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August 11, 2017

Superintendent Michael Juech
Bristol School District #1
20121 83rd Street
Bristol, WI 53104

Dear Superintendent Juech:

I have the honor of serving as the Executive Director of the Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation. The Foundation serves nearly 100 members of Congress who are part of the Congressional Prayer Caucus (the names of those members of Congress who serve on the Congressional Prayer Advisory Team are listed on the left).

In addition, the Foundation serves Legislative Prayer Caucuses in 31 states, which have over 750 state senators and state representatives as members. These leaders are working together to preserve the integrity of our Founding Principles and protect First Amendment rights for all.

We recently learned from news reports that the Freedom From Religion Foundation ("FFRF") objected to the District's partnership with Thrivent Financial in a "Feed My Starving Children" event. We understand from this news report that after the students packed food for the needy children, they were invited to participate in a Christian prayer over the food. In addition, Thrivent transported students to the event, and gave the students T-shirts with the firm's logo on it that includes a Christian cross. FFRF objected to this event on the grounds that it violated the First Amendment. The news article further states that the District has discontinued its relationship with Thrivent Financial and is taking steps to remove any social media posts from the District's digital pages highlighting the relationship with Thrivent.

We hope that you recognize that the District is losing an opportunity to teach its students to care for the less fortunate through direct action. Although we lack a historical knowledge of your District, we assume that this partnership with Thrivent was one of the first efforts to broaden the perspective of students in caring for others. It is, of course, not unusual for a public institution to partner

with Christian institutions with respect to charitable activities, since Christians have historically initiated the institutions for health and welfare. The first hospitals, for instance, were created by Christians, and churches historically provided for welfare of the poor prior to the 1930s.

We sense that the group with the most to lose in your decision to no longer partner with Thrivent, are the students. Unless you find a substitute, the children will not learn about the hunger of those children who are less fortunate, nor will they go home and ask for food from their parents to help the starving children. No longer will there be an opportunity for children to discuss with their parents the blessings that we in America have, and no longer will there be a field trip for the students.

There is a way for the District to partner with Thrivent and not violate the First Amendment. Any prayer must be completely voluntary, and should also be student initiated. Regarding the T-shirts, the students can either accept it or reject it. Since the cross is part of Thrivent's logo, the District is not responsible for what appears on the logo. According to federal regulations, any institution that includes a religious symbol in its logo is not required to remove that religious symbol when partnering with the government.

Let us know if you have any comments or questions.

For Faith and Freedom,



Lea Carawan

Executive Director

Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation