

Constitution of the state of Georgia

To perpetuate the principles of free government, insure justice to all, preserve peace, promote the interest and happiness of the citizen and of the family, and transmit to posterity the enjoyment of liberty, we the people of Georgia, relying upon the protection and guidance of Almighty God, do ordain and establish this Constitution.

ARTICLE I. BILL OF RIGHTS SECTION I. RIGHTS OF PERSONS

Paragraph III.

Freedom of conscience. Each person has the natural and inalienable right to worship God, each according to the dictates of that person's own conscience; and no human authority should, in any case, control or interfere with such right of conscience.

Amendment I of the Constitution of the United States of America:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

FORMAL LETTER TO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF JACKSON COUNTY GA

PRESENTED: 16 June 2014

Jackson County Board of Commissioners
Commissioner/Chairman Tom Crow
Commissioner Bruce Yates
Commissioner Jim Hix
Commissioner Chas Hardy
Commissioner Dwain Smith
5000 General Jackson Parkway
Jefferson Ga. 30549

Request for investigation into and amendment of “religious gatherings” ordinance under section 351 (d) of the “Temporary Events” Heading of ordinances in Jackson County Ga.

Dear Board of Commissioners:

Upon reading the language of section 351 (d) We and others have become concerned that this ordinance could be used to infringe upon the religious and free speech rights of citizens in Jackson County. We have determined that the language is so broad that it is given to the interpretation of whoever may be in a position of power at any given time. Our concern is that the language could be used to limit or monitor home Bible studies, home church cell groups, home prayer meetings or any other small gathering that may be of a religious nature.

While it is understood that a large gathering that may need parking or may some how infringe upon neighbors should require a permit, it should also be understood that a small meeting in a persons living room to pray or study the Bible should need permission from no one.

The wording of the amended ordinance could contain a clause that states: “gatherings on private property need no permit as long as there is ample privately provided parking and the assembly does not violate predetermined fire code ordinances or noise ordinances”

We believe that as American Citizens & as Citizens of the State of Georgia, we should not have to ask any government agency or official for permission to have a few people over to our homes to pray or sing or study or what have you. We have all seen the examples in several other states where people, especially Christians, have been prosecuted, spent time incarcerated, & been subject to heavy fines because those in a position of power chose to enforce ordinances like this one by the letter of the law. Another concern is that one of the organizations dedicated to disassembling of religious freedoms may bring a law suit forcing counties to enforce such ordinances by the Letter of the Law. We feel that an amendment to this ordinance is needed to protect not only our freedom, but the freedom of our children and future generations.

Thanks for your service, understanding and cooperation in this important matter:

Sincerely,