

State of Mississippi named in federal lawsuit over 'In God We Trust' car tags

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Editor

Three Mississippi atheists and a pair of anti-religion organizations are suing the State of Mississippi over the inclusion of, "In God We Trust," on vehicle license plates.

"No state may force a person to be a mouthpiece for the government's preferred message... In so doing, the state is violating of nearly a century of settled First Amendment laws," states the complaint filed in the Northern Division of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi.

The individual plaintiffs listed on the website of American Atheists, Inc., of Cranford, N.J., which is itself a party to the lawsuit, are:

- Jason Alan Griggs of Brandon.
- Derenda Hancock of Brandon.
- L. Kim Gibson of Jackson.
- Sarah Worrell, who is not listed on court papers but is included on the lawsuit's plaintiff page on the website of American Atheists, Inc.

The fifth plaintiff is the Mississippi Humanist Association, based in Jackson.

The sole named defendant is Chris Graham, in his official capacity of commissioner of the state's Department of Revenue,

which is responsible for the car tag program.



Digby

“This is straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel,” said Kenny Digby, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention’s Christian Action Commission in Jackson. “They’re using legal tender with, “In God We Trust,” printed on it to pay for a car tag with, “In God We Trust,” printed on it – and griping about it.

“They’re suing a public servant for doing what all three branches of state government have confirmed is legitimate,” Digby pointed out. “What more do they want? We’ve already given them a holiday – April 1: ‘The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God’ (Psalm 14:1).”