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Attorney General Marshall Defends Right of Auburn Baseball Players to Pray

(Montgomery, Ala) – Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall defended the right of Auburn baseball players to pray in a letter to the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), which had threatened to sue Auburn University if it does not prohibit a men’s baseball chaplain from leading prayers with players or players from wearing Christian symbols or messages at practice.

“Freedom From Religion’s latest crusade is a swing and a miss. Coaches and athletes don’t lose their religious rights just because they attend a public school,” said Attorney General Marshall. “The Supreme Court has been clear that the days of censoring employees and students to remove religion from public view are over. Auburn – and all Alabama schools – should know that the Attorney General’s Office will stand with them in protecting the religious liberties of their employees and students. Do not surrender.”

It has been reported that Mason Maners serves as the team’s chaplain, offering Bible studies and praying with the team. According to news outlets, Maners broke his neck playing high school football but made an inspirational recovery and himself played baseball at Auburn.

Without evidence, the Freedom From Religion Foundation’s demand letter accused the team of forcing players to pray, complaining that anyone who does not participate is “marginalized.”

The Attorney General’s letter responded: “Alabama is committed to preserving the liberties of all its citizens. Because of its fidelity to the Constitution, the State will not let ‘concerns about phantom constitutional violations justify actual violations of an individual’s First Amendment rights.’ For you to say that members of the baseball team should ‘pray privately ... on their own time’ is offensive. For the government to say so would be both unconstitutional and un-American.”

The Attorney General requested that the Freedom From Religion Foundation withdraw its letter.

The letter can be read [here](#).

