



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MISSOURI
ANDREW BAILEY

May 16, 2024

Mayor Quinton Lucas
414 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106

Sent via certified mail and emailed to: mayorq@kcmo.org

Dear Mayor Lucas:

It has been reported that the city of Kansas City has retaliated against a well-respected local resident and member of the Kansas City Chiefs after he spoke about his religious views. Your office's X account likely publicly released residential location information on a private citizen, Harrison Butker, in an attempt to retaliate against him for expressing his sincerely held religious beliefs at a religious college's commencement ceremony—to an audience that largely shares his views. Use of government social media to retaliate against an individual based on their religious beliefs amounts to discriminatory behavior that is not tolerated under our Constitution or Missouri statute.

Our nation is founded on a bedrock commitment to the free exercise of religion. In addition, Missouri law specifically prohibits faith-based discrimination against Missouri residents. Yet, your office apparently believes it is appropriate to denigrate a devout Catholic for comments he made about his own faith at a religious college.

The speech I am referencing was given by Chief's all-star kicker Harrison Butker at Benedictine College—a private, religious college. This college openly affirms that it “is committed to those beliefs and natural principles that form the framework of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and it is committed further to those specific matters of faith of the Roman Catholic tradition...” Yet, speaking to a group of fellow Catholics about theological issues important to their shared faith at a graduation ceremony at a private college prompted a retaliatory social media post by your office.

Missouri's Human Rights Act prohibits government actors from discriminating against citizens because of their sincerely held religious beliefs. In addition to the city of Kansas City's attack on Mr. Butker, there is an effort to force his employer to take disciplinary action against him. To any employer or government official considering such a move, I assure you that I am prepared to use the authority provided in statute to defend the principle of free religious expression.

Missouri law states the following:

Whenever the attorney general has a reasonable cause to believe that any person or group of persons is engaged in a pattern or practice of resistance to the full enjoyment of any of the rights granted by this chapter or that any group of persons has been denied any of the rights granted by this chapter, and such denial raises an issue of general public importance, he may bring a civil action to any appropriate state court[.] Section 213.126.1, RSMo.

That is not the only concerning and potentially unlawful conduct. Given that your office's official account identified where Mr. Butker may reside, it is plausible that Kansas City government officials misappropriated government resources and information to find Mr. Butker's city of residence. This was irresponsible at best, and is potentially a violation of Missouri law. Missourians deserve better from our elected leaders.

Mr. Butker was well within his rights to discuss his religious views—views which are shared by millions of members of his faith tradition. Sadly, history is filled with examples of people of religious faith being targeted for their beliefs by government officials. Please see enclosed demand for information related to your office's retaliatory social media post.

Sincerely,



ANDREW BAILEY
Missouri Attorney General