



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A MESSAGE FROM COUNTY CAO WALT EKARD

Bible Study Will Continue in Bonita Pastor's Home

I have received dozens of e-mails and calls from people concerned about reports that the County is attempting to muzzle religious expression by shutting down a neighborhood Bible study. As the Chief Administrative Officer for San Diego County, I want to say in the most direct terms: the County has never tried to stifle religious expression and never will.

The County responded to complaints from a neighbor about traffic and parking issues resulting from a weekly Bible study held in a Bonita home. This is a land use issue; it's not an issue of religious expression. We have been working to resolve the matter with the property owner.

I am personally reviewing our actions in this case and the policies and procedures we use to deal with such complaints. Should I find that County staff at any level acted in a heavy-handed way; did anything inappropriate under the circumstances; or that a change or revision to our processes and procedures is warranted, I will take appropriate action immediately.

More importantly, let me be clear: religious intolerance in any form is not, and never will be, allowed under any circumstance in San Diego County government.

I deeply regret that a routine code enforcement issue has transformed into a debate over religious freedom in San Diego County. No one respects the right to free religious expression more than I do and no one would find the infringement of such rights more abhorrent. The Bible studies will continue in Pastor David Jones' home as we work to find a solution that works for everyone involved in this matter.

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