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The IRS Officially Recognizes the Satanic Temple as a Church

The church has been granted tax-exempt status

By **EJ DICKSON**



Lucien Greaves, spokesman for The Satanic Temple, photographed in Salem, Massachusetts.
Josh Reynolds for The Washington Post/Getty Images

Good news for those who worship Satan and Satan-adjacent deities (goats, I wanna say?): the **Satanic Temple** has officially been granted tax-exempt status by the IRS, according to a post from the **religion**'s official Instagram account.

Being granted tax-exempt status essentially means that the Satanic Temple has the same legal protections that other religions do, including “access to public spaces as other religious organizations; affirming its standing in court when battling religious discrimination; and enabling The Satanic Temple to apply for faith-based government grants,” according to a press release sent to *Rolling Stone*.



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~~Although the Satanic Temple had previously **rejected pursuing tax exempt status**, church president~~
Lucien Greaves reversed this stance in 2017 after President Trump signed a **“religious freedom” executive order**. “As ‘the religious’ are increasingly gaining ground as a privileged class, we must ensure that this privilege is available to all, and that superstition doesn’t gain exclusive rights over non-theistic religions or non-belief,” Greaves wrote in the Satanic Temple newsletter (yes, apparently there is a Satanic Temple newsletter), adding that the group should move to ensure that “atheistic and secular non-profits, advancing a distinct religious opinion and/or opinion upon religion, are themselves rightful beneficiaries of religious tax exemption as well.”

As documented by the recent film *Hail, Satan?*, the Satanic Temple was initially founded in 2013 as something of a joke, as a way to highlight the increasingly blurred lines between church and state. In one famous 2013 rally, the group expressed its support of Gov. Rick Scott, who had just signed a controversial bill allowing for student-led prayer in schools. The group also advocated for the **addition of a Baphomet statue outside the Oklahoma state capitol**, next to a statue of the Ten Commandments. Over time, the organization has evolved into a genuine grassroots religious and activist movement, experiencing a **huge spike in membership** after the election of Donald Trump.

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Update: This story has been updated to clarify that other Satanic-affiliated groups have previously been granted tax-exempt status.

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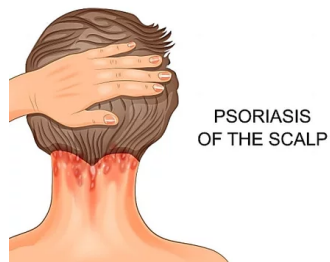
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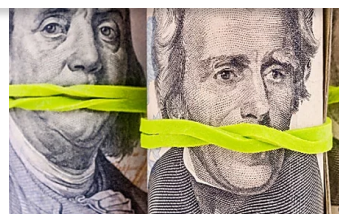
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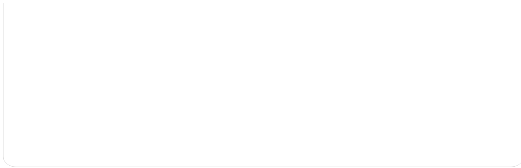
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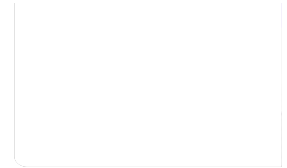




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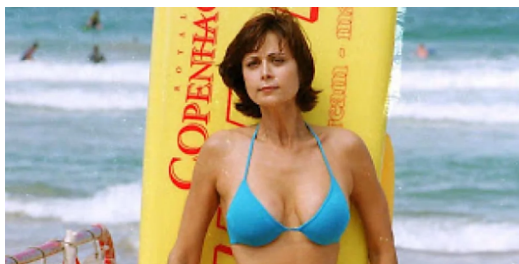
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