



Leicester Secular Society

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PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY 4th MARCH 2011

NO BAN ON CENSUS ADS IN LEICESTER

Bus adverts which have been branded “offensive” in London are on the back of Leicester buses. The ads are part of a campaign to encourage people with no religion to tick the non religious box on the census form.

**IF YOU'RE NOT RELIGIOUS
FOR GOD'S SAKE SAY SO
IN THE 2011 CENSUS TICK "NO RELIGION"**



LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY www.lsec.org.uk

Nationally, the British Humanist Association has been forced to drop the words ‘*for God’s sake,*’ from its advertising because it was deemed to be ‘potentially offensive.’ This follows advice given by the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP)

However in Leicester, buses have been carrying these ads for nearly two weeks with no complaints from the public. The local adverts are part of a campaign by the Leicester Secular Society.

President of the Leicester Secular Society, Dr Emma Chung said: “*It is vital that the 2011 census results in accurate data. Our advertisements are intended to be a humorous way of drawing people’s attention to a serious issue. Leicester has a well earned reputation for toleration and I am sure that apart from a few zealots, the majority of religious people have a sense of humour.*”

“*Evidence from other surveys shows that the 2001 Census inflated the number of people who were religious and undercounted those who were not. Since the Census usually influences public policy, we are concerned that flawed Census data will be used to justify an increase in the number of ‘faith’ schools, the public funding of religious groups, keeping Bishops in the House of Lords as of right and the continuation of compulsory worship in schools.*

We are worried that some people who are not religious may tick in the Christian, Hindu or Muslim box on the Census form. They may do this because they are showing their cultural background rather than whether they hold any religious beliefs. All we want is for the 2011 Census to accurately reflect the real demographics of our society.”

Andrew Copson of the British Humanist Association said: *“This censorship of a legitimate advert is frustrating and ridiculous. The blasphemy laws in England have been abolished but we are seeing the same principle being enforced nonetheless.”*

According to the 2010 British Social Attitudes Survey, those who profess no-religion as an identity have risen from 31% to 43% between 1983 and 2008. Yet the 2001 census data suggests that this figure is only 14.8% nationally and 17.43% in Leicester. It also concluded that there were more Jedis than Jews.

For further comment or information contact <http://census-campaign.org.uk/> or

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Other surveys on religion or belief:

The British Social Attitudes Survey 2010. <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/study/british-social-attitudes-26th-report>

■ In the UK, those who profess no-religion as an identity have risen from 31% to 43% between 1983 and 2008

■ 59% did not describe themselves as religious when asked about how they would describe their religiosity level

■ In 1983 66% identified as Christian, in 2008 the number was 50%

■ 62% of people in the UK never attend a religious service and only 8% attend a weekly church service

An Ipsos Mori Poll 2007 showed that 36% of people – equivalent to around 17 million adults – are in fact humanist in their basic outlook.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/863680.pdf>

In the 2007-08 Citizenship Survey, participants were requested to select factors that they regarded as important to their identity from thirteen options. Whilst family was top with 97%, followed by interests (87%), religion ranked bottom at 48%.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/863680.pdf>

In a 2006 Guardian/ICM poll, 63% of people said they are not religious

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/dec/23/religion.topstories3>