



[Print This Article](#) | [Close this window](#)

Court rules against Mormon who objects to tax

Mon May 7, 2007 5:14PM EDT

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - A U.S. federal appeals court dismissed a case on Monday in which a Las Vegas attorney argued his Mormon religion should exempt him from Social Security taxes.

"I don't believe in it, I don't like it, I think it is Satanic," Jonathan Hansen said in a telephone interview, adding that to date he has paid his Social Security taxes. "I belong to a religion that will take care of me. I don't need the Social Security system and I don't want it."

"It violates my religious beliefs and it violates the teachings of my church as I interpret them."

The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed with such arguments and backed a lower court's dismissal of Hansen's claim.

"We affirm the dismissal of these claims because Hansen's complaint fails to specify the particular statutes and regulations requiring use of an SSN (Social Security number) that he objects to, but instead seeks a general declaration that he and his son are entitled to never use an SSN," Judge Michael Hawkins wrote for a three-judge panel.

"The government has a compelling interest in maintaining a sound social security and tax system, and that the SSN requirement -- with its limited exceptions -- is narrowly tailored to this interest."

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as the Mormon church is formally called, teaches its members that "If ye are prepared, ye shall not fear" and encourages members to prepare for emergencies such as by stocking a year's supply of food. It also teaches followers to help other church members in need.

© Reuters 2006. All rights reserved. Reproduction or redistribution of Reuters content, including by caching, framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Reuters. Reuters and the Reuters sphere logo are registered trademarks and trademarks of the Reuters group of companies around the world.

Reuters journalists are subject to the Reuters Editorial Handbook which requires fair presentation and disclosure of relevant interests.