



# CATHOLIC LEAGUE

*For Religious  
and  
Civil Rights*

February 4, 2010

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Honorable Jim Webb  
Chairman  
Senate Armed Services  
Subcommittee on Personnel  
248 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Susan A. Davis  
Chairwoman  
House Armed Services  
Subcommittee on Personnel  
1526 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Sen. Webb and Rep. Davis:

The enclosed news release tells only the most immediate reason why I am writing to you. Unfortunately, a recurrent problem of hostility to Catholics and Protestants at the Air Force Academy exists.

Five years ago, a report was issued on religious intolerance at the Air Force Academy. The report was conducted by outside researchers after it was alleged that there may be some problems in the Evangelical community regarding this issue. Though "no overt discrimination" was found, some instances of "insensitivity" were revealed. Ironically, as it turned out, both Catholic and Protestant cadets had grounds to complain. (Please see the enclosed letter I wrote to members of the House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee about this matter in 2005.)

Now we have a troubling incident where someone put a cross in a pagan worship site at the Academy. But worse than this infraction was the incendiary and downright insulting comment made about the cross by Superintendent Michael Gould: "We absolutely will not stand for this type of *destructive* behavior. I consider this no different than someone writing *graffiti* on the Cadet Chapel." (My italics.)

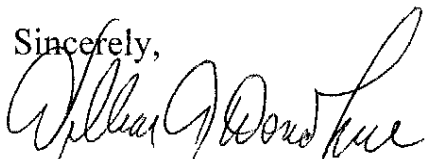
To treat the cross as a symbol of hate speech is despicable, no matter how indefensible this particular display was. And it is not just Superintendent Gould who engaged in overkill.

Mikey Weinstein, a 1977 graduate of the Academy, was the principal person who pushed for the 2005 study. The following year he founded The Military Religious Freedom Foundation to monitor instances of alleged religious intolerance against non-Christians at the Academy. Regarding the latest incident, Weinstein said that to put a cross at a pagan site was analogous to putting a swastika at the Jewish center!

Weinstein is not just someone from the community—he is integrally tied to the Air Force Academy. Indeed, the pressure he brings to bear on Academy leaders is denied by no one: he admits to having “clients” on campus.

I would like to hear your thoughts about these issues. What is going on at the Air Force Academy is more than political correctness run amok—it’s despicable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William A. Donohue". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W".

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

President

cc: Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel  
House Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel  
Lieutenant General Michael Gould