



CATHOLIC LEAGUE

*For Religious
and
Civil Rights*

March 11, 2016

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Dr. Jody Donovan
Dean of Students
201 Administration Building
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523

Dear Dr. Donovan:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I take anti-Catholicism very seriously, and this is especially true when offenses take place at public institutions. Regrettably, Colorado State University is witnessing this problem.

To be sure, the anti-Catholic incidents that recently occurred are not a campus-wide issue, and no faculty or administrative personnel are implicated. Nonetheless, I have a moral and professional obligation to bring this matter to your attention. I might add that I have taught college for many years and served for two decades on the board of directors of the National Association of Scholars.

Let me begin by giving you some background information on why I am writing. Some of what I am going to say has already been reported in the campus newspaper, the *Collegian*; the story has also been picked up by local and national media outlets. Still other information that I will discuss is the result of conversations and correspondence that my staff has had with students.

Recently, a "diversity bill" was proposed in the student senate to grant senate seats to select organizations on campus: adult learning, veterans, the disabled, LGBT students, women's groups, as well as various racial and ethnic groups. A Jewish student, Lawrence Horowitz, offered an amendment to include, Jewish, Muslim, and Catholic students; it was supported by a Catholic, Sarah Bruce.

Inexplicably, the amendment was rejected, sending a message to students of faith. Horowitz and Bruce then joined eight other students in defeating the original bill. The scene got ugly: the proponents of the original bill exploded in anger. "I haven't ever experienced hate like this, ever," is how Ms. Bruce put it.

The original bill's supporters then organized demonstrations, a petition, threats of impeachment, and threats to "shut the senate down" if they did not get their way. The leader of this effort, Kwan Atlas, was himself impeached from the student senate last year for "harassment and intimidation."

On March 9, the original bill passed, without including religious groups; one senator changed her vote under threat of impeachment.

What happened is disturbing enough—excluding students of faith in an "inclusion" bill, and a rank abuse of the impeachment process to silence these students—but what makes this even worse is what happened next.

Bruce tried to reason with students who disagreed with her, but the dialogue broke down when she was told that "the Catholic Church does not need to be represented because you are the 'oppressors' of the LGBTQ communities and others." When she said that she has Catholic constituents who agree with her, she was mocked by the directors of the Black/African American Cultural Center. None of this can be contested: voice recordings were taken.

The Diversity Office on campus says it is "committed to enhancing its diversity through the inclusion of individuals reflective of characteristics such as...religious and spiritual beliefs...." By any measure, this tenet has been violated: injustice has certainly been done to Catholic students, and quite possibly to Jewish students, as well.

I would like to hear from you about this matter and what steps might be taken to remedy this situation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William A. Donohue". The signature is fluid and connected, with a large initial "W" and "A".

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President