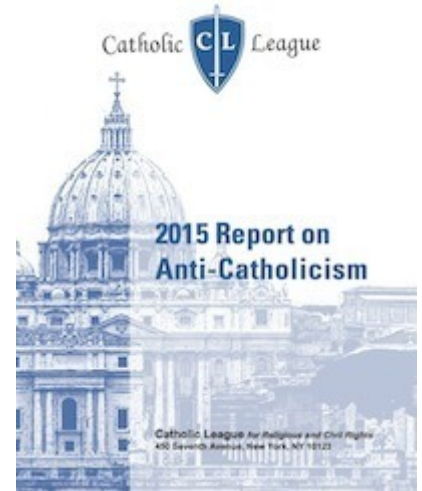


Activist Organizations

January

In 2013, Rebecca Randles, an attorney who works with supreme Catholic-suing lawyer Jeffrey Anderson, sued Bill Donohue and the Catholic League for allegedly libeling a man who had made accusations against a priest in 2011. There was nothing libelous about anything Donohue said, and in January 2015 the suit was dismissed on all counts.



When a Missouri man made allegations against a priest who allegedly molested him and three other altar boys in the early 1980s, Donohue investigated the accuser and found that he had been implicated in a murder. While another man was convicted, it was public record that the priest's accuser had "motive to commit the murder and the opportunity to do so."

Donohue took the information from court records—he did not make it up. Moreover, two of the three altar boys were dead, and the one living man said that none of the abuse ever occurred.

The man who sued Donohue and the Catholic League was riding high when he hired Randles: he had just won a multi-million dollar lawsuit against the Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese. But Randles proved no match for Erin Mersino, who represented the Catholic League; she works at the Thomas More Law Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The judge dismissed the case mostly on technicalities—the defamation suit was time barred by New York's statute of limitations (almost two years had elapsed before the suit was filed)—and on other matters. The plaintiff filed an appeal at the end of the year.

January 6

King, NC – The city council voted to remove a sculpture of a soldier kneeling next to a cross after the city was sued by Americans United for Separation of Church and State. The sculpture, which was part of a larger memorial, featured a black silhouette of a soldier and a cross. Americans United sued on behalf of a local Afghanistan War veteran. In addition to removing the image, the city agreed to pay Americans United \$500,000 to settle the lawsuit.

January 6

Winfield, AL – In December of 2014 the city council passed a resolution declaring the town's motto to be "City under God." The resolution passed unanimously and received little fanfare. The local paper pushed a supportive editorial and the town's mayor, who supports the motto, said several residents contacted him to express their support as well.

Then atheist Hemant Mehta posted on his Patheos blog, "The Friendly Atheist," about the town's decision which caused many other atheists to take to Facebook and other social media to object to the town's resolution. The atheist blogger used the Internet to rally people against the small town. The mayor refused to budge.

February 3 – March 4

California – An array of persons not affiliated with the Archdiocese of San Francisco joined some parishioners to wage war on Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone. At issue was a proposed contract for teachers at the four archdiocesan high schools. It seeks to assure fidelity to Church teachings.

Showing nothing but contempt for the First Amendment, lawmakers from Sacramento and San Francisco injected themselves into the dispute. The internal affairs of the archdiocese is none of their business. The media, led by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, joined the critics.

Joining the fray was Sam Singer, a public relations giant who has been accused of having a problem with the truth. He falsely claimed that Cordileone was going to “purge gay, lesbian and pro-choice teachers.” He also called on Pope Francis to have him removed.

Some of the accusations that were made were so totally untrue that those making them either did not read the relevant documents or decided to ignore their plain wording. Make no mistake about it, this was a despicable campaign launched against a loyal son of the Church, Archbishop Cordileone.

Note: For more information about the lawmakers’ attack on Archbishop Cordileone see the government section.

February 11

Ravenswood, WV – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent a letter to Ravenswood Middle School saying that a small memorial outside the school violated the First Amendment. The memorial was installed in 2004 after a teacher who was a 25-year-veteran of the school was killed in an accident.

According to FFRF, because the memorial included crosses and angels it was illegal. “Schools cannot advance or promote religion, so that’s what this display is doing” an FFRF attorney said. The teacher’s family agreed to remove the crosses, but left the angels. The school board said it would discuss whether or not to allow the memorial to remain.

February 18

Oklahoma – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent letters of complaint to stop two private groups from distributing Bibles to 5th graders at schools in three towns. FFRF had filed lawsuits against other schools in the past.

March 20

Madison, WI – The Supreme Court of Wisconsin ruled on a formal complaint, filed by the Catholic League in 2011, against a lawyer, Naomi Isaacson, suspending her for one year and

ordering her to pay \$6,600 in court costs. The complaint was filed with the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility in St. Paul, Minnesota against Isaacson for making a series of patently anti-Catholic remarks. The case was referred to the courts in Wisconsin, where Isaacson is also licensed.

Below is an excerpt of Isaacson's bigoted comments that triggered the complaint:

- She called U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Nancy Dreher [who is not Catholic] "Popess Dreher" and "a secret Catholic Knight Witch Hunter."
- She called U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Dennis O'Brien a "dastardly Jesuit."
- She called the court-appointed bankruptcy trustee a "mindless numbnut [who] would follow church orders with a vengeance."
- She accused judges and trustees of conspiring to liquidate the company's assets "for pennies," saying the proceeds will go "to members of the Catholic Church."
- She referred to a contempt-of-court order by Judge Dreher saying, "We may as well flush her papal bull order down the toilet."
- She said the court "is an arm of the church to force the minority to be converted or face the consequences just like during the Dark and Middle Ages."
- She called one trustee "Grand Inquisitor."
- She said Judge O'Brien converted the case to Chapter 7 "on papal orders."
- She accused the Church of bringing illegal immigrants to America "so their population can outrun that of the Protestants and they can turn the country into another Spain."
- She said: "The Catholic Church has millions of Jesuits working undercover around the country to fulfill the church's agenda. They give orders, pull the strings, and their puppets like Nancy Dreher jump like zombies."

In September 2014, the Catholic League was successful in getting her equally anti-Catholic lawyer, Rebekah Nett, suspended for a year as well.

March 26 – April 10

Indiana – Holy Week will be remembered not for religious observances in 2015, but for an assault on religious liberty. It was ignited by social media, and quickly took on a life of its own, bringing in gay activists, left-wing non-profit groups, the media, the entertainment industry, academia, the clergy, and big corporations. The cultural ramifications will be felt for years.

The Catholic League wasted no time coming to the defense of Indiana Governor Mike Pence. On March 26, he signed a law that was based on a federal law passed in 1993, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). Not only had there been no controversy when the federal law was introduced by liberal Democrats, it was signed by President Bill Clinton. Subsequent to that time, 30 states adopted their own RFRA, without a fuss.

The 1993 law was passed to rectify a 1990 Supreme Court decision, *Employment Division v. Smith*, that nullified religious exemptions from otherwise valid laws. Under RFRA, the government could not substantially burden religious exercise without compelling justification, and even then it had to be done in the least restrictive way. In 1997, the high court said that RFRA applied only to states that had their own religious liberty acts.

Governor Pence signed the Indiana RFRA because he did not want his state to be without the protections afforded by federal law. What broke this time around is that by 2015 the gay lobby had become more powerful than ever before: it succeeded in convincing many elites that RFRA could be used to discriminate against gays. Never mind that none of these laws say anything about sexual orientation.

No sooner had Governor Pence signed the law when he was attacked by the president of the NCAA. The Indiana-headquartered collegiate sports organization threatened to pull future events from the state because the law allegedly permits discrimination.

Top duplicity prizes go to Senator Chuck Schumer and Hillary Clinton. Schumer slammed the Indiana RFRA law, but in 1993 he voted in favor of the federal RFRA, warning that unless it were passed, "the practice of using sacramental wine, wearing a yarmulke, kosher slaughter and many other religious practices all could be jeopardized." Clinton's husband signed RFRA into law.

March 26

Mark Emmert, president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) released a statement concerning Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act days before the Men's Basketball Final Four was scheduled to take place in Indianapolis. Emmert was "especially concerned about how this legislation could affect our student-athletes and employees." And he promised to "closely examine the implications of this bill and how it might affect future events as well as our workforce."

Bill Donohue responded by writing to Emmert on March 27. The following page is an excerpt of his letter.

Dear Mr. Emmert:

I read with interest your concerns about the welfare of student-athletes who will compete in Indianapolis over next week's Final Four weekend. Your concerns are not noble—they are demagogic.

After Indiana Governor Mike Pence signed the state Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) yesterday, you said that you were concerned "how this legislation could affect our student-athletes and employees. We will work diligently to assure

student-athletes competing in, and visitors attending, next week's Men's Final Four in Indianapolis are not impacted negatively by this bill."

Why the high alert? Do you expect that Christians will take to the street looking for homosexuals to taunt and assault simply because the religious liberties of store owners have been affirmed? If that is not what you mean, then be explicit: What kind of negative impact will you be looking to guard against?

When Governor Pence signed this law, he joined 30 states, and the federal government, in securing religious-liberty protections based on some version of RFRA. You know perfectly well that student-athletes who have competed in these states have never had their rights abridged because of such legislation. If anything, their rights have been expanded. So to say that things might be different in Indianapolis is nothing less than an invidious scare tactic. It also smacks of hostility to religion.

Governor Pence signed the state RFRA because without it, the federal law, which was passed in 1993, would not apply to Indiana (the U.S. Supreme Court stipulated in 1997 that it only applied to states that had adopted their own RFRA). Should the people of Indiana be denied the same coverage that affords most Americans? After all, 19 states have their own RFRA and another 11 have similar laws.

The federal RFRA, upon which all state variations are based, was sponsored by Rep. Nancy Pelosi in the House. Is she the enemy of gays? Sen. Edward Kennedy sponsored it in the Senate. Was he anti-gay? President Bill Clinton signed it. Did he seek to create a hostile environment for gays? Is President Barack Obama also an anti-gay bigot? He voted in favor of the Illinois RFRA when he was in the state senate.

Is there any evidence that RFRA has subsequently fostered a negative milieu for gays, or anyone else? If so, please share

it with the rest of us. It is hardly controversial to say that what these aforementioned Democrats did was to merely affirm our First Amendment right to religious liberty. That is what Governor Pence is doing now.

It would be such a relief to learn that you are reconsidering your threat to pull future NCAA events from Indianapolis. But if you do not reverse your position, then you have a moral obligation to raze all of the lavish buildings that comprise the NCAA headquarters in Indianapolis and set up shop someplace else. This would include bulldozing your brand new 130,000 square-foot addition to the NCAA's national office in White River State Park. Don't forget to level the Hall of Champions as well.

Surely you could set up shop in one of the minority of states that do not support RFRA. Were you to stay put, someone might think you are a phony, among other things.

Sincerely,

*William Donohue
President*

March 31

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) used Indiana's Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) as an excuse to attack the Supreme Court's ruling in the *Hobby Lobby* contraception case. FFRF called on Congress to repeal the federal RFRA, and cited the "right-wing, male, Catholic bloc on our Supreme Court [which] ruled that corporations have 'religious rights' that can be 'offended' if employees don't follow their boss's religion."

April 5

On Easter Sunday, the anti-Christian organization, Freedom From Religion Foundation, placed an ad in the *New York Times* arguing that religious liberty laws promote "hate."

April 7

Franklin County, IN – The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against the county on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation and a Satanist group. The Satanic Temple, a group based out of Massachusetts, filed for permits to erect a display outside the county's courthouse. The Satanic display was meant to protest a nativity scene that is placed outside the courthouse each winter. Franklin County officials rejected the permit application citing a city ordinance that only allows displays from city residents.

April 14

Oklahoma City, OK – The American Humanist Association (AHA) threatened to sue the Duncan, OK school district after a third grade teacher in the district distributed Gideon Bibles to her students. An AHA spokesman accused the teacher of attempting to "proselytize" her students.

April 16

Madison, WI – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) launched a campaign against Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker's proposal to expand the state's voucher program. FFRF installed a billboard that read "V(ouch)ers hurt our public schools" ['ouch' was highlighted] near the state capitol. FFRF also commissioned a series of television commercials claiming "Walker wants to take money from our public schools and use it to support someone else's religion. Your tax dollars shouldn't fund religiously segregated schools."

April 22

Washington, DC – Fox News reported that the ACLU is suing the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) over the Church's refusal to provide contraceptive and abortion "services" in its care for immigrant children. Accusing the bishops of "taking millions of dollars in federal grants" while "imposing their beliefs on this vulnerable population," the ACLU said this "raises serious concerns" about the separation of church and state. Kevin Appleby, a USCCB official, argued that the

ACLU's real purpose is "ending the productive and successful partnership between the Catholic Church and the federal government on the care and shelter of vulnerable populations. Denying us the freedom to serve betrays the very children the ACLU is purportedly attempting to help."

April 27

Lexington, KY – The Lexington Pride Parade, having sued a Christian printer for refusing to print T-shirts for a gay pride parade, was rebuked by the Fayette County Circuit Court, which upheld the business owner's right to decline to print messages that run counter to his religious views. The court overturned a previous ruling by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission, which held that the company, Hands on Originals, had discriminated when it refused to print the T-shirts.

April 29

Warren, MI – An atheist man protesting a prayer station inside Warren City Hall sued the city. A federal judge ordered the mayor to grant the man a permit for a "reason station" where he can distribute atheist literature and advocate for the separation of church and state.

May 14

New York, NY – Yeshiva University law professor Marci A. Hamilton engaged in a baseless smear of New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan. Writing in the law publication *Verdict*, Hamilton deplored New York State's "failure" to enact a bill suspending the statute of limitations – yet again – for lawsuits involving abuse allegations against private or religious entities. Ignoring the bill's glaring weakness – that it exempts government entities, like public schools, from such lawsuits – she accused "the Catholic bishops and primarily Cardinal Timothy Dolan" of "pulling the strings" to block the legislation.

June 1

Toledo, OH – The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) claimed that University of Toledo Head Coach Matt Campbell committed a “serious and flagrant violation of the First Amendment” when he led the team in prayer prior to a game in 2012. FFRF cited a YouTube video that showed Coach Campbell telling the team, “I’m going to say this: Every one of us has so much to be thankful for. A great night to play football, play with your brothers. OK? What an opportunity. Let’s be grateful for it.” He then knelt and the team began to recite the Lord’s Prayer.

June 19

Baltimore, MD – Catholics for Choice and Americans United teamed up to place an editorial in the *Baltimore Sun* to attack the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ “Fortnight for Freedom” campaign, opening with the claim: “This defense of religious liberty campaign is about as disingenuous an effort as any carnival huckster could conjure.” The editorial made it clear that the concept of religious conscience exemptions itself is the target.

June 22

Washington, DC – Catholics for Choice ran a full-page advertisement in the *Washington Post’s* Express tabloid attacking the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ “Fortnight for Freedom” campaign for religious liberty. The ad, reminiscent of 19th-century Know Nothingism, featured a parody of a famous World War I recruiting poster, with a mitered Bishop in place of Uncle Sam and the legend “We Want You To Help Us Discriminate.” The ad claimed that the bishops’ campaign for religious liberty was “discrimination wrapped in a false flag of freedom.”

June 24

Washington, DC – Americans United for Separation of Church and State called on the U.S. Air Force to discontinue a flag-folding ceremony that it claimed has specific religious symbolism. It said the ceremony’s “second fold ‘symbolizes our

belief in eternal life,' while the fourth 'represents our weaker nature; as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace, as well as in times of war.' The 11th fold, it asserts, 'in the eyes of Hebrew citizens, represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon and glorifies, in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' The 12th fold, it claims, 'in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit.'" Although Americans United noted that this flag-folding is to be used "at personal ceremonies where attendance is voluntary," the group nonetheless demanded that the ceremony be discontinued.

July 18

Harlan, IA – In an article published in *Cosmo*, Mississippi abortionist Dr. Willie Parker drew a parallel between Deborah Nucatola, the Planned Parenthood executive who was filmed casually discussing the trafficking of aborted babies' organs over a glass of wine, and Jesus during the week of his crucifixion.

July 31

New York, NY – New York Archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan wrote an op-ed in the *Daily News* that was critical of Donald Trump's remarks on immigration. He called attention to the history of anti-Catholic nativism, mentioning the role played by Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State (POAU), now known as Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Barry Lynn, who heads Americans United, was offended that Dolan lumped his organization in with "the violent and hateful actions of groups like the KKK," and wrote a letter to the editor accusing Cardinal Dolan of "telling lies about our organization." He made it clear he was also defending POAU.

In fact, Dolan is right about his history and Lynn is in denial. When POAU was founded no one played a bigger role in

ideologically launching it than Paul Blanshard, the most notorious anti-Catholic bigot in the nation. His screed, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, is known to this day for its unrelenting bigotry. He warned that “the Menace” – i.e. the Catholic Church – was about to take over America, turning it into a theocracy. POAU’s first president, Glenn Archer, drew on Blanshard’s ideology when he labeled the Catholic Church “more dangerous and clever than communism.” Archer also petitioned the FCC to deny TV licenses to the Jesuits, claiming they were an “alien organization.” If that isn’t nativism, the word has no meaning.

August 7

Madison, WI – The Freedom from Religion Foundation sent ten letters to sheriffs’ offices and police departments around the country, protesting their placement of the national motto “In God We Trust” on their departments’ vehicles. The letters followed an earlier series that were sent to seven other departments and are part of a continuing campaign. The letters object that the motto makes unbelievers feel “offended, excluded and like political outsiders” and furthermore that “it is frightening and politically dubious for the [Sheriff’s] Office to announce to citizens that officers rely on the judgment of a deity rather than on the judgment of the law.”

August 13

Belen, NM – The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to the city of Belen, demanding that they remove a public Nativity display that has been in place for more than 20 years. The letter stated, “It is unlawful for Belen to maintain a display that consists solely of a Nativity scene, thus singling out, showing preference for, and endorsing one religion.” Mayor Jerah Cordova said that the display is more historical than religious; Belen is the Spanish for Bethlehem. “Our town was named Belen for a reason,” he said, “because our founders wanted it to be named after Bethlehem.”

August 18

Auburn, AL – The Freedom From Religion Foundation demanded that Auburn University fire its team football chaplain and abolish the chaplaincy. The organization sent a letter to the University's president which read in part: "It makes no difference if the chaplain is unofficial, not school-sponsored or a volunteer, because chaplains are given access to the team as a means for coaches to impose religion, usually Christianity, on their players. Under the circumstances, the chaplain's actions are attributable to the university and those actions are unconstitutional."

August 20

Chanute, KS – The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to Chanute Public Schools requesting the removal of a portrait of Jesus, "The Head of Christ" by Warner Sallman, that had been hanging in the hallway for decades. The portrait was removed the same day.

August 21

Washington, DC – In response to the widespread revulsion toward Planned Parenthood (PP) following the Center for Medical Progress's undercover videos showing PP officials discussing the procurement and sale of fetal organs, Catholics for Choice (CfC) elected to show its support for PP by delivering "cakes and messages of goodwill" to PP clinics. Jon O'Brien, the president of Catholics for Choice, was quoted in a CfC press release: "It is clear that Catholics support Planned Parenthood and reject the extremist rhetoric and dirty, underhanded tactics of the antiabortion lobby... We wanted clinic workers, doctors and nurses to know that we stand with Planned Parenthood and the women they care for."

August 25

Little Rock, AR – Responding to the decision by the state of Arkansas to place a Ten Commandments display on its Capitol grounds, the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sought permission to place on permanent display its own monument declaring that "there are no gods." In a letter to the

Arkansas governor and secretary of state, FFRF declared, "Most freethinkers find the Ten Commandments to epitomize the childishness, the vindictiveness, the sexism, the inflexibility and the inadequacies of the bible as a book of morals."

August 26

Redding, CA – In response to a letter from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) the Mercy Medical Center, a Catholic-affiliated hospital, agreed to follow through with a local woman's request for a postpartum sterilization procedure. Mercy Medical Center initially denied the woman's request for sterilization, stating that it did not meet the requirement of Mercy's current policy or the Ethical and Religious Directives (ERDs) for Catholic Health Services. The woman appealed to the ACLU, which sent a demand letter to the hospital claiming that a hospital supported by public funds in California does not have permission to deny "medically indicated pregnancy-related care, as doing so constitutes sex discrimination." Under pressure from the ACLU, the hospital reversed itself and granted the procedure. Lauren Davis, a representative from Mercy Medical, said that the decision would not affect its policies in the future, that the hospital would always operate within the ERDs and that "tubal ligations are not performed in Catholic hospitals except on a case-by-case basis."

August 27

Clark County, NV – The American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed suit in Nevada District Court to challenge a school voucher program. The Nevada program creates "educational savings accounts" that would allow any parent to pull a child from the state's public schools and take tax dollars with them to pay for private or parochial school. Parents could also use the money for transportation, technology or home schooling.

August 28

Connellsville, PA – The Freedom From Religion Foundation

(FFRF) successfully sued to force the removal of a Ten Commandments monument from the grounds of the Connellsville Area School District Junior High School. FFRF Co-President Annie Laurie Gaylor stated, "We're very grateful to the plaintiffs who made possible this challenge, in the face of community rancor. Religion is divisive and builds walls between people, which is why it doesn't belong in our public schools."

August 28

Mesa, AZ – Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AU) sent a letter to the principal of Heritage Academy in Mesa demanding that the school stop using the textbook "Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land" in its mandatory senior government/U.S. Constitution class. Heritage Academy is a public charter school. AU said that the book cites the divine Creator, biblical law and judgment following death.

September

Madison, WI – After a dozen law enforcement agencies joined a national movement to place decals that say "In God We Trust" on their vehicles, Freedom From Religion Foundation sent out over a dozen letters to these agencies asking them to remove the words.

September 23

Brookville, IN – A lawsuit brought by the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) against a nativity scene that has appeared on the Franklin County Courthouse square in Brookville was dismissed by a judge. The battle began when the FFRF and ACLU sued Franklin County in December 2014 as a result of officials who refused to remove the nativity scene. A new ordinance was drafted to clarify the use of the Franklin County Courthouse square, which is the location of where the nativity has been placed for decades. As a result of the new ordinance, any display, religious or not, is welcome.

October 5

Benton, LA – A demand made by the ACLU to put an end to all religious activities in schools was rejected by school authorities who emphasized how U.S. history is based on “freedom of religion, not freedom from religion.” The Bossier Parish School Board responded to an ACLU letter that demanded a school remove all prayer references by ruling that Airline High School in Bossier City did not violate the constitution.

October 19

Carson City, NV – The Nevada Attorney General’s Office filed a motion to dismiss a suit by the American Civil Liberties Union challenging Education Savings Accounts. The program, which is viewed as the broadest school choice program in the U.S. because it’s not limited by issues such as family income, permits parents to claim most of their child’s per-pupil state education funding and put it toward private school tuition or other qualified education expenses.

The ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State argued that the law violated the so-called “Blaine Amendment” in the state’s Constitution that prohibits the use of public funds for sectarian purposes. ACLU of Nevada Executive Director Tod Story said “Parents have a right to send their children to religious schools, but they are not entitled to do so at taxpayers’ expense.”