

BANNING CHRISTMAS IN THE SCHOOLS



Bill Donohue comments on banning Christmas events in the schools:

For the last three decades, students at an Indiana high school have included a live Nativity scene in the annual Christmas show. This year the scene was censored by a federal judge. He acted on a complaint from two anti-Christian organizations, the ACLU and Freedom From Religion Foundation, and they, in turn, responded to the beckoned call of a bigot. The judge's decision, like those who made the complaints, flies in the face of directives announced 20 years ago on the subject of religious expression in the schools.

When Bill Clinton was elected president in 1992, he asked his Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley, to work with the Attorney General to "provide every public school district in America with a statement of principles addressing the extent to which religious expression and activity are permitted in our public schools." The [memo](#) by Secretary Riley, which was sent to all public school superintendents in 1995, is a clear and fair statement on the subject. Regrettably, it has been ignored.

Here is the paragraph that is particularly operative at Christmastime:

“Official neutrality regarding religious activity: Teachers and school administrators, when acting in those capacities, are representatives of the state and are prohibited by the establishment clause from soliciting or encouraging religious activity, and from participating in such activity with students. *Teachers and administrators are also prohibited from discouraging activity because of its religious content, and from soliciting or encouraging anti-religious activity.*” (My italics.)

This last sentence is being ignored in many schools throughout the nation. Indeed, it was ignored by the federal judge in the aforementioned case. The principle of neutrality cuts both ways—it does not give officials the right to discourage activity *because of its religious content!*