

# BEN CARSON ATTACKED BY ATHEISTS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on the reaction by atheist organizations to a prayer given by Ben Carson:

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson opened a recent Cabinet meeting with a prayer, noting that separation of church and state “doesn’t mean that they cannot work together to promote godly principles.” No one but a maniacal religion hater would find fault with such a conventional observation. But two atheist groups did.

Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), an extreme atheist organization that I recently branded as “haters,” blasted Carson for saying something he manifestly did not say.

Annie Laurie Gaylor of FFRF accused Carson of saying that religious believers have a “monopoly” on positive values. Nonsense. What he said was that secular government agencies and religious church bodies can work together for “godly purposes.” Atheists would not be expected to know what “godly purposes” means, but it is a term that has been commonly used by civil rights leaders to refer to “civil duties.”

Rachel Laser is the head of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, an organization founded as an anti-Catholic institution after World War II. She alleges that Carson, and the Trump administration, want to “privilege a narrow set of religious views above all others.”

There is nothing “narrow” about the religious views the Trump administration is promoting: our Judeo-Christian tradition is rich and broadly based. But should religion be privileged? Of course. It has been from the beginning of the Republic.

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the majority in a religious accommodation case in 2015, noted that Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act “does not demand mere neutrality with regard to religious practices...it gives them favored treatment.” He added, “Title VII requires otherwise-neutral policies to give way to the need for an accommodation.”

That settles the matter.

To show how wildly out-of-touch the atheist organizations are, consider the following statement. “Freedom of religion is essential—and so is access to health care.” So how should the law address these sometimes competing ends? “Current law tries to accommodate both.”

Who said that? The words are taken from a *New York Times* editorial published last year. That puts Americans United and FFRF way out in left field, falling off the bleachers. Thus have they discredited themselves yet again.