

BIDEN'S SECULAR VISION OF FAITH-BASED PROGRAMS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on President Biden's faith-based programs:

President Trump and President Biden could not be more different when it comes to religion. Trump never gave the impression that he was a deeply religious man; Biden has. But Trump delivered on religious liberty, passing many key policies and appointing religion-friendly judges. Biden, on the other hand, is content to check his religion at the church door.

Biden's decision to appoint Melissa Rogers to head the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships is telling. She will also serve as senior director for faith and public policy in the White House Domestic Policy Council. He could not have chosen a more seasoned secularist to steer these faith-based entities.

Rogers may be a Baptist, but it is her secular vision of faith-based programs that will direct her decision-making. This not a matter of speculation. This is her second appointment as director of faith-based programs: Obama chose her to head this initiative in his second term. So we know what we are getting.

When Rogers worked in the Obama White House, her idea of reaching out to faith communities was to invite the Secular Coalition of America to the White House. She welcomed the professional atheists in the name of religious pluralism. As I previously said, this was "akin to welcoming racists in the name of racial harmony."

The clash between religious liberty and the LGBT agenda is well known. It is fair to say that we would not expect an LGBT

activist to champion the cause of religious liberty. Nor would we expect a religious leader to champion the LGBT cause. That's what makes Rogers special. She sides with the homosexual agenda against people of faith.

Does this mean that Rogers would ban Orthodox Jews from exclusively hiring their own to run their day-care centers? Yes it does. Does this mean that she opposes Catholic foster-care programs from following Catholic teachings when deciding whom to place children with in adoptive settings? Yes it does.

Rogers doesn't miss any salient issue. For example, she wants to ban "government-sponsored religious displays." Not sure whether she would approve of the Catholic League's display of a life-size nativity scene in Central Park. After all, it is on public property.

Biden obviously shares Rogers' secular vision, which is why he went back to the well and brought her on board again. In doing so, he is right in step with his previous boss, President Obama. Three months into his first term, the Obama advance team told Georgetown University that the president would not speak there unless they put a drape over religious symbols. Then there was the serious debate over whether to display a manger scene at Christmastime in 2009.

These anecdotes are revealing, but it was secularization of faith-based programs that angered religious leaders. Matters got so bad that on January 15, 2010, I released a statement, "Time to Close Faith-Based Programs." On June 24, 2011, after another round of dumbing-down the religious element of these programs, I issued another news release calling to "Shut Down Faith-Based Programs."

President Biden has a right to appoint whomever he wants to command his faith-based programs. But in choosing Rogers the "devout Catholic" has sent an unmistakable message to people of faith: You lose.

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