

# LENO APOLOGIZES TO ASIANS BUT NOT CATHOLICS

Longtime NBC “Tonight Show” comedian Jay Leno has come out of retirement to apologize to Asian Americans for the bigoted jokes he told about them while hosting the late-night show. But there was none for Catholics.

From 1997 to 2015, Bill Donohue wrote well over a dozen news releases taking Leno to task for insulting Catholics; he only addressed Leno’s most offensive remarks. For example, our files show that in one time period alone, from April 1996 to January 2012, we recorded 37 jokes Leno told about Catholics, some of which were inoffensive and some of which were not (only the latter merited a news release).

Whenever we received a complaint,” Leno recently said, “there would be two sides to the discussion: Either ‘We need to deal with this’ or ‘Screw ’em if they can’t take a joke.’” Regarding his anti-Asian jokes, he now recalls, “Too many times I sided with the latter even when in my heart I knew it was wrong.”

In the late 1990s, Leno concluded he needed “to deal with” a complaint Donohue lodged. He called Donohue in February 1997 to discuss his concerns; Donohue posted a news release following the discussion. He explained to Leno “why jokes about the Eucharist are not synonymous with jokes about Catholic school traditions.” Leno said he understood the distinction. He added that he tells 11,000 jokes a year and may sometimes go over the line. Fair enough. The conversation ended amicably.

Unfortunately, a few years later Leno started in again. Most of his favorite “jokes” portrayed all priests as molesters. Evidently, he took the “Screw ’em if they can’t take a joke”

approach; he never reached out to Donohue again.

All we have ever sought at the Catholic League is parity. We don't ask for preferential treatment vis-a-vis other groups. We simply want a level playing field. Regrettably, that remains an elusive goal.

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## **RULING CLASS IS RACE OBSESSED**

We are getting close to the point where if a white person says he prefers vanilla ice cream to chocolate, he risks being labeled a racist. The ruling class, in particular, is obsessed with this issue, seeing racism lurking behind every decision that adversely affects people of color.

We need to grow up. The first thing we need to do is get rid of the term "people of color." It is meaningless. Asians have little in common with African Americans or Hispanics. Indeed, Asians have little in common with each other: The Chinese do not share a common history or culture with the Japanese, never mind with the Nigerians or Argentineans. The same is true of Hispanics—they vary considerably by their country of origin.

If the goal is to find racism, it is a sure bet it will be found. So when a self-confessed sex addict killed six Asian women in a massage parlor in Atlanta, the account he offered was immediately dismissed. He did not kill because he is a wacko, the ruling class said, but because he hates Asians. But if the massage parlor women had been Irish, what would they have said about that?

On March 20, a 66-year-old Asian man was punched in the face in Manhattan. Without missing a beat, the media said this was one more example of anti-Asian sentiment. But was it? The

offender was a homeless man who walked the streets with a blanket. The assault happened in Chinatown, so the ruling class smelled racism. However, had it happened a few blocks away in the Bowery, no one would have suspected racism.

Last year, Catholic churches were burned and Catholic statues were destroyed—all by left-wing mobs—yet the ruling class never condemned these acts for being anti-Catholic. They are only interested in assaults on “people of color.” But even there, their select interest in anti-Asian crime is more politically motivated than it is a sincere expression of concern. Consider how it is being addressed.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki blamed President Trump for the recent attacks on Asians. Katelyn Beaty, former managing editor of Christianity Today, blamed Christianity: the shooter came from a “purity culture.” Similarly, Freedom From Religion Foundation noted that since the shooter was a Christian, the role his religion played must be considered. As usual, CNN fingered white supremacy as the major cause.

As it turns out, blacks, not white supremacists or white Christians, are disproportionately responsible for violence against Asians. But even here we need to be careful about putting too much stock in race-based theories. After all, most of the crime committed against blacks is done by blacks.

No doubt there are many reasons why Asians are being targeted these days. There is one factor, however, that doesn't command the attention of the ruling class: the extent to which they themselves are responsible.

Everyone knows that Asians, on the whole, excel in school. They succeed so much that they have angered the white ruling class. Indeed, the elites resent the fact that African Americans and Hispanics don't do as well in school, and it is this attitude that accounts for racial quotas in prestigious schools. More important, the ruling class has nurtured a

culture of resentment, one that portrays Asians as unfairly getting ahead.

Last year, Asians in California worked hard to defeat Proposition 16, an initiative to reinstate affirmative action. Had it passed, it would have granted preferential treatment based on race, benefiting blacks and Hispanics, but at the expense of Asians. White liberals outspent their Asian opponents by a ratio of more than 20-1, yet they still lost.

The president of the Asian American Coalition for Education, Yukong Zhao, sent a message to white liberals. "Asian Americans will fight fiercely and defeat your racist policies wherever and whenever tried."

This was an accurate observation—the quotas are racist. It does not matter that Harvard's anti-Asian admissions policy was upheld by the courts. Of course, Harvard has a right to say that it can consider such personality traits as courage and leadership when making determinations for admission. But every honest person knows this is a ruse: such attributes have nothing to do with academic performance; they were chosen to limit Asian attendance.

What's happening at Harvard is happening at Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Cornell, Brown, the University of California and elsewhere. It's also happening in elite public high schools throughout the nation. In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio has done everything he can to keep Asians from taking up too many seats in the city's select public high schools. Perversely, he also works against blacks by trying to destroy charter schools.

The ruling class, which is dominated by white liberals, says their anti-Asian policies have nothing to do with fomenting a culture of resentment against Asians. They would rather blame Christians and white supremacists. But to anyone who has seriously studied this issue, their rationale not only lacks

evidence, it lacks common sense as well.

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## **BIDEN AND THE BISHOPS AT EASTER**

During the presidential campaign season last year, it was obvious that candidate Joe Biden was not having an easy time with some U.S. bishops. After he won the election, that observation was validated. Now that we are in the Easter season, it is undeniably true that the president's relationship with many bishops is rocky, if not seriously strained.

Last summer, Providence Bishop Thomas J. Tobin issued a tweet that was both sarcastic and pointed. "Biden-Harris. First time in awhile that the Democratic ticket hasn't had a Catholic on it. Sad." The dismissal of Biden's professed Catholic status was lost on no one.

A month before the election, Cardinal Raymond Burke said that Biden should not receive Communion, adding that he was not a Catholic "in good standing."

A few weeks after the election, Archbishop José Gomez, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, opined that President-elect Biden supported policies that "attack some fundamental values we hold dear." Noting that it could be confusing to Catholics to see a Catholic in the White House who rejected the Church's teachings on abortion and other matters, Gomez appointed a Working Group, chaired by Detroit Archbishop Allen Vigneron, to help the bishops "navigate" this "difficult and complex situation."

In December, the recently retired archbishop of Philadelphia, Charles Chaput, said that Biden's support for gay marriage and abortion rights meant that he "should stop defining himself as a devout Catholic." On the day he was inaugurated, Biden's press secretary, Jen Psaki, called the president a "devout Catholic."

Archbishop Gomez, speaking for the bishops' conference, also weighed in on inauguration day. "I must point out that the new President has pledged to pursue certain policies that would advance moral evils and threaten human life and dignity, most seriously in the areas of abortion, contraception, marriage, and gender. Of deep concern is the liberty of the Church and the freedom of believers to live according to their consciences."

A week later, Archbishop Joseph Naumann, chairman of the bishops' Pro-Life Committee, teamed up with Bishop David Malloy, the head of the bishops' International Justice and Peace Committee, to take Biden to task for promoting abortion overseas. "It is grievous that one of President Biden's first official acts actively promotes the destruction of human lives in developing nations." They said his executive order "is antithetical to reason, violates human dignity, and is incompatible with Catholic teaching."

In February, Naumann, the archbishop of Kansas City, Kansas, said that Biden "should stop defining himself as a devout Catholic," noting that he is "100% pro-choice on abortion." He accused Biden of "usurping the role of the bishops and confusing people." What should be done? "The bishops need to correct him, as the president is acting contrary to the Catholic faith."

Within days of Naumann's remarks, Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas declared that "Biden is not a real Catholic." In March, Bishop Richard Stika, who heads the Diocese of Knoxville, tweeted that Biden "likes to brag on his Catholic

background when convenient. So very dishonest!"

At the end of March, Bishop Thomas J. Paprocki, who leads the Diocese of Springfield, Illinois, said that Biden "should not present himself" for Communion. He cited Biden's long history of supporting abortion rights, saying that if politicians are "living in a way or holding positions that are contrary to church teaching, then the Minister of Communion has to deny them the sacrament."

Paprocki's comments were followed by Cardinal Burke's. Speaking of Biden, he said that "a person who claims to be Catholic and yet promotes in such an open, obdurate, and aggressive way a crime like procured abortion is in the state, at least, of apostasy." He concluded that the penalty for the "crime of apostasy" is "excommunication."

The bishops, as well as millions of practicing Catholics, are not going to have their concerns about Biden allayed by photos of him clinging to his rosary beads. He cannot at once declare himself to be a "devout Catholic" while at the same time supporting abortion-on-demand, gay marriage, sex transitioning for minors, and the war on religious liberty.

It's time for President Biden to stop living a lie.

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## **NCAA'S ANTI-RELIGIOUS BIAS**

Collegiate sports and professional sports have traditionally been apolitical. They have also been at least tacitly supportive of traditional moral values. No longer. They have now laid anchor with the politics of the left, and that, in turn, has led them to adopt an aggressively secular worldview, one that is increasingly anti-Christian. Consider the NCAA.

On April 12, the NCAA Board of Governors stated that it “firmly and unequivocally supports the opportunity for transgender student-athletes to compete in college sports. This commitment is grounded in our values of inclusion and fair competition.” It also said that it will not hold championship events in locations that do not agree with its position.

Truth to tell, the NCAA does not believe in inclusion and fair competition: It believes in exclusion and unfair competition.

Its policy of restricting championship events to locales that conform to its transgender politics manifestly excludes parts of the country that maintain a Christian view of sex and sexuality. Moreover, there is nothing fair about allowing males to compete against females in athletics.

There is something else going on here that needs to be addressed. Why is the NCAA promoting sex reassignment therapy when it is well known how dangerous it is to the psychological and physical wellbeing of those who undergo it? To this point, are NCAA officials aware that hormone therapy causes physical changes that are irreversible?

Sweden has a comparatively long history of accommodating transgender persons. It does not have an admirable record. In fact, what we know should give us pause. For example, the suicide rate for those who undergo sex reassignment therapy is astonishingly high, and the range and scale of psychiatric disorders are also disturbing. None of this has anything to do with stigma—Sweden enthusiastically embraces the transgender community.

In this country, the American Heart Association has concluded that those who undergo sex reassignment therapy have higher rates of strokes, heart attacks and blood clots. Another study found that females who transition to males have a greater risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes.



In 2018, the Annals of Internal Medicine published the results of a major study conducted by distinguished universities and research institutes on this subject. Those men who switched to female experienced rates of stroke that were “80 to 90 percent higher” than biological women.

Recently, the Mayo Clinic reported on several risk factors for males who transition to female. They include blood clots, high blood pressure, infertility, Type 2 Diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke and breast cancer.

It is a sure bet that the NCAA will distance itself from reports of serious health issues that arise from transgender athletes. They will claim they have nothing to do with them.

In March 2021, the British Journal of Sports Medicine found that male athletes who transition to female maintain their body mass and strength for up to three years, putting natural-born women at a major disadvantage. In other words, once the change takes place, biological women will be hamstrung for years.

Even if there weren't any serious side effects to sex transitioning, there is still the anti-Christian bias that is evident in the NCAA's policy.

For instance, states such as Mississippi, Tennessee, Idaho and Arkansas have banned transgender participation in women's sports, and all of them are overwhelmingly Christian. Is it by accident that none of them are allowed to host an NCAA championship contest? Or is it a direct consequence of the NCAA adopting the anti-Christian animus that colors the politics of the left?

The NCAA commitment to inclusion stops short when it comes to Christian schools. None of the 25 members of the Board of Governors hail from these states, and the two religious-affiliated board members—from Georgetown University and Hamline University—represent schools that are unabashedly

“progressive,” not orthodox.

In general, male athletes are faster and stronger than female athletes. That is why everything from pre-school athletics to the Olympics are sex segregated. Similarly, we have the Special Olympics for the disabled. There should also be a forum for transgender athletes, even if it is limited to regional competition.

The NCAA should stay out of politics, stay away from affirming sex transitioning, and stay clear of imposing punitive measures on Christian states and schools.

### ***CODA***

Florida and Texas lawmakers have passed legislation to bar biological men from competing in women's sports; their governors are expected to sign it into law. Their defiance of the NCAA is welcome.

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## **THE HOLOCAUST'S MORAL LESSONS**

Observing Remembrance Day is special for Jews around the world, but it should also be recognized by those of us who are not Jewish. There are many things that we can learn from this monstrous event, among them being the seminal moral lessons that it bequeathed.

At Nuremberg, the standard Nazi defense was to claim that they were only doing what they were instructed to do. It did not work. The London Charter of the International Military Tribunal determined that “following orders” did not exonerate them. Though the Tribunal did not explicitly invoke natural law—e.g., we know in our heart of hearts that certain acts,

such as the killing of innocents, is wrong—it essentially validated what Aristotle broached and what the Catholic Church later pioneered.

We need to remember this moral lesson because of the prevalence of moral relativism in our culture, the notion that there are no objective truths. This pernicious idea is not new, though it is more widely embraced today—allowing for glaring inconsistencies—than ever before, especially on college campuses. Its legacy is rich with irony.

“There is no such thing as truth, either in the moral or in the scientific sense.” Many professors and their students would fully endorse this view today. Hitler is the author.

Before Hitler there was Nietzsche. He spent his adult life trashing the teachings of the Catholic Church. He is famous for opining, “There are no facts, only interpretations.” The Nazis later agreed. Martin Heidegger also embraced Nietzschean relativism and, not surprisingly, he was a big fan of Hitler.

The idea that there are no objective meanings also marks deconstruction, a school of thought that originated in France in the 1960s; Jacques Derrida is its intellectual father. In this country, his views achieved currency through Paul de Man. Many intellectuals were shocked when it was revealed that de Man had been a Nazi collaborator in Belgium. If they understood the logical consequences of denying moral truths, they wouldn’t have been shocked.

In a survey of college seniors, conducted in 2002, three-quarters of them said they were taught that right and wrong depend “on differences in individual values and cultural diversity.”

When James Q. Wilson, a professor of political science who taught at UCLA and Harvard, discussed the Holocaust with his students, he found no general agreement that the Holocaust itself was a moral horror. “It all depends on your

perspective,” one student said.

Professor Roger Simon, who taught at Hamilton College, experienced the same reaction. He estimated that 10 to 20 percent of his students could not condemn the Holocaust. “Of course I dislike the Nazis,” one student told him, “but who is to say they are morally wrong?”

Even more troubling, philosopher Christina Hoff Sommers found that students at Williams College, who were taught that “all knowledge is a social construct,” doubted the Holocaust even occurred. As one student said, “Although the Holocaust may not have happened, it’s a perfectly reasonable conceptual hallucination.”

The good news is that the reality of objective truth cannot be erased, even in our cancel culture, though admittedly it is harder to voice this verity than ever before. It is incumbent on those of us who know better to point out the flaws inherent in moral relativism. It does not help when we have a president who will not speak to this issue.

The White House statement by President Joe Biden on Holocaust Remembrance Day is embarrassing. Instead of focusing on anti-Semitism, he twice mentions, in a short address, the plight of “LGBTQ+” people; he also denounces “homophobia.” What day does he think he is observing?

It is noble of him to object to “dehumaniz[ing] groups of people,” and to “all forms of dehumanizing bigotry.” But if “LGBTQ+” people are to be cited in this regard, why is there no mention of the most dehumanizing of all behaviors—child abuse in the womb? We all know why: Our “devout Catholic” president champions abortion-on-demand.

The Catholic League salutes Jews all over the world for honorably observing Holocaust Remembrance Day. They prove that this day can be commemorated without exploiting it for political purposes.

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# AMERICAN ATHEISTS GOES BALLISTIC

American Atheists flew off the handle in April when Bill Donohue slammed them for promoting the fiction of “Christian nationalism.”

What set them off was Donohue’s criticism of a report that American Atheists released claiming “Christian nationalists” were a threat to the nation. Donohue noted that although this label is mentioned 12 times in the report, never once is it defined. It’s just bandied about, the way it always is.

“Christian nationalists,” according to the report, are those who believe in such things as religious exemptions, pro-life legislation, school vouchers, homeschooling, and our national motto, “In God We Trust.” Donohue said this was “fairly common stuff.” “In other words,” he continued, “American Atheists thinks that a very large swath of the American public qualify as ‘Christian nationalists.’”

Donohue concluded by saying, “We don’t have to worry about ‘Christian nationalists’—we have to worry about those who are promoting this fiction as a weapon to assault our Judeo-Christian heritage.”

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# BIDEN V. THE BISHOPS

President Biden was in office for only a month when he collided with the bishops. It reached a new level when he issued a statement endorsing the Equality Act; the bill is tied up in the Senate.

Biden sees the Equality Act as granting “dignity and respect” to everyone, making sure that “America lives up to our foundational values of equality and freedom for all.” He says it is needed because “LGBTQ+ Americans” have been denied “full equality.”

This is a dishonest account. If the bill were as benign as Biden says it is, why would the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop’s (USCCB) be so adamantly opposed to it? The bishops have not been fooled. The Equality Act is, without a doubt, the most radical assault on religious liberty, the right to life, and privacy rights ever packaged into one bill.

When Archbishop José Gomez, chairman of the USCCB, warned in November that some of Biden’s policies were troubling, he explicitly mentioned “the passage of the Equality Act.” As the bishops have previously noted, it could gut the autonomy of Catholic hospitals, especially with regards to reproductive issues. It could also be used to compel Catholic schools to grant boys access to the locker rooms and shower facilities of girls.

Gomez said the Equality Act poses “a serious threat to the common good,” but that wasn’t the worst of it. What made it really treacherous was its endorsement by a Catholic president. The chairman of the USCCB rightly observed that “it creates confusion among the faithful about what the Church actually teaches on these questions.”

The Catholic League would object to any president who would promote this bill. That it is being done by a Catholic makes

it all the more disconcerting.

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## **BIDEN'S SECULAR VISION OF 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 is also a 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 is 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 we 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, we 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, we 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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# EQUALITY ACT IS ANTI-CHRISTIAN

According to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the Equality Act is “about ending discrimination”; President Joe Biden agrees. That may be its intent, but its effect is to promote the most comprehensive assault on Christianity ever written into law.

This explains why the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has been fighting this proposed law for years. Most recently it said the Equality Act “would discriminate against people of faith.” The Catholic League and many other civil rights and religious organizations have also sounded the alarm.

The Equality Act has two major goals: it would amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to include sexual orientation and gender identity to the definition of sex; it would also undermine the Religious Freedom Restoration Act by allowing gay rights to trump religious rights.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act was primarily motivated by a desire to end racial segregation. It banned discrimination based on race, sex or national origin. That was it. It said absolutely nothing about sexual orientation, and it certainly didn’t address transgender rights—it wasn’t even a concept in the 1960s. Adding sexual orientation and gender identity to this law not only violates the intent of the legislation, it unduly burdens houses of worship and other religious organizations.

In order to end racial segregation, the 1964 Civil Rights Act banned discrimination in public accommodations. Blacks had historically been denied services in many public facilities, ranging from diners to hotels. The Equality Act goes way beyond this, so much so that it disfigures the meaning of this historic 1964 law.

The Equality Act not only covers homosexuals and transgender persons, it expands public accommodations to include consumer services such as healthcare. In practice this would be a disaster. It would mean, for example, that healthcare providers would be forced to provide hormone therapies and surgical procedures that are required to change the physical characteristics associated with sex changes.

One does not have to be a Catholic healthcare practitioner to register moral and religious objections to this "healthcare" initiative. Will anyone be allowed to voice objections to these procedures, pointing out the long-term physical and mental problems associated with sex reassignment? What about parents who learn that their child wants to switch his or her sex? Will their rights be respected or eviscerated?

It has become increasingly clear that the expansion of rights to transgender women—really biological males who identify as female—has come at the expense of rights for biological females. Take sports.

Boys and men would be allowed to compete in sports with girls and women, thus unfairly altering women's athletics. Females would also lose their privacy rights. These biological males can use the locker rooms, restrooms and shower facilities that have always been reserved for females. None of this has anything to do with why the 1964 Civil Rights Act was passed. There are other problems with this bill that alone should be enough to stop it from ever becoming law.

In 1993, Rep. Nancy Pelosi and Sen. Chuck Schumer co-sponsored

the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA); it was signed by President Bill Clinton. This was a major victory for religious liberty. But now Pelosi and Schumer regret their vote, even to the point of supporting the Equality Act, knowing full well that it exempts itself from RFRA! This is perverse. There could be no more serious undercutting of religious liberty than what they are proposing.

It would mean that Catholics, evangelicals, Orthodox Jews, Mormons, Muslims and many other religious communities could not raise religious liberty objections to any of the aforementioned rights of transgender women. In effect, religious entities would be secularized.

For example, if the Equality Act were to become law, Catholic foster care programs would be shut down. They would either have to agree to allow two men to adopt children—a clear violation of Church teachings—or lose federal funding. This is the kind of “gotcha” type element that makes this bill so pernicious.

Currently, Catholic hospitals can legally refuse to perform abortions. Under the Equality Act, they would either lose federal funding or be forced to get into the abortion business. That is because refusing abortion services would be declared “pregnancy” discrimination.

Without the religious liberty protections afforded by RFRA, virtually every religious institution—from houses of worship to schools—would be expected to fall in line with this radical legislation. Catholic schools, for instance, would be expected to change their teachings on sexual ethics to suit the radical LGBT agenda.

It is hard for the public to understand, especially Catholics, why such allegedly “devout Catholics” as Biden and Pelosi would want to champion such patently anti-Christian legislation as the Equality Act.

We contacted the entire Congress and asked our email subscribers to do the same.

We understand the bill has stalled in the Senate, and because it is a non-budgetary item it would take 60 votes to pass. That will not be an easy sell. No matter, we know Biden's thoughts on this legislation, and that does not bode well for religious liberty.

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## **BECERRA IS A MENACE TO LIFE AND LIBERTY**

Xavier Becerra was President Biden's worst nominee for a Cabinet post. On March 18, he was confirmed as Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). We did our best to fight him, pressing legislators to do their job. The Senate voted 50-49 to confirm him.

The man is a menace to life and liberty and has no business serving in this capacity. Here are 16 reasons why we opposed Becerra.

### *Beginning of Life*

1) It would be impossible to find a more enthusiastic advocate of abortion-on-demand. While a majority of Americans support legal abortion, it does so with important qualifications: it does not support abortion for any reason and at any time during pregnancy. As such, Becerra is out of the mainstream. Indeed, he is an extremist. That is why he secures a 100% rating from NARAL and Planned Parenthood and a 0% score from National Right to Life.

2) Becerra's lust for abortion even allows him to support

partial-birth abortion, a practice which allows the abortionist to crush the skull of a baby who is 80% born so that the child can exit the woman's birth canal.

3) For all the talk about allowing pregnant women the right to choose, Becerra is on record seeking to prevent them from choosing life. To be exact, when he was the California Attorney General, he lost in the U.S. Supreme Court in his attempt to effectively close down crisis pregnancy centers across the state.

In 2016, in *National Institute of Family & Life Advocates v. Becerra*, the high court ruled against his mandate forcing abortion-alternative centers to post a message saying the state will pay for a woman's abortion. This not only negated the reason these centers were founded, it constituted "compelled speech," and was therefore unconstitutional under the First Amendment. In short, Becerra's idea of freedom to choose is limited to choosing abortion over adoption.

4) If someone who assaults a pregnant woman winds up killing her unborn child, that would seem to make him a criminal. But not to Becerra. As a congressman, he voted against a bill that would criminalize the killing of an unborn child during the commission of another crime. According to Becerra, the unborn child has no rights that the law needs to respect.

5) Though it is hard to believe, there are underground railroads run by abortion extremists that literally transport minors to states where they can easily get an abortion. This is a particularly obscene form of human trafficking that makes even pro-abortion politicians wince. Not Becerra. He voted against a ban on this hideous practice.

6) Becerra proved himself to be a pro-abortion zealot once again when he brought charges against pro-life activists who went undercover to film Planned Parenthood officials trafficking in aborted baby parts. He brought felony charges against them. His decision was so radical that even the abortion-rights Los Angeles Times criticized him for "disturbing overreach." In 2017, a judge dismissed 14 of the 15 charges as legally insufficient.

## *Genetic Engineering*

7) Embryonic stem cell research, unlike other kinds of stem cell research, is a life and death issue. Science tells us that nascent human life is evident at the embryonic stage, making it impossible to do embryonic stem cell research without killing the embryo. This does not matter to Becerra, which explains his vote in Congress to approve it.

8) Human cloning is an issue that most lawmakers and judges have declined to address. Their reluctance is grounded in the moral and legal dilemmas associated with making a genetically identical copy of a human being in the laboratory. Becerra, however, is different. When he was in Congress, he approved human cloning for research purposes.

## *End of Life*

9) It makes sense that if someone does not value innocent human life at its beginning that he would not value it at its end. Becerra is a classic example of this mentality. When he was Attorney General in California, his strong support for doctor-assisted suicide won him the kudos of the most radical proponents of this cause.

## *Religious Liberty*

10) Conscience rights are at the very heart of religious liberty. To put it mildly, Becerra is not a fan. When those who owned Hobby Lobby were pleading their case, invoking their conscience rights as grounds for objecting to paying for birth control in their healthcare plan, Becerra maintained that such rights should not matter. He said it was one thing to hold to religious beliefs, quite another to act on them. Fortunately, the U.S. Supreme Court did not ratify such contorted logic and sustained the conscience rights of the business owners.

11) Few Attorneys General in the United States fought more ferociously to deny the Little Sisters of the Poor their religious rights than Becerra. The nuns objected to being

forced to pay for abortion-inducing drugs, contraception and sterilization in their healthcare plan. At every stage, Becerra hounded them. He even filed lawsuits against the Trump administration for shielding the nuns from the HHS mandate passed under the Obama administration.

12) Should a baker be forced against his will to make a wedding cake for two men planning to marry? The owner did not object to selling his products to gay men. What he found objectionable, on religious grounds, was being ordered to inscribe a wedding cake for two homosexuals; to do so would force him to affirm their status. Becerra said too bad for him—his religious convictions should be overridden. This explains why he filed an amicus brief on the part of the gay men. But once again, he lost.

13) Practicing Catholics, among others, do not believe that people of the same sex should be adoptive parents. Anyone is free to disagree, but respect for the diversity that Catholicism affords suggests that Catholic foster care agencies should be entitled to practice what they preach. Becerra disagrees. He is so wedded to the LGBT agenda that as California Attorney General he even supported a law to deny California public agencies, public universities and boards the right to fund work-related trips to states that respect the religious liberty interests of foster care agencies.

14) In January 2017, at his confirmation hearings as California Attorney General, Becerra stunned lawyers when he said that it was one thing to respect the religious rights of individuals, quite another to extend these rights to organizations. Thus did he try to marginalize houses of worship, faith-based organizations and religious non-profits. It doesn't get more absurd, or constitutionally wrongheaded, than this.

15) The Equality Act is not law but it is strongly supported by Biden. If passed, it would be the most serious assault on religious liberty ever enacted. As a congressman, Becerra was a co-sponsor of this bill. In the name of abortion and LGBT rights, it would not only devastate the autonomy of Catholic

hospitals, it would ensure that boys who claim to be girls could compete against biological girls in sports. It would even allow them to shower with girls. When religious liberty objections are made, Becerra dismisses them outright.

16) Over the past year, California Governor Gavin Newsom imposed the most draconian Covid-19 restrictions on houses of worship in the nation. His limitations on occupancy have been so severe as to abolish the rights of churchgoers. Becerra, of course, was delighted to enforce these strictures.

For all of these reasons, it would be hard to think of a more unfit person in the United States to serve as Secretary of HHS than Xavier Becerra. His positions on life and religious liberty make him an outlier and should have automatically disqualified him from serving in this capacity. But Biden got his way.