

IS SHARIA A FRIEND OR FOE OF LIBERTY?

[Bill Donohue](#)

Sharia is the law that is derived from Islamic texts and traditions. Whether it is more of a friend or foe of liberty is disputed, but both sides can't be right.

On March 20, the *New York Times* ran an editorial taking aim at President Trump's "Islamophobia." Without assessing its merits, what interests the Catholic League is whether its interpretation of Sharia is correct. It defines it as "a set of principles, based on the Quran, that guide life for Muslims, much as biblical precepts guide Christians and Jews." "Extreme versions" exist, it allows, "including Afghanistan and Iran."

Agreeing with the *Times* is the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Muslim civil rights organization.

Sharia, it says, "plays the same role in Islam that canon law plays for Catholics and halacha plays for Jews, a voluntary moral compass, not an alternative legal code." It goes on to say that "Like other faith communities in the US and elsewhere, we see no inherent conflict between normative values of Islam and the US Constitution and Bill of Rights."

A week prior to the *Times* editorial, Rep. Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House, expressed his concern about those who "come to a country and not assimilate but to impose Sharia law." The problem there, he notes, is that "Sharia law is in conflict with the Constitution."

Agreeing with Johnson is the European Court of Human Rights.

In 2003, the Grand Chamber ruled that "It is difficult to

declare one's respect for democracy and human rights while at the same time supporting a regime based on sharia, which clearly diverges from Convention values..." Similarly, according to Islamic scholar Robert Spencer, Sharia law is "contrary to America's founding principles and may violate federal law and the Constitution."

Islamic texts may not settle the issue, but they do not seem to support the position taken by the *Times* and CAIR.

The Quran (5:44) declares that failing to "judge by what Allah has revealed" makes one a disbeliever. This would appear to render the U.S. Constitution subordinate to Sharia. Furthermore, the Traveller, a classic Islamic manual of Islamic law, notes that "Jihad is a communal obligation." At best, this affirms the need for a militaristic struggle; at worst it is a call to arms.

Leaving aside the scholarly debate, what matters in the end is how Sharia is interpreted by those who implement it.

Freedom House annually reports on the state of freedom worldwide, rating every country as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. Almost all the countries with a Christian majority are rated Free or Partly Free, and all but one with a Muslim majority (Senegal) are rated Not Free or Partly Free. That says it all.

It is undeniably true that the more fully Sharia is implemented, the greater the threat to civil liberties. In other words, in its purist form, Sharia is wholly incompatible with the tenets of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. But Christianity is not.

The three nations which have full Sharia implementation are Iran, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. They enforce Sharia as the sole or primary source of all law, including Islamic text legal punishments (amputation, flogging, stoning) and capital penalties for apostasy, blasphemy, adultery, and theft.

Islamic Republic of Iran

Freedom House:

Iran's constitution requires all laws to conform to Twelver Shia (Ja'fari) Sharia. Islamic text legal punishments are authorized and regularly applied. Iran's constitution recognizes only Zoroastrians, Jews, and "Christians by birth" (Armenians, Assyrians, etc.) as protected minorities with limited rights. All others, plus converts, are treated as threats to the Islamic state. Apostasy and blasphemy are punishable by death.

- Iran holds regular elections, but they are not free or fair. The unelected Guardian Council vets and disqualifies candidates, and real power lies with the Supreme Leader and unelected institutions that control the security forces, judiciary, and economy. Media are heavily censored, journalists are arrested or killed, and independent. The judiciary is not independent and serves as a tool of repression: arbitrary arrests, torture, unfair trials, and executions are common.

Afghanistan

Freedom House:

- Since overthrowing the elected republican government in August 2021, the Taliban has ruled Afghanistan as an Islamic Emirate with Sharia as the sole legal framework. The Taliban leader exercises unlimited authority by decree, with no constitution in place. Islamic text legal punishments are enforced nationwide. No non-Islamic public worship is permitted, and apostasy carries a death sentence. Women are almost entirely excluded from public life, including education and employment.
- All political parties and opposition groups are banned. There are no elections, no representative bodies, and no

independent media.

The conclusion is obvious: Sharia is the enemy of liberty. We enjoy our freedoms precisely because of our Judeo-Christian heritage.

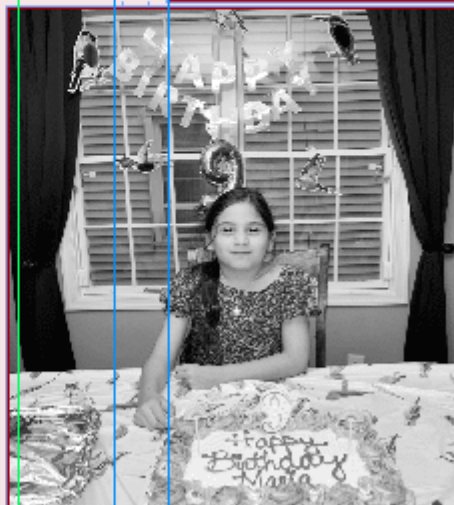
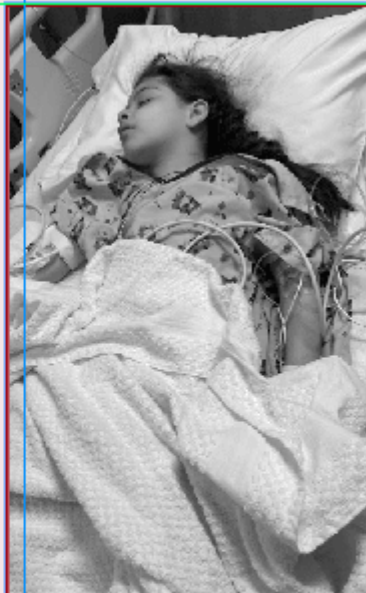
Why Mamdani Mentioned Palestinians in His St. Patrick's Day Message

Bill in the News (New York Times): "Bill Donohue...criticized the mayor, who is Muslim, saying he had turned a St. Patrick's Day message into 'a radical Muslim rant.'" [READ MORE HERE](#)

Catholic Connection

Bill in the News (Catholic Connection): Bill discusses the USCCB's decision to prohibit transgender care in Catholic hospitals. To listen, click [here](#).

MIRACULOUS RECOVERY PHOTOS



Catholic Connection

Bill in the News (Catholic Connection): Bill discusses newly elected, Pope Leo XIV, with Teresa Tomeo. To listen, click [here](#). (Bill's segment begins at 50:55)

OPEN LETTER TO DC BISHOP WHO LECTURED TRUMP

January 22, 2025

Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde
Episcopal Church House
Mount St. Alban
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Bishop Budde:

At the January 21 prayer service at Washington National Cathedral that featured President Trump, you mentioned that “people in our country are scared now.” You singled out people who “may not be citizens or have the proper documentation,” as well as LGBTQ persons. These people “fear for their lives.” You then made a plea to “find compassion.”

Your commitment to compassion is noble, but it is misplaced.

I work in New York City, and I witness daily how many New Yorkers are “scared” and “fear for their lives.” They are

afraid of being mugged, beaten, raped and killed, often by people who have crashed our borders, people you refer to as lacking “proper documentation.” They, and in some cases their surviving families, are deserving of compassion. More than that, they are deserving of justice, and that means that illegal alien criminals must be apprehended and deported.

You are right to call attention to violence against LGBTQ persons. They have every right to be “scared” and “fear for their lives.” What you don’t mention is that the people who are most likely to victimize them are people just like them. In other words, it is not heterosexual guys who are beating up on gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender persons—it is people in their own ranks. It is called “intimate partner violence,” and the studies show how prevalent it is among LGBTQ persons.

In 2022, Psycom Pro, a psychiatry resource for clinicians, concluded that “More than half of transgender individuals experience partner violence or gender identity abuse.”

In 2020, seven experts published a study in the American Journal of Public Health on this subject and concluded that “Transgender individuals experience a dramatically higher prevalence of IPV [intimate partner violence] victimization compared with cisgender individuals [those who accept their sex identity], regardless of sex assigned at birth.”

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence reviewed the literature on this subject and found that “43.8% of lesbian women and 61.1% of bisexual women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime, as opposed to 35% of cisgender women.” It also found that transgender individuals experienced the highest rate of intimate partner violence.

The Williams Institute, a think tank at UCLA Law, reviewed a number of studies on this subject. One of them found that

“31.1% of transgender people and 20.4% of cisgender people had ever experienced IPV or dating violence.” It also said that three studies concluded that the lifetime intimate partner sexual violence prevalence among transgender people ranged from “25.0% to 47.0%.”

Even in sympathetic pop culture magazines, such as Portland Monthly, it is acknowledged that “statistically speaking, the most common perpetrators of violence against trans women are domestic partners.”

In short, misdirected compassion is not virtuous. You need to make a public statement addressing the fallacies of your remarks.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

BIDEN HONORS SOROS

On January 4, President Biden gave the Medal of Freedom to George Soros. It is the nation’s highest civilian award, given to “individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public or private endeavors.” The White House said those who received the award are “great leaders because they are good people who have made extraordinary contributions to their country and the world.”

The truth is that George Soros has done more to destroy western civilization and the United States, in particular, than any single person in the world. An inveterate anti-

Catholic bigot, his anti-law enforcement policies have impoverished and punished legions of innocent black Americans. A self-hating Jew, he has been condemned by Jewish leaders in the United States and Israel.

Soros has sought to destabilize America by supporting open borders, welcoming those who have illegally entered the country. His embrace of Black Lives Matter, which has openly said it wants to destroy the nuclear family, is of a piece with his attacks on the criminal justice system. He funded the most radical district attorneys in the nation, the result of which has been a dramatic increase in crime by repeat offenders.

Soros' Open Society Institute has waged war on Catholics for decades. It funds many dissident organizations, activist groups that falsely claim to be Catholic. They include Catholics for Choice, a pro-abortion, anti-Catholic letterhead funded by the likes of Soros. He was also the money behind Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and Catholics United, two front-groups set up by

Clinton aide John Podesta to create a "Catholic Spring" revolution in the Church.

Though Soros is Jewish, he has been accused by the ADL of blaming anti-Semitism in Israel on the Israeli government, and the Jerusalem Post has accused him of weakening support for Israel in the Democratic Party. The editor of the New Republic, Martin Peretz, called him "a cog in the Hitlerite wheel."

As a young man in Hungary, Soros became a Nazi collaborator. In a "60 Minutes" interview he admitted that he helped confiscate property from Jews. He told Steve Kroft that he never regretted doing so. When asked if this was difficult, Soros said, "Not, not at all." Stunned, Kroft said, "No feeling of guilt?" "No" came the reply.

Biden has been telling us for four years how much he supports DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion). His decision to honor George Soros, the world's most influential anti-Catholic bigot, shows what a liar this "devout Catholic" really is.

TAKING AIM AT BISHOP FINN

This ad, written by Bill Donohue, was rejected by the Kansas City Star, without explanation. The close relationship between the newspaper and SNAP is disturbing, but to turn down \$25,000 is still surprising. The Star can impose a gag rule on us, but it cannot control us. We intend to let everyone in Kansas City, Missouri know about this matter.

TAKING AIM AT BISHOP FINN

There is nothing wrong with asking legitimate questions about the way Bishop Robert Finn handled the Fr. Shawn Ratigan matter. But there is something wrong about not asking legitimate questions about the politics of those out to sink him. First, let's recap what actually happened.

Last December, crotch-shot pictures of young girls, fully clothed, were found on Fr. Ratigan's computer; there was one photo of a naked girl. The very next day, the Diocese contacted a police officer and described the naked picture; a Diocesan attorney was shown it. Because the photo was not sexual in nature, it was determined that it did not constitute child pornography. This explains why the Independent Review Board was not contacted—there was no specific allegation of child abuse.

When Fr. Ratigan discovered that the Diocese had learned of his fetish, he attempted suicide. When he recovered, he was

immediately sent for psychiatric evaluation. It is important to note that Bishop Finn, who never saw any of the photos, did this precisely because he was considering the possibility of removing Fr. Ratigan from ministry. After evaluation (the priest was diagnosed as suffering from depression, but was not judged to be a pedophile), Fr. Ratigan was placed in a spot away from children and subjected to various restrictions. After he violated them, the Diocese called the cops. That's when more disturbing photos were found. At the same time, Bishop Finn contacted an attorney to do an independent investigation into this matter.

Fair-minded persons may question whether the Diocese was too lenient, but unless there is reason to believe that a crime has been committed, there is no cause for contacting the authorities. Yet the Diocese—unlike the officials of other organizations faced with the same situation—contacted a police officer and a lawyer immediately.

[Note: in 2007, a huge investigation by the Associated Press of teacher sexual misconduct revealed that Missouri school districts were guilty of “backroom deals” that allowed molesting teachers to “quietly move on.” So where is the dust-up about this? Where are the calls for grand jury probes?] Why, then, the attempt to get Bishop Finn?

What's driving the anti-Finn campaign is politics. The major players are the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) and attorneys Rebecca Randles and Jeffrey Anderson. Their goal is not justice. Nor is it child welfare. Their goal is to sabotage the Catholic Church.

Here's how it works. Anderson, who is worth hundreds of millions, helps to fund SNAP. SNAP works with Randles, a protégé of Anderson, and together they find new “victims”—adults who just now seem to remember being groped decades ago. Indeed, upwards of 20 new lawsuits have been filed since Ratigan was nailed in May. SNAP, ever coy, then holds a press conference, making wild accusations.

Importantly, no one in Finn's office is prepared to comment *because Randles has yet to file suit*. In other words, SNAP and Randles ambush the Diocese, garnering a high media profile, and then press the authorities to indict Bishop Finn.

What is SNAP? It sells itself as a victims' advocacy organization that represents those who have been abused by any authority. This is a lie. It concentrates almost exclusively on the Catholic Church. How do I know? For one, just check its website. More revealing, last July I asked trusted sources to register at a SNAP conference outside of Washington, D.C. The entire event was dedicated to discussing ways to undermine what they called the "evil institution," namely the Catholic Church. No one from SNAP has contested a single comment attributed to the speakers as described in my report, "SNAP Exposed."

Here's how SNAP manipulates the media. At the meeting, attendees were instructed how to hold a press conference: "Display holy childhood photos"; Use "feeling words"; Say, "I was scared" or "I was suicidal"; "Be sad, not mad"; "If you don't have compelling holy childhood photos, we can provide you with photos of other kids that can be held up for the cameras." The unmistakable goal is to feign sorrow and stage the event.

SNAP's director, David Clohessy, began his activist career by working for ACORN, the now discredited far-left wing organization. In 1988, while watching the movie, "Nuts," he had a revelation: his memory exploded with tales of being molested by a priest 20 years earlier. Three years later, his attorney, Jeffrey Anderson, sued the local diocese; working with Anderson for the first time was Rebecca Randles. The time gap in both instances is striking.

Clohessy wants Bishop Finn behind bars for not moving fast enough on this matter. But when Clohessy was working for SNAP in the 1990s, he refused to contact the authorities when he

learned of a man who was sexually abusing young men. That man was his brother, Kevin, a Catholic priest. Feeling conflicted, David wondered, "he's my brother; he's an abuser. Do I treat him like my brother? Do I treat him like an abuser?" He chose the former. "He [Kevin] told me he was getting help, getting treatment." This is understandable. What is not understandable is his outrage at bishops when they voice the same sentiment about their brother priests. The duplicity is sickening.

Is SNAP really upset about child porn, or just when a priest is involved? Dr. Steve Taylor is a psychiatrist who is in prison for downloading child porn on his computer. He is not just an ordinary shrink with a sick appetite—he worked for SNAP for years. Before his conviction, Barbara Blaine, the founder of SNAP, intervened on his behalf and wrote to the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners asking them to give consideration to Taylor's alleged humanitarian work—she didn't want him to lose his license. Had Taylor been a priest, her reaction would have been vengeful.

At the July SNAP conference, Blaine spoke about priests who believe they have been mistreated by the authorities and want to countersue. She said they may have "a legal right," but they "don't have a moral right to do so." This is what SNAP means by justice. When lawsuits were flying in 2002, after revelations about the Boston scandal, many priests who claimed innocence decided to countersue. SNAP actually declared such lawsuits "brutal" and "un-Christian."

This one-way street favored by SNAP also manifests itself in other ways. While it always protects the names of its accusers, it demands that we know the names of accused priests, including those who are dead. Moreover, it will not release the names of its donors. Yet they condemn the Catholic Church for lacking transparency.

In August, SNAP accused New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan of covering up an alleged incident involving a teenage girl who

said she was “inappropriately touched” by an 87-year-old priest. Dolan knew nothing about it until the cops were called. SNAP has yet to apologize. It also accused Dolan of “acting secretly” about a previous case where a priest was suspended. But Dolan was not in New York at the time—he was the Archbishop of Milwaukee. Moreover, at the SNAP conference, Dolan was accused of shielding 55 molesting priests. This is libelous. But it is what we have come to expect from these people—a SNAP official once spat in the Archbishop’s face.

SNAP is so anti-priest that its Kentucky chapter leader once lobbied state authorities to warn residents when Catholic priests who have been accused, *but not convicted*, of sexual abuse move into their neighborhood. Just priests. A few years ago, in California, a boy’s father alleged that his son had been abused by a priest in the 1990s. The case was dismissed. The alleged victim, now a grown man, said it never happened. When SNAP then learned that this innocent priest was appointed to a sex abuse panel, it went ballistic. In SNAP’s mind, once a priest is charged, he’s guilty, no matter what the verdict says.

The reason why SNAP wants to bring down Bishop Finn is because it always shoots for the top. In September, Clohessy admitted that his goal is to bring down the pope. “We’re not naïve,” he said. “We don’t think the pope will be hauled off in handcuff’s next week or month. But by the same token, our long-term chances are excellent.” This kind of thinking explains why SNAP recently blasted the Vatican’s new guidelines on sex abuse *the day before they were released*.

SNAP is so hateful that it even endorses Gestapo-like tactics used against the Catholic Church. Last year, the world was stunned to learn of a Belgium police raid on Church facilities, looking for evidence of wrongdoing. The bishop was detained for over nine hours; the police even went so far as to drill into the tombs of two deceased cardinals looking for documents. And what did Barbara Blaine say? “If children are

to be protected, the actions of Belgian law enforcement must become the norm, not the aberration.”

While fascistic means are acceptable to SNAP, it knows it can't get away with that in the U.S. So it elects to work with those who are flooding the Diocese with lawsuits. This way it can drain its resources, tie up the courts and seek to turn the public against the Catholic Church.

Randles was one of the lawyers who was behind the bundled lawsuits that led to a 2008 settlement with the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. Those lawsuits included claims dating back to just after World War II. Now she's back, representing clients who just now seem to recall being abused many moons ago. The timing couldn't be more convenient. The SNAP-led crowd is now claiming that the settlement, which held that the Diocese had to take steps to curb abuse, was violated. Their proposed remedy represents the fulfillment of their dreams: they want the Diocese to cede control of its operations.

Between 2009-2010 (the latest years for which data are available), there was a 42 percent increase in false allegations against priests. So-called repressed memory figures prominently in these bogus charges. A few years ago, researchers at Harvard Medical School studied this phenomenon and concluded that it has no scientific basis—it is purely a cultural invention. Harvard psychology professor Richard J. McNally also studied this subject. “The notion that the mind protects itself by banishing the most disturbing, terrifying events is psychiatric folklore.” He added, “The more traumatic and stressful something is, the less likely someone is to forget it.”

Randles is now charging that not only did the Diocese know what was happening, and did nothing about it, those in charge actually *encouraged it*. Here are some examples, all filed recently. In the case of Fr. Stephen Wise, the suit charges that “The Diocese ratified Wise's sexual abuse of the

plaintiff by encouraging him to commit the abuse and encouraging him to continue committing the abuse.” In the Fr. Michael Tierney case, the suit claims, “the sexual abuse of minors became a collective objective of the Diocese.” And in the Fr. Mark Honhart case, the suit also claims, “the sexual abuse of minors became a collective objective of the Diocese.”

In one sense, this kind of language is useful: it is positive proof of the anti-Catholic mindset. In their vision, the Catholic Church is the font of all evil, with the pope at command central. All of this might have been believable if it had been said by nativists 150 years ago, or by those in the asylum today, but to think that such malicious fiction is being trumpeted in 2011—by lawyers no less—is mind-boggling.

Clohessy recently wrote to the prosecutors of Clay County and Jackson County. “Jailing Finn, once his guilt has been determined or admitted, would be an unprecedented and effective step toward preventing future clergy sex crimes and cover ups, in Kansas City and elsewhere.” So Bishop Finn either admits his guilt or is found guilty. There is no other option. That’s exactly the way they think.

It is incorrect to assume that Randles and company are motivated mostly by money. No, their real goal is control—the control of the Catholic Church. Randles wants the Diocese to accept third-party supervision of these matters. She is asking for “continuing supervision,” explaining that she is “looking for a mechanism to enforce the provisions of the settlement agreement from this day forward, so that there is some form of continuing watch-dogging.” It doesn’t get much plainer than this.

The Catholic League stands by Bishop Finn without reservation. What’s at stake goes well beyond Kansas City. It should be clear by now that the ultimate goal is to have the Catholic Church cede its autonomy to the state. It’s what the Catholic haters have long wanted, and are now using Bishop Finn to dig

a hole in the First Amendment.



Bill Donohue

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ARCHBISHOP O'MALLEY TARGETED BY MEDDLERS

Boston Archbishop Sean O'Malley has come under increasing criticism for his decision to close sixty-five parishes in the archdiocese. Addressing this issue today is Catholic League president William Donohue:

“No one wants to see a parish closed. The ties that Catholics have to the parish are thicker than blood, and it is for this reason that no bishop takes any delight in restructuring his parishes. But in the real world of demographic changes, financial constraints and a shortage of priests, tough decisions must be made. To suggest there is another way is almost always delusional.

“It is one thing for long-time members of a parish to experience anguish when they are about to lose their church, quite another when meddlers intervene to foster their own agenda. This is exactly what is happening in Boston: Voice of

the Faithful (VOTF), and Massachusetts Secretary of State William Galvin, are obstructing the process to score political points.

“It is obvious to just about everyone that VOTF is spent: it is an organization in search of a mission. Born of the homosexual scandal in the Church, the group has been left in the lurch ever since the Church started to reform itself. Furthermore, it does not exaggerate to say that Archbishop O’Malley’s brilliant leadership has functionally disabled VOTF, making it an increasingly irrelevant body, That is why it is seizing on the issue of church restructuring— one that has absolutely nothing to do with its alleged interest in combating sexual abuse. Things have descended so far that VOTF must now resort to fielding endorsements from notorious Catholic bashers (e.g., Steve Gushee of the *Palm Beach Post*).

“Regarding Secretary of State William Galvin, some clerk needs to introduce him to the establishment clause of the First Amendment. For a state official to busy himself in the internal affairs of the Catholic Church is to tread on dangerous grounds. As a private citizen, and as a Catholic layman, Galvin has every right to opine on any religious matter he wants. But he had better keep his status as a government official at bay.”

SUPREME COURT TO HEAR PLEDGE CASE

On March 24, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the Pledge of Allegiance case. The Catholic League, together with the Thomas More Law Center, has filed an amicus

curiae brief in support of the Elk Grove Unified School District that seeks to uphold the recitation of the Pledge in the schools. Challenging the school district is Michael Newdow; he objects to the words "under God" in the Pledge.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the case that is before the Supreme Court:

"It cannot seriously be maintained that the words 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance constitute the establishment of a religion. Surely there is a dramatic difference between the collective acknowledgment of our religious heritage and the formal establishment of a religion. While it is not surprising that Mr. Newdow cannot understand the difference—he is a devout atheist—the American people have every right to expect that the high court can make such a distinction.

"Just as it makes sense not to force students to say the Pledge, it makes sense not to deny those who choose to recite it from doing so. As our brief states, 'This Court should take the opportunity to affirm once and for all that a voluntary nonsectarian invocation of God in public, especially in the public schools, does not violate the Establishment Clause, and is in fact Constitutionally consistent with our nation's history and religious heritage.' Indeed, if the high court were to censor the words 'under God' from the Pledge, it would send an unmistakably hostile message to the 94 percent of Americans who believe in God. That the Bill of Rights secures rights for minorities is true, but it is also true that the majority does not lose its rights simply because it is the majority.

"Ultimately, what is at stake is the right of Americans to celebrate their religious heritage on public property without fear of state reprisal."