

CPAC IS A DISGRACE



Bill Donohue comments on the decision by the American Conservative Union (ACU), host of the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), to invite American Atheists to this

year's conference; the decision has since been rescinded:

It took Brent Bozell, president of the Media Research Center, to set off the alarms at CPAC. But it is too late: Bozell is right to say that it makes no difference that the ACU and CPAC have backed down. I have my own reasons for agreeing with him.

In 1989, I spoke at the 16th annual CPAC conference on the subject, "Liberty and the ACLU." Even back then, it was clear to me that conservative principles were being compromised, which is why I wound up debating an empty chair: after Ira Glasser, the head of the ACLU, refused to debate me, I was disinvited. Were it not for a protest by Reed Irving of Accuracy in Academia, and the support I received from The Heritage Foundation (I had just completed a year there as a Bradley Resident Scholar), the second invitation would not have been granted.

Regarding this latest incident, a spokesperson for ACU said that it withdrew the invitation to American Atheists because of the "divisive and inappropriate language" of its president, David Silverman. In other words, had Silverman used more temperate language, the invitation would still stand. Hate speech is hate speech, whether delivered with invective or polish.

There is more than incompetence at work here. CPAC is a disgrace. They should have learned by now that big tents have a way of collapsing in the middle.