

# MENORAH PULLED FROM CO-OP LOBBY—AGAIN!

[Bill Donohue](#)

The attempt to discriminate against Christians at a cooperative apartment complex in Westchester County, New York failed. Those who run the cooperative allowed the display of a menorah in the common area, but not a nativity scene. They failed because we intervened.

What makes this story so bizarre is that the same issue took place last Christmas, and in the same building in Larchmont, New York! The only difference is that the building management company is new and the resident who complained is new. But the facts are the same.

I wrote to the new Property Manager company, recounting the story from last year. I said the display of a menorah was “commendable.” But I hastened to add, “What is not commendable is the refusal to display a nativity scene. Indeed, it is illegal.”

My letter was dated December 10 and we gave them until December 15 to either display the nativity scene, along with the menorah, or take down the menorah. The letter was emailed to them on the morning of December 10 (and sent in the overnight mail) and that very afternoon they removed the menorah, and a Christmas tree.

They could have settled this issue by simply displaying the crèche, but their idea of neutrality was to ban both the menorah and the manger scene. We prefer the tolerant alternative; they prefer the intolerant option.

“The menorah, like the crèche,” I wrote, “is a religious symbol; the Christmas tree is a secular symbol. This is not my

opinion—this is the interpretation afforded by the U.S. Supreme Court. So you can either allow all religious symbols to be displayed, or you can deny both of them: You cannot chose one and deny the other.”

Ironically, it was last year’s confrontation with a different management group that ran this cooperative that led us to contact over 2,000 Homeowners Associations (HOA) in November, alerting them to the religious rights of their residents. We never thought we would have to swing into action again to stop discrimination against Christians in the same cooperative.

The Fair Housing Act of 1968 makes it clear that if one religious symbol is displayed in a common area, others must also be allowed. Supreme Court decisions on the display of religious symbols on public property are also accommodating. This is a serious religious liberty issue.

It is a sad commentary on the co-op board of this property that they thought they could get away with their bigoted stunt two years in a row. But their determination to discriminate was met with our equally determined decision to stop them.