

# NEW VICTIMS: ATHEISTS AND WITCHES

For the first time in American history, a group of professed atheists were given a reception in the White House. In nearby Fairfax County, a self-proclaimed witch pressed Virginia authorities to allow her to perform marriage ceremonies. All this in a country that is 86% Christian.

In May, Maureen Shea, associate director of the White House Office of Public Liaison, welcomed Ron Barrier of American Atheists to discuss the ambitions of his group. The meeting, which was also attended by a White House counsel, went well. Barrier exclaimed that it was “a very positive” first step. He said he wanted atheists to have “a place at the table” and an end to their “exclusion” from government. Barrier also expressed opposition to the Religious Freedom Amendment, a proposed constitutional measure that has been endorsed by the Catholic League.

Meanwhile, Rosemary Kooiman wants Virginia authorities to allow her pagan religion, Wicca, a place at their government table; she wants to officiate at marriage ceremonies, something she has been able to do in Maryland. The witch has *bones*, candles, powders and swords in her “church” basement, artifacts that are integral to her pagan rites.

The Catholic League’s take on all this is to recommend that Kooiman lend Clinton officials her broom—there is much to clean up—and the White House, in turn, should ask Barrier to convert Kooiman to atheism, thus nixing her claim to religious status. Make no *bones* about it, this idea has merit.