

OBAMA: RIGHTS STEM FROM THE STATE

Recently, President Barack Obama set off a firestorm after he gave a few speeches this fall; the president quoted from the Declaration of Independence, omitting any reference to God.

At an October fundraiser in Rockville, Maryland, he spoke of "inalienable rights," mentioning that "all men are created equal," but omitted what comes after this phrase: namely, he did not say "that they are endowed by their Creator" with these unalienable rights.

Only a month before that, after Obama omitted the same words before the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (there are four references to God in the Declaration), we faulted his speech writers but defended the president by saying he should have been "given a pass." We could no longer do so. We said that it was painfully obvious that President Obama does not believe that individual rights are given to us by God.

The most dramatic historical achievement of the American Revolution was the insistence of the Founders that the state is not the source of our rights. What the state grants, it can take away. We saw this most strikingly under the Soviets: the Soviet Constitution was a marvelous tribute to human liberty, the only problem being that it made the state the origin of individual rights. By declaring God to be the origin of rights, the Founders deliberately awarded a subordinate role to government.

Addressing the media on this issue, Bill Donohue said, "President Obama is the first president in American history not to acknowledge that all rights stem from God. Given that all prepared presidential speeches are written and vetted by many people, and that he was roundly criticized last month for this same infraction, it is only fair to conclude that this was not a mistake. This was deliberate."

It was only a few days after we issued our news release that the president used the word "Creator" in three separate instances over a single weekend. Guess he got the message.