

# LIBERALS HAVE A BIG PROBLEM WITH FREE SPEECH

[Bill Donohue](#)

Few Americans will publicly admit that they don't believe in free speech, yet attacks on it are commonplace. How can this be? While some are simply lying, others entertain a notion of free speech that allows them to be censorious while professing allegiance to it. This is true of Republicans, conservatives, Democrats and liberals, though recent evidence shows that the latter two categories are the most guilty.

Two years ago, the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) released a survey of 45,000 college students from 201 colleges. It found that liberals were the most intolerant of free speech.

That same year Real Clear Opinion released a survey on this topic and found that Democrats were the least supportive of free speech and the most supportive of censoring speech they found disagreeable. In fact, a third said Americans have "too much freedom." The figure for Republicans was 14.6 percent.

Two events occurred this month that shed light on this issue.

On April 8, former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett spoke at Princeton University. At least he tried to.

About 150 people showed up outside the building where he was to speak, chanting anti-Semitic slogans. After he spoke for about 15 minutes, some 20 people, most of whom were students, shouted him down, accusing him of genocide. Shortly after they were escorted out, a pro-Hamas activist started screaming at him, stopping his address. Ten minutes later the fire alarm went off, shutting down all the microphones.

Princeton is an elite school, but it has little respect for free speech. In the 2025 survey by FIRE of 251 colleges, Princeton ranked 223, meriting a rating of “below average” on the free speech scale. The situation is so bad on campus, especially with regard to stifling the speech of Jewish students, that the Trump administration has halted dozens of research grants to the Ivy League school.

The other event was held on April 3 at Hamilton College.

Former President Barack Obama sat down for an interview, answering lots of questions. No one interrupted him. He questioned the nation’s allegiance to free speech, asking, “Do we stand up for freedom of speech when the other person talking is saying stuff that infuriates us and is wrong and hurtful?”

The right answer is, “No, we don’t.” And that is because it is *almost always* left-wing students, faculty, administrators and activists who censor speech on campus, and elsewhere. It is the elites who allow the muzzling of free speech, not rednecks.

Obama knows this to be true, yet in his discussion he never mentioned who the offenders are. Had they been the Proud Boys, it’s a sure bet he would have noted it. But he did complain about the denial of funding to colleges that show contempt for free speech, as if somehow they are entitled to it.

The former president should be very careful pointing the finger at anyone. When he was in office, he was known for disrespecting the conscience rights of Catholic healthcare workers and grant recipients who disagreed with his policies on abortion, marriage and the family. If they voiced their objections, they were candidates for sanctions.

Obama is hardly the only Democrat with a free speech problem.

Last fall, when former Secretary of State John Kerry spoke to

the globalists at the World Economic Forum, he decried what he called “disinformation” efforts [the intentional distortion of information], saying, “our First Amendment stands as a major block to the ability to be able to hammer [it] out of existence.” In other words, the First Amendment is a problem because it stymies attempts to stop speech that John Kerry claims is disinformation.

Hillary Clinton, champ of Russian dossier propaganda, said last year that Americans should be “criminally charged” if they engage in speech that she deems “propaganda,” or what she calls “Russian talking points.” Also last year, Minnesota Governor (and failed vice president candidate) Tim Walz said, “There’s no guarantee of free speech on misinformation [mistaken information] or hate speech.” Got that? So if someone errs in reporting the news, his speech is not protected by the First Amendment.

The Biden administration went further and invoked a new category of unworthy speech, namely “malinformation.” This is information that is “based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate.”

To cite one example, when this linguistic weapon was invented in 2023, it was used against Jacob Sullum, a noted libertarian, after he said that the CDC had repeatedly exaggerated the scientific evidence upon which the mask mandate was formulated. Facebook attached a warning to his article, saying it was “missing context” and “could mislead people.”

In a poll of voters taken in November, it was found that a majority of those who voted for Donald Trump rated “the future of free speech in this country” as “the single most important factor” affecting their vote. Only a minority of those who voted for Kamala Harris felt this way.

In short, liberals have a big problem with free speech.

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# NASHVILLE REPORT ON MASS SHOOTER SHOWS BIAS

[Michael P. McDonald](#)

On March 27, 2023, Audrey Hale, a woman who falsely claimed to be a man, attacked the Covenant Presbyterian Church and School in Nashville killing six innocent people, three of whom were children. Over two years later, the Metro Nashville Police Department released its report into the deadly assault.

Given that the report acknowledges that “the amount of information Hale left behind was far more than is usually available in a criminal investigation,” one might expect that the nearly 50-page document would leave no stone unturned. But instead of providing a comprehensive overview of this tragedy, the report protects secular-liberal biases ignoring Hale’s violent commentaries on sex, race, and religion.

Indeed, the report gives little mind to any of these. For instance, it only mentions twice that Hale was a lesbian. Similarly, the report almost entirely ignores that Hale misidentified as a male. There are only two instances that this is brought up, and one of these times was to explain why the report would use pronouns that reflect biological reality and proper grammar. The other was to note that although Hale “made statements about wanting to transition genders” and used “the name ‘Aiden Williams’” and “male pronouns,” she was “not undergoing any transition at the time of her death.”

In addition to the subject of sex, the report downplays Hale’s views on race. The report reveals that in December of 2018, Hale began planning to attack a school. Initially, she wanted to target Creswell Middle School, a magnet school for arts

which she attended. However, by March of 2020, Hale decided against the attack because Creswell had a large minority student body, and she did not want to be seen as racist. At this point, she turned her focus on Covenant because more white children attended the school.

In fact, Hale's race consciousness played a significant role in her life. The report briefly discusses that Hale's writings were full of what she dubbed "rage storms," essentially unhinged and violent rants. At first, these "rage storms" focused on how she felt rejected by society. In time, the report notes that these would expand to other issues such as "being ostracized by black culture despite her longing for acceptance" and "white privilege."

Another bias that the report glosses over was Hale's attitudes about Christians. The report notes that when Hale first decided to attack a school she also began writing about how she resented living at home and the control her mother had over her. Of particular interest, the report notes that Hale "feared to open up to her mother about her being a lesbian, believing her mother's 'traditional Christian' values would make her incapable of understanding, if not derisive towards her daughter's orientation." Indeed, "Hale considered this a wedge between them."

Further, the report goes on to say that Hale "believed the Christian faith of those within [Covenant] would make them meek and afraid."

Yet despite this evidence that the report clearly cites, its authors disregard these factors to make the final assessment. Chiefly among these concerns is an attempt to demonstrate that Hale did not specifically choose to target white Christian children.

While the primary evidence that the report relies on to make this claim is statements by Hale "that the race, religion,

gender, or other demographic categories of her victims would not matter,” the evidence above clearly show that these factors featured significantly in her writings and planning of the assault. It would seem as though the report twists logic to avoid drawing a certain conclusion that runs contrary to the predominant secular-liberal narrative.

Even in the section of the report dedicated to debunking the claim that “Hale selected this location [Covenant] for racial, religious or economic reasons,” the report undermines this claim, and as a result, the report trips over its own arguments and undercuts its own conclusions.

But then again, the authors of this report love playing these games. There is an entire page dedicated to what is and is not a manifesto. Rather than obscuring the facts of this tragedy with mental gymnastics, it would be nice if the authors of the report would get their secular-liberal biases out of the way so they could provide an unvarnished version of the story.

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## **COLORADO’S SICK WAR ON PARENTAL RIGHTS**

[Bill Donohue](#)

It is hard to know what is sicker—a Colorado bill that would gut parental rights or the basis upon which it rests.

The bill would punish parents who do not align themselves with the wishes of their transgender children. Indeed, it grants the government the right to take them away from them. All they have to do to trigger this brazen denial of parental rights is to refer to their children in terms that reflect their nature-

determined sex.

That's right, the authorities can seize your son, Sam, if he wants to be called Sally and you call him Sam. The bill would make this illegal. It's called "Deadnaming." Your child can also be taken from you if you refer to Sam as "he" or "him," instead of "she" or "her," or "they" or "them." This is called "misgendering."

In other words, the rights of mentally challenged children—who are contemplating, or have completed, a regiment of puberty blockers and genital mutilation—trump the rights of parents who want to help them. Parents who violate these provisions are deemed guilty of "coercive control" under the law. The bill also says that the courts do not have to respect laws in other states that make it illegal for parents to allow their child to "transition" to the other sex.

In an unusual move, the bill passed the mostly Democratic Colorado House of Representatives on Sunday, April 6. In doing so, it clearly stuck it to Christians who opposed it. Indeed, they were told by the bill's sponsors that parental rights should not even be discussed!

It will now be heard by the mostly Democratic Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee. If it passes, it will go to the mostly Democratic Colorado Senate. The Democratic governor, Jared Polis, is a homosexual fan of radical gay and transgender rights. Perhaps he will wait until Good Friday to sign it.

No state has anything like this on the books. Even Democratic California Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed a similar bill.

The Colorado bill that passed, HB 1312, explicitly refers to the legislation as the "Kelly Loving Act."

Kelly Loving was murdered in 2022 at a nightclub in Colorado Springs. Five were killed and 25 injured when a madman opened up on them with an AR-15 rifle. But it wasn't an ordinary

club—it was an LGBTQ hot spot. And Kelly was no ordinary person: he falsely claimed to be a woman. It appears Kelly was named Jonathan Ray Loving, and later adopted a female name after becoming confused about his sex.

After the massacre, President Joe Biden denounced it as an attack on LGBTQ people, saying, “We cannot and must not tolerate hate.” The mayor in Colorado Springs said the shooting “has all the appearances of being a hate crime.”

But is it a “hate crime” when transgender people kill transgender people? People of the same race kill people of the same race all the time, and no one calls such acts a “hate crime.” [Yet as we have shown before](#), transgender-on-transgender crime is commonplace.

The person who killed Kelly Loving was Nicholas Franklin Brink. But he later changed his name to Anderson Lee Aldrich because he did not want to be associated with his father. When he went on his killing spree, he was a 22-year-old sexually confused person who falsely claimed to be neither a man nor a woman. He called himself “non-binary” (there is no such thing) and wanted others to falsely refer to him as “they” or “them.”

The killer’s father was a porn actor, and after his parents divorced—he was one-year-old—he grew up mentally disturbed and was arrested several times (a SWAT team had to be sent to his house when he threatened to blow it up). In 2021, he told his grand-aunt he wanted to kill Christians.

Colorado Democrat Rep. Yara Zokaie, who co-sponsored the bill in the House, credits the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) with justifying excluding parental rights from discussion on the bill.

SPLC is a well-funded hate group that is cited by the media as a specialist in identifying hate groups. Following suit, Zokaie censored those who sought to speak against her bill, saying, “we don’t ask someone passing civil rights legislation

to go ask the KKK for their opinion.”

A search of the website of SPLC found that the first eleven posts under the banner “parental rights” are all about race, poverty, neo-Nazis, migrants and LGBTQ rights. In short, they have absolutely nothing to do with parental rights. The twelfth post is on parental rights. However it does not mean what is traditionally understood: it defends the right of parents to keep obscene books in elementary school libraries, not the right of parents who object.

Recent elections and surveys prove that attacks on the rights of women and parents is a losing game. But for some reason many Democrats are not listening, and nowhere is this more evident than in Colorado.

Contact the Chairman of the Colorado Senate Judiciary Committee: [julie.gonzales.senate@coleg.gov](mailto:julie.gonzales.senate@coleg.gov)

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# FAILED ATTEMPT TO MALIGN OPUS DEI

[Bill Donohue](#)

*This is an abbreviated version of a longer article, “Why The Need To Bash Opus Dei?”, that appears in the April edition of “Catalyst,” our monthly journal that is available to members.*

Opus Dei is loved by millions of Catholics all over the world for its yeoman efforts in getting Catholics to practice their religion more seriously. Founded in 1928 by a Spanish priest, Josemaria Escrivá, it is a spiritual home to lay Catholics and clerics who are com

mitted to living the faith on a daily basis; most are laypersons. Escrivá was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2002.

Militant secularists, and many so-called progressive Catholics, hate Opus Dei. Why? It symbolizes everything they detest: it is unashamedly Catholic, orthodox, and wildly successful.

The latest effort to trash Opus Dei is a book by Gareth Gore, *Opus*. Like so many who hate the organization, he is caught up in the mystique of Opus Dei. He can't understand why men and women are drawn to an entity that is so deeply religious, especially given the decidedly secular bent of western civilization. On top of that, he is a sloppy writer.

His book is strewn with hyperbole, innuendo and out-and-out falsehoods. Yet he had the audacity to say in an interview that his book is "100 percent correct." Here are a few examples of his inattention to detail.

"During a trip to Nicaragua, the pope refused to let one cardinal kiss his ring because he had disobeyed a papal order." But Ernesto Cardenal was not a cardinal—he was a priest. More important, he was Minister of Culture who worked for the communist dictator, Daniel Ortega, the Sandinista thug who has impoverished and enslaved the people of Nicaragua (he is still doing this today). With good reason did Saint John Paul II rebuke him.

Gore says that Mother Teresa of Calcutta attended the beatification of Saint Josemaria—she did not. Also, when he died the servants did not have to be awakened in the middle of the night to make preparations—he died in the middle of the day.

The well respected Catholic Information Center in Washington, D.C. has not been staffed by an Opus Dei priest for the past forty years; that didn't happen until 1992. Gore also says

that there are “hundreds of similar centers around the world.” In fact, there are only two.

Gore can't get over how financially successful Opus Dei is. So what? Does anyone complain about Harvard's outsized endowment? It has well over \$50 billion. To show how truly sloppy he is—his editors are just as remiss—he writes that “millions of dollars were spent on a huge school-building program across Spain.” Yet his footnote refers exclusively to summer camps!

It is to be expected that Gore would not pass up the chance to trot out a case of the sexual abuse of minors. But when he cites the case of a married layman who was guilty of molestation, accusing Opus Dei of never reporting it, he is showcasing his sophomoric research. The abuse occurred in the man's home and Opus Dei never knew about it.

Malice, not ignorance, is at work when Gore portrays the late Cardinal George Pell as a pedophile. As anyone who knows anything about this issue, the fabricated charges against Pell were thrown out of court. Indeed, he was unanimously acquitted. I have personally written a great deal about this subject, and I find mindboggling that Gore's editors would allow him to promote this invidious falsehood.

It is so typical of left-wing writers to malign the Catholic Church for reaching out to young people, depicting such efforts as something nefarious. Gore does the same to Opus Dei.

We learn that young people are not attracted to Opus Dei because of what it stands for; they are “recruited” and “captured” by its adult members. Gore must be thinking of the way left-wing college professors manipulate and recruit unsuspecting students, indoctrinating them in the latest Marxist iteration.

It is important to note that even fair-minded liberal reviewers of Gore's book see right through his agenda. That is

why Matt Murray, the executive editor of the *Washington Post*, took issue with his “rather partisan” approach, saying it sometimes comes across as a “slog.” Indeed, Murray says that “Gore can’t hide his disdain for the founder.” This accounts for his “snarky” style and his “tone of snideness.” Gore’s disdain also extends to questioning “truths,” which is why he puts the word in quotes.

When this review was published, Gore went ballistic, invoking obscenities. Instead of defending his work, he chose to berate Murray for taking “time out of his busy schedule to basically say that my book doesn’t include enough positive stuff about Opus Dei.”

With good reason does Murray say that “some chapters read more like a prosecutor’s brief” than a fair assessment of Opus Dei. This leads him to conclude that the book lacks a “nuanced understanding of the organization.” Gore greets this criticism with indignance, but that doesn’t prove Murray wrong.

It is said that education can conquer ignorance. Not if it is willed. Ideologues are not persuaded by empirical evidence, data, and logic. They are informed by a set of tightly woven ideas that are impervious to reason.

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## **McCARRICK’S DEATH DOESN’T RESOLVE EVERYTHING**

[Bill Donohue](#)

Theodore McCarrick died April 3 at the age of 94. The defrocked cardinal was known for decades as one of the most influential prelates in America. He was also a masterful

fundraiser and a notorious homosexual whose predatory behavior is legendary.

Contrary to what the *Washington Post* editorialized in 2019, it was not the media that revealed McCarrick's offenses—it was New York Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan.

Dolan's Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program was responsible for outing McCarrick. Dolan went public after one of McCarrick's victims came forward. As I said in my book, [\*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse\*](#), "How many rapists who work in the media—think of CBS and NBC—have had one of their senior officials turn them in? None."

McCarrick was not content to be a good priest. The report on him, known as "The McCarrick Report," found that when he was Archbishop of Newark, he told two bishops of his quest to succeed Cardinal John O'Connor as the Archbishop of New York (he had been an auxiliary bishop there in the late 1970s-early 1980s). He "pounded the table and blurted out 'I deserve New York.'"

In the mid-1990s, McCarrick called to congratulate me for fighting anti-Catholicism. I had been in the job for only a few years. I was struck when he told me of his desire to come across the Hudson and become the successor to Cardinal O'Connor. Why, I wondered, would he tell me? It was obvious that he was consumed with this issue.

None of this would have come as a surprise to those who knew him when he was a monsignor in the late 1960s. He was assessed by his superiors as being overly "ambitious."

In the 1980s, McCarrick first served as the Bishop of Metuchen, and then as Archbishop of Newark. This is when he began his predatory behavior. It was at his beach house on the Jersey Shore where he would invite seminarians to stay with him. He would intentionally invite more men than he had beds for. This set the stage: he would invite one of them to sleep

with him. He often succeeded. He also had sex with seminarians in the Waldorf Astoria in Manhattan.

McCarrick justified his behavior by telling the seminarians that "priests engaging in sexual activity with each other was normal and accepted in the United States, especially in that diocese." While this was an obvious rationalization, it was not altogether incorrect. The homosexual network at that time was extensive.

His sexual romps were known to many of the New Jersey bishops, but they did nothing about it. Nor did they say a word when McCarrick grabbed the crotch of a priest at the dinner table—they simply looked away.

Were there any good guys? Yes. Cardinal O'Connor was not afraid to act. After fielding several complaints, he reported McCarrick to Vatican officials. But McCarrick had friends everywhere, and those who surrounded Pope John Paul II took his side when he contested O'Connor's account. It took Pope Benedict XVI to get beyond this. In 2006, he accepted McCarrick's resignation, something he had to offer when he turned seventy-five.

Travel restrictions were placed on McCarrick but he ignored them. He ignored them under Benedict and even more so under Pope Francis. He did exactly what he wanted to and no one stopped him.

Unfortunately, McCarrick's death does not put to rest all concerns.

The person who is currently in charge of the Vatican's administrative duties is also the person who lived with McCarrick in Washington, D.C. for six years (McCarrick consecrated him in 2001), yet he claims that he never heard of any wrongdoing. Indeed, he "never suspected or ever had reason to suspect, any inappropriate conduct in Washington." As I said in my book, "That would make him unique."

His name is Cardinal Kevin Farrell. He is now the Camerlengo, or Chamberlain, responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the Vatican. He is very close to Pope Francis, who has elevated him to several high posts. Pope Francis also says he never heard about McCarrick's predatory conduct, though others say they told him.

Farrell admitted in 2019 that he received a \$29,000 gift from Bishop Michael Bransfield to refurbish his Rome apartment. A probe found that he had been using diocesan funds for these gifts and his own personal spending. He then returned the money; Bransfield was removed from office.

A priest was recently quoted saying that Farrell is holding "the fort down until the conclave elects a new pope." Now that McCarrick is dead, it would be helpful if he told us more about his interactions with him. It would also be instructive to know why he thinks he was held in the dark when so many others at least heard of McCarrick's offenses.

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## **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

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## **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.

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# THE STATE OF RELIGION IN AMERICA

**Bill Donohue**

Pew Research Center recently released its third Religious Landscape Study; previously ones were conducted in 2007 and 2014. Its latest study, which reports on findings from 2023-2024, covers a wide range of subjects, broken down by religious affiliation.

Seven-in-ten Americans belong to a religion, and all but seven percent are not Christians; three-in-ten are unaffiliated. One of the key aspects of this survey was the finding that the apparent decline in Christianity has stabilized.

More than eight-in-ten Americans believe in God or a universal spirit, and this includes the majority of the unaffiliated.

This category consists of three groupings: atheists, agnostics and those who say they believe in “nothing in particular.” Seven-in-ten of the latter believe in God, as do 43 percent of agnostics and seven percent of atheists. Interestingly, only a thin majority of atheists (54 percent) are “absolutely certain” there is no God.

Eight-in-ten Americans believe “there is something spiritual beyond the natural world, even if we can’t see it”; this is also true of nearly 60 percent of the religiously unaffiliated. This includes a majority of agnostics, two-in-three of those who believe in “nothing in particular,” and two-in-ten atheists.

This suggests that there are very few materialists in America (those who believe that nothing exists outside of matter).

Politically speaking, we have known for a long time that Republicans are much more likely to score high on religiosity (beliefs and practices) than Democrats. This survey shows once again that the Democratic Party is home to secularists, the only exception being black Democrats.

Most religiously affiliated Americans have come to terms with homosexuality, saying it should be accepted, not discouraged. The exceptions are Evangelicals, Mormons and Muslims. The same breakdown is evident on the subject of same-sex marriage.

When it comes to accepting transgender people, however, there is a big divide between those who are religiously affiliated and the unaffiliated (twice as many of the former say acceptance is a “change for the worse” compared to the unaffiliated.)

The issues of women in the workforce and family responsibilities depend largely on context. While most (73 percent) cheer women’s increased workforce participation, a majority (55 percent) say it is better for a child with two parents to have one stay at home. Context—marriage and the

family—explains the apparent disparity. The religiously affiliated are more likely to say it is better to have one parent stay at home (59 percent) than the religiously unaffiliated (47 percent).

Context also matters in making judgments about right and wrong. A majority (55 percent) say it “often depends” on the situation, while 44 percent say there are “clear and absolute standards for what is right and wrong.” The problem with this line of questioning is that those who believe in the latter may also believe that there are times when no “clear and absolute standards” exist, hence the caveat that it “often depends.” Thus, such persons may not be holding contradictory positions.

More Americans believe religion does more good than harm. As expected, this varies widely when comparing the religiously affiliated to the unaffiliated. Unfortunately, there has been a dramatic decline in those who express mostly positive opinions about religious institutions—a drop of 12 percent from a decade ago (from 63 percent to 51 percent). Given the generally negative portrayals of religion in the media and in the entertainment industry, this is not surprising.

Social capital refers to the general wellbeing, or health, of society. We know from many studies that those who score high on religiosity possess more of the resources that service the public weal. It is not in the best interests of society, then, to discourage the responsible exercise of religious beliefs and practices. On that score, America can stand to improve.

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# Vatican Bans Publishing Lists of 'Credibly' Accused Priests

*Fr. MacRae ties a lot of loose ends together to offer a magnificent piece on what has happened to the rights of priests.*

***April 2, 2025 by Fr Gordon MacRae and William A. Donohue, PhD***

**Note from Father Gordon MacRae:** This post may not move hearts, but it should move minds and consciences. It is of utmost importance to me, to the priesthood and to the whole Church. So we should not be silent in the face of injustice. So please share this post

On February 22, 2025, the Dicastery for Legislative Texts, the Vatican office responsible for issuing authoritative legal interpretations and directives for the universal Church, published online a long awaited guidance to bishops impacting the due process rights of "credibly accused" Catholic priests.

The announcement underscores the Dicastery's decision that bishops considering publication of lists of priests deemed credibly accused of sexual abuse are prohibited under Canon Law from doing so. This guidance is for a multitude of reasons connected to long established civil and canonical rights of due process. I will describe below some examples of how these rights have been impacted.

From the point of view of official Church positions, the problem is, and has always been, the bishops' collective interpretation and use of the term "credible" in their response to the crisis. It is a standard applied nowhere else in the world of civil or criminal jurisprudence. It means only that a claim of abuse cannot be immediately dismissed on its face. If a claimant alleges abuse in a specific community 30 or 40 years ago, for example, and the named priest had once

been assigned there, the claim is “credible” unless and until it is disproven.

There is no court in America that admits such a standard of evidence but it is routinely applied now to accused Catholic priests. Courts have long recognized that older memories are highly malleable, and misidentification of the accused is a frequent risk.

Before delving further into this, I want to present a reaction to the Vatican news from William A. Donohue, Ph.D., President of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, who has consistently defended the due process rights of priests.

## **From Catholic League President Bill Donohue**

### **Vatican Finally Does Right by Accused Priests**

Six years after Pope Francis rejected the practice of publishing the names of accused priests, the Vatican has finally codified his plea. Henceforth, dioceses are discouraged from publishing such a list. Among the reasons cited was the inability of deceased accused priests to defend themselves.

This should never have been an issue in the first place. But in the panic that ensued following the 2002 series in *The Boston Globe* detailing clergy sexual abuse, the bishops convened in Dallas in 2004 to adopt a charter that listed comprehensive reforms, some of which substantially weakened the rights of the accused.

At the time, I was highly critical of the way some bishops allowed a gay subculture to flourish, one that resulted in a massive cover-up of the sexual abuse of minors (homosexual priests – not pedophiles – were responsible for 8 in 10 cases of abuse). But I also said of the Dallas reforms, “There is a

problem regarding the rights of the accused. It appears that the charter may short-circuit some due process rights.”

One of the problems was the desire to publish the names of accused priests. Egging the bishops on was Judge Anne Burke, the first person to head the National Review Board commissioned by the bishops to deal with the problem.

She made it clear that priests – and only priests – should be denied their constitutionally prescribed right to due process. “We understand that it is a violation of the priest’s due process rights – you’re innocent until proven guilty – but we’re talking about the most vulnerable people in our society and those are children,” she said. Such thinking allowed the bishops to make public the names of accused priests.

In an interview I had in my office with a female reporter from CNN, she became quite critical of the Church for not posting the names of accused priests on its diocesan websites. I picked up the phone and, holding it in my hand, asked her for the name and phone number of her boss. When she asked why, I said I was going to accuse her of sexual harassment. I added that I wanted to see if CNN would post her name on its website. She said, “I get it.” I put the phone down. (For more on this see my book, [\*The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse\*](#)).

No organization in the United States, religious or secular, publishes the names of accused employees. That there should be an exception for priests is obscene.

The rights of accused priests need to be safeguarded, and the penalties for those found guilty need to be severe. The Church failed on the latter, which is why the scandal took place, and it failed on the former, which is why Pope Francis, and now the entire Church, had to act.

The sexual abuse of minors in the Church in America has long been checked – almost all the cases in the media are about old cases, and most of the bad guys are dead or out of ministry.

Now that the rights of the accused have been given a much needed shot in the arm, we can say with confidence that the problem has been ameliorated.

*Now back to Father MacRae.....*

## **But My Diocese Employs “Trauma-Informed” Consultants**

On July 31, 2019, Bishop Peter A. Libasci, Bishop of Manchester, New Hampshire proactively published a list of the names and assignment histories of 73 priests in his diocese who had been “credibly” accused of sexual abuse of minors and removed from ministry. Most of the claims deemed “credible” are decades old. The majority of the priests on Bishop Libasci’s list are long deceased. In most cases, the sole condition making the claims “credible” was the fact that money – lots of it – changed hands.

Bishop Libasci’s stated goal for publishing his list was “transparency.” In 2024, long after Pope Francis discouraged bishops from doing so, Bishop Libasci republished the list with the names of additional accused but deceased priests.

Weeks after Bishop Libasci’s original list was publicized in 2019, Ryan A. MacDonald penned and published a contentious objection: “[In the Diocese of Manchester, Transparency and a Hit List](#).” It was contentious because it represented well my disagreement with this action of the bishop of my diocese, something I otherwise hoped to avoid. Plaintiff attorneys and activist groups like SNAP pressured bishops to publish such lists for the purpose of “assuring victims they are not alone and that they are heard.”

The real reason for pushing for published lists, however, was to provide a forum and online database for false “copycat” claims, a lucrative business for contingency lawyers and claimants alike with little or no court oversight. In May

2024, Ryan A. MacDonald published a report on how and why this happens in "[To Fleece the Flock: Meet the Trauma-Informed Consultants.](#)" Here is an excerpt from an official statement of my Diocese:

***"The Diocese of Manchester provides financial assistance to those who have been harmed, regardless of when abuse occurred, through a process utilizing independent trauma-informed consultants."***

A basic problem with handling the matter of due process for the accused and outcomes for the Diocese by abdicating judgment to "trauma-informed consultants" is that the term is widely noted and critiqued by professionals as highly biased. It has a documented negative impact on judicial fairness and due process of law in claims of sexual abuse and assault.

The [Center for Prosecutor Integrity](#) (CPI ) is an organization that seeks to strengthen prosecutorial ethics, promote due process, and end wrongful convictions. Victim-centered investigations, also known in the sex abuse contingency lawyer industry as "trauma-informed," presume the guilt of all accused and lead to wrongful convictions.

According to the Center's website, "The most destructive types of victim-centered investigations are known as "Start by Believing," and "Trauma-Informed." The Center exhibits a professional bibliography documenting the "junk science" behind such investigations creating an epidemic of false witness and police and prosecutorial misconduct. Given the well-founded caution about false claims and financial scammers, it was alarming to read the following in a recent news article, "[Diocese of Manchester Settles Sexual Abuse Claims from the 1970s.](#)" Here's an excerpt:

***"No lawsuit was filed because the alleged abuse happened outside the statute of limitations, but the attorney representing the 'John Doe' who was involved said it's***

***important for survivors to come forward as part of the healing process, ... thus announcing a six-figure settlement outside the Diocese of Manchester office."***

Has it never dawned on anyone in Church leadership that there are those in our midst who would find a "six-figure settlement" an enticement for false accusations? This is especially so when there is no court oversight for such claims. The process has been made very simple. A lawyer writes a letter and a bishop writes a check.

In addition to these trauma-informed consultants retained by the Diocese of Manchester and other dioceses,"it seems that civil lawyers and risk managers, not bishops, are often running the show." So wrote prominent canon lawyer, Michael Mazza, JD, JCD, in a recent *First Things* article (February 24, 2025): "[Who's Really Calling the Shots at U.S. Diocesan Chanceries?](#)" Mazza concludes:

***"In the wake of the clerical abuse crisis, church leaders may have surrendered too much authority to risk managers focused on eliminating every threat. Seasoned entrepreneurs understand that the moment lawyers run the show, adopting a zero-risk strategy as the business model, the company grinds to a halt. While the surest way for a car company to avoid getting sued is to stop making cars, that strategy is not an option for an institution that has received a divine call to preach the Gospel to all nations. Bishops must recognize this truth and seize the helm with the resolve their office demands."***

## **The Perspective of a Not-So-Credibly Convicted Priest**

My name was on Bishop Libasci's published list under the unique category, "convicted," but that was not at all my point of contention with his list. Unlike most of the priests named on that ongoing list, I at least had public charges in a public forum – a 1994 criminal trial – no matter how jaded and

unjust it was. The details of those charges and that trial have emerged over time and are also now in public view. They have raised awareness about the absence of truth and the aura of injustice in the forum in which I was condemned and sentenced.

As Ryan A. MacDonald's article, "[In the Diocese of Manchester, Transparency and a Hit List](#)" points out, Bishop Libasci's predecessor, the late Bishop John B. McCormack, went on record in an unpublished media interview in the aftermath of my trial stating his informed belief that I was falsely accused, wrongly convicted, and should not be in prison. He insisted, however, that this information should never leave his office. These details were exposed in a 2021 post, "[Omertà in a Catholic Chancery – Affidavits Expanded.](#)"

Going back even further in this history of neglected due process, Bishop McCormack's predecessor, the late Bishop Leo O'Neil, chose not to wait for the outcome of a trial. Before my trial commenced, he published an official diocesan press release declaring that I victimized not only my accusers but the entire Catholic Church. After that, a trial seemed just a formality.

The most visible post-trial analysis of due process in the case, however, was that of Dorothy Rabinowitz, awarded a Pulitzer Prize for her courageous exposure of "accusation, false witness, and other terrors of our time." Her series of articles in [The Wall Street Journal](#) culminated in "[The Trials of Father MacRae](#)" in 2013, six years before Bishop Libasci published his list.

In a compelling five-minute video interview produced by *The Wall Street Journal*, Dorothy Rabinowitz saw through all the smoke and mirrors and got to the heart of the matter. It is a brief but bold exposé of unassailable truth that ties the two-decade outbreak of clergy abuse claims to the very unquestioned settlements money promised by my Diocese in its

statements above.

I give the last word to "[A Video Interview with Dorothy Rabinowitz](#)."

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# AMICUS BRIEF FILED ON BEHALF OF PRIESTS

**[Bill Donohue](#)**

The Catholic League has filed an amicus brief in the Supreme Court of New Jersey defending the rights of priests. We are represented by the Pittsburgh office of Leech Tishman; our attorney is Russell Giancola. The lead attorneys for the case, representing the Diocese of Camden, are from Cooper Levenson in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

This case began almost seven years ago. Following the Pennsylvania grand jury report in 2018, the Attorney General in New Jersey launched an investigation of the clergy who worked in the state's dioceses. Prosecutors wanted a grand jury empanelled but the Diocese of Camden objected, saying they had no authority to do so. It is the Camden Diocese that we are defending.

The Diocese of Camden is on solid grounds. In New Jersey, grand jury investigations, or "presentments," are designed only to investigate public officials and public agencies such as prisons and police departments. Targeting private individuals or private institutions are not permitted. Therefore, to go after the Catholic clergy—investigating alleged molestation of minors dating back to 1940—is unwarranted.

In May of 2023, Superior Court Judge Peter Warshaw agreed with the Camden Diocese. He said that state law allows special grand juries to investigate public officials or government agencies, not a private entity like the Catholic Church or individual priests. He also questioned the fairness of the probe: the accused priests will not be given a chance to defend themselves. Judge Warshaw said this amounts to a “hit-and-run.”

More recently, New Jersey’s Appellate Division agreed, affirming Judge Warshaw’s decision. Now, the New Jersey Supreme Court will have the final say in whether this selective, invasive probe of the dioceses and clergy is permitted to go forward.

The grand jury process allows no cross examination so the accused have no legal recourse when their names are bandied about in reports or in the media. This is outrageous, and it is doubly outrageous when we note that, as always, it is the Catholic Church that is being targeted. It is never some other religion, and it sure isn’t the public schools, the source of sexual abuse today.

On a related note, we have complained for decades about the decision made by dioceses in the United States that post the names of accused priests on the internet or in some other public spot. No other institution does this—just the Catholic Church. In March, Pope Francis formally rejected this practice. Henceforth, dioceses are discouraged from publishing such a list.

Priests should have the same rights as every other American, but they do not. Due process demands that they are assumed innocent until proven guilty. Also, most of the bad apples are dead or are no longer in ministry. So New Jersey’s attempted grand jury investigation is a sham.

We will keep you posted.