RELIGION HAUNTS DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

On August 13, we issued a release commenting on the role that atheists were seeking at the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Colorado.

Leah Daughtry, the religious point-person for the Democrats and CEO of the Convention, boasted about her effort to have the first Democratic Convention start with a religious service. Not only was her boast unwarranted, but it also drew fire from the atheist crowd: Among those offended by the interfaith religious service was the Secular Coalition for America.

To begin with, the Democratic Convention did not start with a religious service: the service was held on August 24, the day before the convention began. It was still undecided whether or not clergy were to be allowed to wear religious garb, but the venue had been decided. According to the New York Times, "the service [would] be held in a theater, in neutral, secular space, so as not to offend anyone."

The Secular Coalition for America said that the meeting excluded nontheistic Democrats and was "divisive rather than unifying." Accordingly, the Coalition asked Daughtry for an invitation to be at the religious service, adding, naturally, "this whole situation could be avoided if no interfaith gathering existed in the first place." Daughtry, sporting her inclusive stripes, questioned, "Atheists speaking at an interfaith service…does that work? I don't quite know. But they're part of the Party, you treat them with respect."

We commented to the media: "The Democrats are in a jam. Long the party of choice for atheists, they have profoundly alienated people of faith from joining their ranks, so much so

that they have lost the last two elections because of these so-called values voters. But now that they are reaching out to the faithful, however clumsily, they have angered the atheists."

Meanwhile, the Freedom from Religion Foundation posted a billboard near the Convention Center that said, "KEEP RELIGION OUT OF POLITICS." It looks like they may have scored one with the Dems.