

PA LAWMAKER BULLIES WOMAN; CENSURE AND PROBE NEEDED

On May 7, we contacted every member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. We sought their support for our call to censure Rep. Brian Sims for his bullying and his vicious anti-Catholicism. Two days later we called for a criminal probe. We were encouraged by the response we received.

What Sims did on May 5 was outrageous. Unprovoked, he accosted an elderly Catholic woman who was praying the rosary outside a Planned Parenthood clinic in Philadelphia and started bullying her.

For eight uninterrupted minutes, Sims badgered her, telling her to go pray at home. When she asked him to stop, he followed her around and threatened to make her home address public so that others could harass her.

On a previous occasion he became equally aggressive attempting to intimidate three teenage girls. He even offered \$100 to anyone who would identify the girls, hoping to have protesters show up at their house to badger them.

On May 7, Bill Donohue sent a letter in the overnight mail to PA Rep. Frank Farry, Chairman of the Committee on Ethics, asking him to formally introduce a resolution calling for the censure of Sims. The LGBT activist and lawmaker refused to apologize; he has a history of unethical behavior, having been investigated for several instances of financial improprieties.

His latest stunt is far worse. There is no place in public office for any person who bullies innocent women and girls for peacefully exercising their First Amendment right to freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

On May 9, Donohue asked PA House members to support

Pennsylvania State Republican Chairman Val DiGiorgio in his quest for a criminal probe. He also wrote to Philadelphia D.A. Larry Krasner asking him to launch a criminal investigation of Sims; such a probe was already under review.

U.S. Senator Al Franken was driven from office after revelations of sexual misconduct. What Sims did was worse. Franken's offenses took place before he was elected to the Senate—Sims committed his offenses while in office. Justice demands that no public official be permitted to get away with such obscene conduct.

Sims should not only resign, he should be investigated for his conduct. If found guilty, he should be given the maximum sentence. He is not a private person—he has violated the public trust by violating the Constitutional rights of four females, placing all of them in danger. We made it clear that this is not simply a Pennsylvania issue—it is a national issue.

Pennsylvania lawmakers contacted our office pledging their support. They also asked us to cooperate with them. We certainly will.

PENCE GIVES GREAT ADDRESS

On May 11, Vice President Mike Pence spoke at Liberty University's Commencement, offering a stirring address. "The truth is," he said, "we live in a time when the freedom of religion is under assault." He cited Christian persecution worldwide as Exhibit A.

Pence also talked about attacks on religion in the United States. He said that "we live in a time when it's become

acceptable and even fashionable to ridicule and even discriminate against people of faith.” He cited as an example the reaction on the part of “the media and the secular Left” to his wife’s teaching at a Christian elementary school earlier this year; she was vilified for doing so.

The vice president was right to say that “these attacks are un-American.” He was also right to say that “Some of the loudest voices for tolerance today have little tolerance for traditional Christian beliefs.”

He didn’t hold back in his admonition to the graduating class. He warned that “you’re going to be asked not just to tolerate things that violate your faith; you’re going to be asked to endorse them. You’re going to be asked to bow down to the idols of the popular culture.”

Pence does not exaggerate. Just read this issue of Catalyst for proof. Indeed, our website provides all the evidence one needs to demonstrate the veracity of Pence’s remarks.

Congrats to Vice President Mike Pence for telling the truth about the unhealthy state of religious liberty.

HOW MUCH DO I OWE OPRAH?

Many Democrats running for president endorse reparations to African Americans because their ancestors were enslaved. Before we go any further, I want to know how much I owe Oprah.

The idea of reparations for African Americans is seriously flawed. Some argue that if the Japanese received reparations, why shouldn’t blacks? It is true that in 1988 Japanese Americans received reparations, but that was entirely

different: The 82,000 people who were given \$20,000 each were interned during World War II; no money was given to their relatives.

There is no denying the history of wrongdoing that African Americans have endured. But the slavemasters are dead, as are their slaves. Unlike the Japanese, those in the black community who would benefit from reparations have not themselves endured what their ancestors did. Moreover, if patterns of unjust discrimination against African Americans continued after slavery, and this qualifies for reparations, what do we say to other racial, ethnic, and religious groups who suffered as well?

Let's begin with blacks. Blacks were sold to Europeans by their African slavemasters—they were not kidnapped as portrayed by Alex Haley in *Roots*. Think of it. Imagine boatloads of white boys showing up in Africa announcing their interest in slavery. Weren't they slightly outnumbered? Why didn't the Africans say yes, there is going to be slavery, but you white boys have the identity of the masters and the slaves backwards: we will be the masters and you will be our slaves. Why didn't that happen?

If blacks who are descendants of slaves are to be given reparations, should not those blacks whose ancestors were slavemasters have to pony up as well? After all, many free blacks in this country owned slaves, though that is never taught in the schools.

The Irish not only were enslaved by the British, more of them died proportionately on board the slave ships than did Africans. That is because there was no provision for slavery in the New World for white people. So when it came time to do the dangerous work on the ships, the English ordered the Irish to do it, saving blacks for the slave auction. Subsequent generations of the Irish in America also faced discrimination in the schools and at work. Should we give today's Irish a

check as well?

The Germans who came here in the 18th century were indentured servants, and many faced discrimination during both world wars. Should they get a check? Southern and Eastern Europeans, particularly those of Polish extraction, were discriminated against in the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924. Where do they go to get their check? Jews worked the sweatshops in the 19th century and were victimized during World War I. Can they collect as well?

Italians from northern Italy discriminated against Italians from southern Italy, so much so that southern Italians were the first migration of Europeans to return to their native land in large numbers. Should they tap their fellow Italians from the north for reparations? The Chinese were excluded from coming to America between 1882 and 1943. Where do they go to collect?

What about the Indians? The Sioux, the Comanches and the Apaches were so warlike that other Indian tribes fought alongside whites to defeat them. Before we give any more money to the Indians, should those tribes who were brutalized by these three tribes be given a check?

Not only is the idea of reparations unworkable, it is unjust. It is an axiom of Anglo-Saxon law that the guilty should pay, not the innocent. Asking white people today to pay for the sins of whites whom they never knew, and for things they never did—just because they are white—is morally offensive.

Let's say, for the sake of argument, that reparations are a good idea and the money should be distributed without delay. Let's even say, for the sake of argument, that the criteria don't matter (let's give Tiger Woods a half share because his father was black and his mother is Thai). Some of the recipients are bound to do what many people would do—they would have a field day. Which raises the question: After a

fast weekend in Vegas, and the money is gone, will they go quietly?

Juan Williams is an African American Fox News contributor who opposes reparations. Why? He thinks it is too easy. He argues that it is too easy for Americans to turn away from their obligations to blacks by offering money, and then declaring they are done with it. He believes there are more constructive things that can be done, and that they should be on-going.

He has a point. Check writing resolves nothing. If I had it my way, we would provide school vouchers to low-income Americans, many of whom are black. That would do more to bring about upward social mobility than any reparations scheme. Unfortunately, those who want reparations oppose school choice.

But if we are to go down this road, I need to know if Oprah, who is worth over \$3 billion, will allow me to pay in installments, preferably without interest.

GIVING UP ON THE POOR

The greatest enemy of the poor are those who champion their cause. It sounds counterintuitive. How can this be? Because most of those who lead the charge against poverty have no personal stake in their cause.

Unlike Mother Teresa, who made it clear that helping the poor must begin with those who carry their banner, most of the professional champions of the poor believe that writing a check—with other people's money—will solve the problem. It rarely does.

To be sure, the aged, the disabled, and the infirm benefit from a safety net. Similarly, as the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan observed, social security did more to alleviate poverty among the elderly than any other factor. But when the subject switches to able-bodied men and women, the check-writing approach fails. Indeed, it typically makes matters worse by fostering dependency.

There is a ton of empirical evidence to back up this observation. Yet in many influential quarters, all the data in the world mean nothing. Ideology wins every time. The latest gambit to catch fire is called Universal Basic Income, a scheme that many Democrats running for president are inclined to support. Each candidate is outdoing the other by promising to provide more goodies than Santa Claus ever did, funding their gambits by playing Robin Hood.

Offering a guaranteed annual income is not a new idea, but the latest incarnation is novel: credit the Silicon Valley with giving birth to it. Those who live there are overwhelmingly wealthy and overwhelmingly burdened with guilt. Every one of them became rich through hard work and ingenuity, but they are convinced that those at the bottom of the income scale do not possess these attributes. Which is why they want to send them a check.

Forget about the racist assumptions—the successful ones are either white or Asian and the ones at the bottom are mostly black or Hispanic—the fact remains that these schemes are bound to fail.

Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, is leading the cause for a universal income. He broached this idea while speaking to Harvard graduates in 2017. His net worth exceeds \$55 billion, meaning that his stash is bigger than the GDP of over 100 nations.

Zuckerberg and his rich left-wing friends in the Silicon

Valley have endorsed a policy that would give a monthly stipend to those who live in Stockton, California, 80 miles away. The plan is to make Stockton the first city in the nation to participate in a test of the Universal Basic Income policy. It will begin by selecting 100 people, each of whom will receive \$500 a month for 18 months. It will begin next year; they hope to make it available to everyone citywide.

They haven't determined who the lucky first 100 people will be, but they'll figure it out. The goal is to see to it that none of the 300,000 residents live in poverty. Not sure how they will keep illegal aliens from moving to Stockton—there is no talk of a wall (not yet anyway)—but again, the rich boys will figure it out.

The good news for the recipients is that there are no conditions on how the money is to be spent. They can spend their money on food and shelter or on booze and heroin. Everything goes. No questions asked.

Chicago is the first big city to give serious consideration to Universal Basic Income. A bill was introduced last year that would give \$500 a month to 1,000 Chicago families. Following the Stockton model, they can spend their money on anything they want. The politicians are still studying this issue. If it passes, let's hope Chicagoans don't buy any more guns.

No one has given the idea of Universal Basic Income a lift more than Barack Obama. When he spoke in Johannesburg, South Africa last year, at an event honoring Nelson Mandela, he endorsed the initiative. "It's not just money a job provides," he said, "it provides dignity and structure and a sense of place and a sense of purpose."

Yes, a job can do all that. But the Universal Basic Income policy does not require anyone to work. The effect of giving a handout to able-bodied persons who are not in the labor market is fundamentally different from giving social security to

retirees who paid into the fund for decades.

Alaska has had something like this program for a long time. Rich with oil money, it has provided a universal income to virtually everyone for decades. The few economic studies done on this initiative indicate that it has not had any noticeable effect on overall employment (though part-time rates have spiked). What has not been studied is the effect on able-bodied persons at the bottom of the income scale who are not working.

Alaska, of course, is not typical. It has tens of billions of oil money to play with, and since the program is not aimed at the poor, the effect on the middle class is similar to the effect of social security on seniors, which is negligible. These people have their dignity precisely because they have earned the money they live off of, something which is not true of many in the lower class.

Obama may mean well, but what he is promoting is likely to retard the upward mobility chances of the poor. He has a proven track record of doing just that. To wit: African Americans are doing much better economically under President Trump's growth-oriented approach than they did under Obama's redistributive policies.

"I'm surprised how much money I've got," Obama told the South African audience. So are many Americans—his net worth is over \$40 million. He added that he would have no problem paying "a little more in taxes" to pay for Universal Basic Income. Again, it's the multimillionaires (and multibillionaires) who sponsor such programs. They know full well that the effect of new taxes on them has almost a zero effect as compared to the burden levied on the middle class who must pay the lion's share of this pipedream.

As usual, little attention is being given to the unintended consequences of a Universal Basic Income policy. Why shouldn't

the recipients receive \$1500 a month, instead of \$500? What will the proponents say when the recipients demand a raise? What will the sponsors say to those not selected to participate in their scheme?

What effect will the program have on those who should be working, but have now elected not to? How will it affect hard-working persons living just above the poverty line knowing that their taxes are going to some who prefer to hang out on the corner rather than seek a job? How will they feel when they learn that the cash allotment is being spent on drugs, not groceries? What will happen if the program goes bust? Are the proponents ready for the riots?

Universal Basic Income is the latest expression of what social scientist Charles Murray once called our “custodial democracy.” He meant by that the tendency of government to essentially take custodial responsibility for the welfare of the poor. In the end, it does more to foster paternalism than anything else.

Pope Benedict XVI, in his magisterial encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, said that subsidiarity—the Catholic principle which teaches that those closest to the problem are best suited to fix it—is the “most effective antidote against any form of all-encompassing welfare state.” He expressly called upon us to practice solidarity with the poor, but to do so in ways that do not promote paternalism.

The most effective way to help the poor is to strengthen their families. The family, not the state, is the greatest determinant of upward mobility. Unfortunately, decades of welfare policies, especially from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s, helped to cripple inner-city minority families, the results of which are still with us.

It is not good enough to have good intentions—results matter. Low unemployment rates garnered through tax-incentive programs

for corporations mean much more in the end than the most well-intentioned welfare programs that wind up disabling the needy. But the champions of the poor, most of whom made a fortune through the market economy, say that their route to success cannot work for the poor. They are as wrong as they are condescending.

From my own work with the disadvantaged in Spanish Harlem, I saw first-hand how core education principles—sticking to the basics, offering structure, demanding discipline, and assigning homework—paid off. My students did well because much was demanded of them. When we lower the bar of expectations for the poor, we lower their prospects for success.

What accounts for success? One way to find out is by studying Asians. Why are they a success?

Asians do well in school, and well in the workforce, for one very basic reason: they are extremely disciplined. Impulse control is not a problem for them—their two parent families have seen to that—and that alone is an incredibly important variable accounting for academic excellence. When intact families are a rarity, so is impulse control, and so is success.

Catholic schools cannot make up for all the damage done to children in poor one-parent families, but they do a better job than their counterparts. A new study published by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, conducted by a professor and one of his doctoral students at the University of California-Santa Barbara, sheds light on why.

“First, students in Catholic schools are less likely to act out or be disruptive than those in other private or public schools. Second, students in Catholic schools exhibit more self-control than those in other private and public schools. Third, regardless of demographics, students in Catholic schools exhibit more self-discipline than students in other

private schools.”

Regarding the role that religion plays, the researchers concluded, “Don’t underestimate the power of religion to positively influence a child’s behavior. But in the absence of that, schools can adopt courses or programs that might foster self-discipline.”

All of this takes work. Impulse control does not come naturally to children, yet without it, success—in any field—is elusive. No one needs to have it instilled in them more than kids who live in poverty and crime-ridden neighborhoods. Once the value of self-discipline is inculcated, progress can be made.

This is what the champions of the poor should be concentrating on, not giveaway programs. But they are too hostile to traditionalism to speak to the virtue of self-control. That would be moralistic. And they are too opposed to religion, especially Catholicism, to promote school choice initiatives. So they fall back on their check-writing schemes.

Mother Teresa said that helping the poor should be an act of love, and that love should cost: it should cost those who work with the poor to enhance the condition of the needy. Universal Basic Income does none of this. It is nothing but another cheap trick played by some very rich Americans who harbor a patronizing attitude toward the poor. They are the poor’s greatest enemy.

SHOULD NYT FIRE MICHELLE

GOLDBERG?

There are few columnists more passionate in their defense of abortion rights than *New York Times* op-ed columnist Michelle Goldberg. She is so obsessed with this issue that she can justify abortion for any reason and at any time during pregnancy.

In keeping with the position of pro-abortion zealots such as New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, Goldberg is also a proponent of allowing a baby born alive after a botched abortion to die without medical care. That is called infanticide.

Goldberg is incensed that President Trump is drawing attention to this Nazi-like practice. Today she goes further by claiming that "Abortion providers are *regular* targets of domestic terrorism." (Our italic.)

There is no evidence to support such a wild accusation. Indeed, the one anecdote she offers has nothing to do with abortion. She cites a nut who three years ago fired a rifle at a pizzeria because it was the alleged home of a child sex trafficking ring involving Hillary Clinton.

Even more disturbing is Goldberg's history of promoting violence and anti-Christian bigotry.

Recently, while doing research on some other topic, Bill Donohue stumbled across a *New York Post* article by Rod Dreher from 1999 where he discussed left-wing intolerance. One of the stories he mentioned caught Donohue's eye. Here is what Dreher said.

"The intolerance hasn't been limited to student newspapers. A few years ago, a pro-life student group at SUNY-Buffalo set up a 'cemetery of the innocents'—4,000 wooden crosses symbolizing the number of unborn children aborted in one day. Pro-choicers

stormed the exhibit and kicked the crosses down. Michelle Goldberg, a writer for the campus paper, urged readers to 'do your part and spit at [pro-lifers]. Kick them in the head.'"

Donohue checked to see if this was the same Michelle Goldberg who today writes for the *New York Times*, and who has a history of demonizing conservative Christians—she calls them “Christian nationalists” who want to impose a “totalistic ideology” on America. It sure was. She was born in Buffalo and graduated from SUNY-Buffalo in the same time period as identified by Dreher.

Forget about abortion and Trump. There is a much bigger issue here.

Judge Brett Kavanaugh was condemned by many for what he allegedly did in high school. No one could corroborate any of the charges. Goldberg was in college, and we have indisputable evidence of her offenses.

Should the *New York Times* employ an anti-Christian bigot who promotes violence against them? Would the *Times* employ an anti-gay bigot who promotes violence against homosexuals?

You will be delighted to know that by putting the email contact of the paper's editorial page editor, James Bennet, in our press release he was pounded with criticism. He issued a lame defense of Goldberg, one that never addressed the issue.

ARIZONA GOV. WHIPS MILITANT SECULARISTS

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey is stood fast against militant

secularists who wanted him to take down a social media post that sent Easter greetings; the post also cited a Bible verse.

Ducey, who is a practicing Catholic, did not bow to pressure from anti-religion activists, saying that his official Facebook page would continue to offer greetings recognizing a variety of religious holidays. He cited Christmas, Hanukkah, Rosh Hashanah, Palm Sunday, and Passover as examples.

Other leaders, in and out of government, should take note of Ducey's stance. Contrary to what many in the mainstream media think, the Arizona governor will not pay a political price for his decision. If anything, it will endear him to most voters.

Social media is often overrated. A new Pew Research survey discloses that 10% of Twitter users account for 80% of all tweets. Who are they? Mostly women (65%) who are left-of-center and college educated. In other words, the voice of this small cluster may be loud, but it is not representative of the public. It is best not to take them too seriously.

Those who want to stamp out religious greetings from public officials are a menace to freedom. They are not liberals of old. No, they are today's totalitarians.

Kudos to Gov. Ducey.

CALIFORNIA CONFSSIONAL BILL IS ABSURD

Lawyers have attorney-client privileges, journalists are allowed to keep their sources confidential, and priests have "penitential communication" privileges. In all three cases, it

has long been deemed necessary to afford these rights lest injustice prevails. But now the latter right is under attack in California.

In February, California State Senator Jerry Hill introduced Senate Bill 360 that would require the clergy to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the authorities, without regard to the circumstances. It is obviously aimed at destroying the seal of confession in the Catholic Church.

The bill was given a hearing before the Senate Appropriations Committee on May 16 and, thanks in part to pressure from the Catholic League, Hill was forced to amend his bill. His bill now protects the seal of confession for most Catholics, but not all. The exceptions are when a priest hears a confession of a co-worker or when hearing the confession of another priest. This is unacceptable.

Priests are already required to report suspected child abuse cases to law enforcement, save for communication learned in the confessional. Neither Sen. Hill nor anyone else has explained what broke.

News Flash: Almost all cases of priestly sexual abuse took place in the last century, mostly between 1965 and 1985. The data are not contestable. If Hill were right—that there is an existential crisis in the Catholic Church—he should be able to provide evidence. He cannot. Neither can anyone else.

There are approximately 50,000 members of the Catholic clergy in the U.S., and the average number of credible accusations made against them in any given year over the past decade has been in the single digits. If Hill wants to learn where a crisis exists, he ought to review the data for the sexual abuse of minors in the public schools. His head would explode.

Senate Bill 360 says that “the clergy-penitent privilege has been abused on a large scale, resulting in the unreported and systemic abuse of thousands of children across multiple

denominations and faiths.” This is preposterous. There is absolutely no evidence to support such an outrageous claim. On this basis alone, the bill should be defeated.

Does anyone really think that a child abuser is going to confess his sin in the confessional? The idea is absurd. Father Roger Landry, a well respected priest and writer, knows his way around this issue.

“No abuser, not to mention others guilty of serious crimes,” he says, “would come to confession if he knew that the confessor was basically a state informant who would betray his confidence.” There is no plausible rebuttal to Landry’s observation.

Hill is not only wrong, he is wasting lawmakers’ time on the taxpayers’ dime. He is not going to win, even if his bill passes the legislature.

In 2014, the Catholic League signed an amicus brief in support of a Louisiana priest, Father Jeff Bayhi (and the Diocese of Baton Rouge), for refusing to disclose to the authorities a conversation he had in the confessional.

We lost in the State Supreme Court, but that decision was overturned by the State District Court in February 2016; Father Bayhi was not required to break the seal of the confessional. In October, 2016, the Louisiana Supreme Court upheld that ruling.

The secrecy of the confessional is integral to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, and has been treated as such since the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Canon law says the seal is “inviolable.” In other words, it is non-negotiable.

We asked everyone on our email list to contact California State Senator Anthony Portantino, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee; he presided over the May 16 hearing on this bill. Many did and as a result we at least forced some

concessions. This issue is not over.

SCHOOL SHOOTING: WHAT THE MEDIA IGNORED

One of the accused shooters at a Colorado high school May 7 had a history of trashing Christians and glorifying Satanism; the other was a girl trying to transition to a boy; and the young man who died while heroically trying to save the lives of others was a Catholic who loved his faith.

Somehow, major media outlets missed all of these facts.

18-year-old suspect Devon Erickson had posted on Facebook his “hate” for Christians who he claims “hate gays.” His car had satanic symbols and “F*** SOCIETY” spray-painted on it.

The other alleged shooter, Maya Elizabeth McKinney, a 16-year-old female, goes by the name “Alec” and asked to be referred to as “he” in court. McKinney’s Instagram account, with the handle “thatgaykidalec,” revealed family issues: the teen’s mother “hates the new Alec,” and McKinney misses her dad. Friends posted on Instagram that McKinney had mental problems because of the trans issue.

None of these facts made it into major media accounts. Nor did the Catholicism of Kendrick Castillo, the 18-year-old who died as he rushed one of the shooters, trying to save his classmates. An altar server, usher and greeter at his parish church, he was described by a teacher at his former Catholic school as hungry for the faith.

Yet the closest any mainstream media came to mentioning

Castillo's Catholic faith was *USA Today* referencing his involvement with the Knights of Columbus. The *New York Times* reported that a friend said Castillo's faith was important to him. What that faith was, the Times didn't say.

Imagine if the situation had been reversed—if the shooter had been Catholic and the victim gay or transgender. Think then the major media would have ignored those facts?

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGION SURVEY

A new Pew Research Center survey, "Changing World: Global Views on Diversity, Gender Equality, Family Life and the Importance of Religion," offers many fascinating insights on these subjects. What it has to say about religion, in particular, has grave political implications.

Almost 6 in 10 Americans (58%) believe that religion plays a less important role today as compared to 20 years ago. Just as many (57%) believe this is a bad thing for society.

The survey also found that 73% say religion plays an important role in their lives (47% said it is "very important" and 26% said it is "somewhat important"). A Gallup poll released last December came to the same conclusion: 72% said religion was important to them.

Does this matter? Two months into his presidency, Donald Trump's job approval with those who are "highly religious" was 51%; it was 32% with those who are "not religious."

What these surveys suggest is that the issue of religion in

public life could be problematic for Democrats. They are, as every survey in the past few decades suggests, the party of secularists, many of whom have grown more extreme in recent years. A look at the Platform of the two parties underscores this phenomenon.

The 2016 Republican Party Platform cites “religious freedom” six times; it also cites “religious liberty” six times. The 2016 Democratic Party Platform has no mention of “religious liberty,” and its references to religious freedom, and to religion more generally, raise some serious issues.

One of the three times where “religious freedom” is cited in the Platform is simply a nominal reference to the role of religious freedom in civil society. The other two evince the Platform’s political colors.

“We support a progressive vision of religious freedom that respects pluralism and rejects the misuse of religion to discriminate.” Nowhere does it define what a “progressive vision of religious freedom” means, or how it differs from other visions. But we are not left in the dark: This sentence appears in a section titled, “Guaranteeing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights.”

In other words, when the First Amendment right to religious liberty collides with the non-constitutionally recognized rights of homosexuals and the sexually confused, the former must yield. The majority of Americans who think that the declining role of religion in society is a bad thing are not likely to applaud.

The other normative reference to religious liberty notes that Donald Trump’s “vilification of Muslims” is proof that this “violates the religious freedom that is the bedrock of our country.” It does not attempt to show a cause and effect, but it is interesting to note that the only time religious freedom is cited as “the bedrock of our country” is in reference to

the rights of Muslims, not Christians or Jews (upon which our Judeo-Christian heritage is anchored).

Besides Muslims, the 2016 Platform of the Democratic Party shows great respect for the religious rights of Indians.

We are told of “our sacred obligation to the Indian nations and Indian peoples”; it fails to note how many Indian nations there are in America. No matter, we also learn of the need to respect “tribal sacred places” and of the right of Indians to “maintain and pass on traditional religious beliefs, languages, and social practices without fear of discrimination or suppression.” Even the “religious rights of Native prisoners” merit a shout-out.

If the Democrats showed as much respect for the religious rights of Christians and Jews as they do Indians, they would even the playing field with Republicans on this issue.

Finally, it is ironic to note how adamantly the Platform opposes “attempts to impose a religious test,” given the enthusiasm that leading Democrats have shown for imposing a religious test on Catholic candidates for the federal bench. So what’s the difference? The difference can be explained by what we left out.

Here is the sentence in its entirety. “We reject attempts to impose a religious test to bar immigrants or refugees from entering the United States.” Score another win for Muslims.

As the survey found, the role of religion in American society is waning, and most do not believe that is a good thing. To turn things around, we will have to have both parties committed to the religious liberties of all people of faith, and not just a few protected groups.

BUTTIGIEG'S RELIGION PROBLEM

Pete Buttigieg, unlike most of his Democratic competitors, is not shy when talking about religion. His problem is that no one knows who his audience is.

When it comes to matters of sexuality and the family, Buttigieg can't persuade traditional Catholics, evangelical Protestants, orthodox Jews, and most Mormons and Muslims, that he is right. His rejection of marriage, properly understood, and his celebration of abortion rights, will not get him one of their votes. So he is trying to appeal to the "religious left."

The "religious left," however, is almost indistinguishable from the secular left: their socialist vision is what conjoins them. The problem for Buttigieg is that many in the secular camp are militants, and they don't want to hear his "God-talk" routine.

Evidence of his problem can be seen in an op-ed column by Kate Cohen in the *Washington Post*. She is drawn to Buttigieg in many ways, but she has one nagging problem with him: She is an atheist—and an angry one at that—and he is a Christian.

Cohen hates the way Buttigieg equates religion with morality. She prefers a morality without religion, arguing that morality is an individual attribute.

She is badly educated. Religion is first and foremost an expression of morality. This is true even of those religions which have very different tenets. While it is true that individuals may have their own moral compass, no society can exist without a moral consensus. This is Sociology 101. Good luck trying to craft a moral consensus that is not grounded in

religion.