

FREE SPEECH, ANYONE?

This is the article that appeared in the May 2025 edition of Catalyst, our monthly journal. The date that prints out reflects the day that it was uploaded to our website. For a more accurate date of when the article was first published, check out the news release, [here](#).

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.

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.

An event took place in April that sheds 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 state of free speech is also precarious.

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.

Why do so many liberals have a big problem with free speech? It basically comes down to one thing: they are obsessed with control. And if they can control your speech, they are well on their way to succeeding.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUBJECTIVISM

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Bill Donohue has decided to address a story that is developing in Anytown USA. The venue is a local gym for adult men and women.

Reporter: Why are teenage boys allowed to compete in pre-teen boy games in Anytown?

Mayor: They are not. The only boys who can compete in pre-teen sports are those who identify as pre-teen.

Reporter: But I just witnessed what is obviously a teenager competing in a pre-teen event.

Mayor: Your perception is not determinative. We spoke to the boy you are talking about, and he says he is pre-teen.

Reporter: But it is obvious that teenage boys are bigger and stronger than pre-teen boys.

Mayor: That may be true, but it is also true that there are pre-teen boys of various sizes.

Reporter: This is crazy. We already have sports for teenage boys, so why the need for them to compete with pre-teens?

Mayor: They are not. The real issue is who determines who a teenager is.

Reporter: That's easy. Birth certificates settle this issue.

Mayor: Birth certificates simply prove the age that someone was assigned at birth.

Reporter: Are you implying that is not enough evidence?

Mayor: You don't get it. There is a spectrum of age groupings. Quite frankly, it is entirely possible for someone to consider himself to be younger, or older, than the age assigned at birth.

Reporter: If this continues, there will be no pre-teen sports programs left.

Mayor: This misses the point. The government has no right to tell anyone what sex or age someone is. We live in a free country, and we need to respect the autonomy, and conscience rights, of everyone. We also believe in being inclusive, letting everyone compete according to the sex and age they

identify with.

Reporter: Does this apply to occupations as well?

Mayor: What do you mean?

Reporter: Can someone claim to hold a certain job even if it appears to outside observers that he is lying?

Mayor: You are being argumentative.

Reporter: Not at all. I am simply following your logic. From this day forward I will consider myself to be Mayor of Anytown USA.

Mayor: But I am the mayor.

Reporter: Not anymore. You were elected. My self-identification matters more. And guess what? You're fired.

Mayor: This is outrageous.

Reporter: By the way, I have also decided to identify as a woman. Can you tell me where the ladies shower room is? Your wife just entered.

IS THE ACLU CRAZY?

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by Bill Donohue

This article originally appeared in the American Spectator on March 20.

If there were a proposal to erect a statue of St. Michael the Archangel on a municipal building, it would be understandable if some objected. However, it would not be understandable to object on the grounds that a depiction of St. Michael stepping on the neck of the Devil ineluctably conjures up images of George Floyd. But that is exactly the position of the ACLU of Massachusetts.

Having authored a Ph.D. dissertation, two books, and a monograph on the ACLU, I am convinced that most of its board members and senior officials harbor a deep animus against religion. Nothing bothers them more than Christianity, especially Catholicism. This is much more than a phobia: religion is seen as a threat to liberty.

When the ACLU was founded in 1920 by Roger Baldwin (the ACLU today falsely claims that Baldwin was one of 10 who founded the organization), all the provisions of the First Amendment, save for religious liberty, were listed as part of their ten objectives. That was not an oversight: Baldwin was an atheist.

Still, the reasoning of the ACLU of Massachusetts is off-the-charts, even by ACLU standards. It is challenging a decision made by the mayor of Quincy to erect two statues of Catholic saints outside the Quincy Public Safety Building. Mayor Thomas Koch chose St. Florian and St. Michael the Archangel; they are the patron saints of firefighters and police officers, respectively. The ACLU says the statues violate the separation of church and state.

The ACLU is well aware that religious statues adorn many buildings in the nation's capital, including the Capitol Building, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, the Lincoln Memorial, and other public buildings. Even in Massachusetts, the Boston Public Library features the outstanding work of John Singer Sargent: his religious murals, including "Madonna of Sorrows," are classic. At the State House, there are statues and paintings of famous Christians,

clergy, and laity alike.

But none of this is enough to allay the fears of the ACLU.

In the ACLU's letter to Mayor Koch and the Quincy City Council, it said that "we note that the contemplated statue of Saint Michael is not only troubling ... it depicts a figure stepping on the neck of a demon. Such violent imagery is particularly abhorrent in light of the murder of George Floyd and other acts of police brutality throughout the country."

In other words, the revered saint who battled Satan and who is known as the guardian prince of Israel—he stood ready to defend God's chosen people—reminds the ACLU of a serial violent criminal who resisted arrest and was subdued by the cops; he had four times the lethal dose of fentanyl in his system. Maybe if St. Michael had been depicted as engaging in dialogue with the Devil, instead of crushing his head, the ACLU would have applauded.

Would Baldwin have agreed with the ACLU? Only in part.

When I interviewed him in his home in New York City in 1978, we discussed an array of issues. He was cordial and forthcoming. But when it came to religion, he was an extremist. Here is an exchange I will never forget (See my book, *The Politics of the ACLU*: Transaction Press, 1985).

Donohue: The ACLU has even gone so far as to deny the right of people to voluntarily take the time during the day, as a schoolchild, to say a prayer.

Baldwin: Not on school time.

Donohue: Well, whose rights are being infringed upon if there is a silent prayer voluntarily said by a student?

Baldwin: If they don't say anything? You mean if they don't—

Donohue: Right. Are you afraid they are going to proselytize

the rest of the class?

Baldwin: Well, they've tried to get around it. They've tried to get around it even further than you by calling it meditation.

Donohue: What's wrong with that?

Baldwin: You don't say anything about God or religion or anything. I suppose you can get by with that but it's a subterfuge, because the implication is that you're meditating about the hereafter or God or something.

Donohue: Well, what's wrong with that? Doesn't a person have the right to do that? Or to meditate about popcorn for that matter?

Baldwin: I suppose that—it sounds very silly to me because it looks like an obvious evasion of the constitutional provision.

Back to St. Michael. Baldwin surely would have opposed erecting the statue, but he would have done so on conventional church and state grounds. Even if he were apprised of the George Floyd incident, he clearly would not have equated St. Michael stepping on the head of the Devil with a cop kneeling on Floyd. I spent many hours with him. He may have been an extremist on church and state, but he was not crazy.

COLORADO'S SICK WAR ON PARENTAL RIGHTS

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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 regimen 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.

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.

McCARRICK’S DEATH DOESN’T RESOLVE EVERYTHING

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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 Bill Donohue said in his 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 Bill Donohue for fighting anti-Catholicism. He had been in the job for only a few years. Donohue was struck when McCarrick told him of his desire to come across the Hudson and become the successor to Cardinal O'Connor. Why, Donohue wondered, would he tell him? 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 Donohue said in his 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 was very close to Pope Francis, who elevated him to several high posts. Pope Francis also said 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.

COLUMBIA TARGETS CATHOLIC STUDENTS

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*Columbia has a problem with Jewish **and** Catholic students.*

April 16, 2025

Ms. Claire Shipman
Acting President
Columbia University
Office of the President
202 Low Library, 535 W. 116 St., MC 4309
New York, New York 10027

Dear Acting President Shipman:

As president of the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization, I was disturbed to read of an anti-Catholic incident that took place at Columbia. The victim is Daniel Di Martino, Ph.D. candidate in Economics. The victimizer is Columbia University.

Mr. Di Martino was summoned to appear before "investigators" from the Office of Institutional Equity because of his professed belief in Catholic teachings. He was told that by posting on social media comments such as, "God does not teach us that we can change our gender," he was engaging in "conduct that could be considered discriminatory harassment." He was also told that what he did could be interpreted as "creating a hostile environment."

It would be more accurate to say that Columbia is creating a "hostile environment" for Catholic students. Indeed, most practicing Jewish, Muslim and Protestant students would agree with Di Martino's post.

It must also be said that there is a profound difference between conduct, such as taking over a campus building and stopping Jewish students from going to class—this is not protected under the First Amendment—and speech that in no way threatens public order (this is protected by the First Amendment).

Columbia boasts that it promotes "Inclusion & Belonging,"

saying they “are essential elements of a welcoming campus. At Columbia, all members of the community—students, faculty and staff—are expected to participate in creating a culture of inclusion.”

That culture of inclusion was violated when staff members created a “hostile environment” for Daniel Di Martino, and others like him. To be specific, interrogating Catholics for publicly supporting their religion creates a “chilling effect” on their speech. Therefore, I respectfully ask that this incident be investigated by agents from outside the Columbia community.

I noticed that in the “Inclusion & Belonging” section under “University Life” that it lists support for students who are Arab and Palestinian, Asian and Asian American, Black, Jewish, Latinx/e/a/o, LGBTQIA+, Muslim, Native American and Indigenous, and People with Disabilities. Why is there no support for Catholic students at Columbia? There is obviously a need.

In 2002, Columbia President Lee Bollinger personally apologized to me after a bigoted incident on campus. It involved an obscene anti-Catholic stunt committed by a band announcer at a football game against Fordham. This is more serious—it gets to the issue of thought control. Please take the necessary steps to rectify this problem.

Sincerely,

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

cc: Laura Kirschstein, Vice Provost for the Office of
Institutional Equity
Daniel Di Martino
Erin Mersino, Esq., Thomas More Law Center
Linda McMahon, U.S. Secretary of Education