

# TRUMP ENSURES RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ON CAMPUS

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a new Trump directive on religious liberty:

For many years now, I have said that there is more free speech allowed in your local pub than there is on your local college campus. Ditto for religious rights. It took the Trump administration, led by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, to assure that colleges and universities catch up to pub standards.

On September 9, DeVos issued a new directive that holds public institutions of higher education accountable for enforcing norms that protect free speech and religious liberty on campus. For example, student-initiated religious clubs on campus cannot be denied the right to set their own strictures regarding membership.

This rule is necessary because attempts to deny religious liberty have been commonplace on the campuses of public universities. In short, “a religious group must have the same rights as other student groups at the public institutions to receive official recognition, to use the institution’s facilities, and to receive student fee funds.”

In a more sane environment, it would not take the U.S. Department of Education to tell public institutions of higher education that they are expected to enforce the rights encoded in the First Amendment. The administrators would see to it. But because so many college administrators are at least as hostile to free speech and religious liberty as their faculty are—if not more so—the job of protecting basic constitutional rights falls to the executive branch of government.

Though the Department of Education news release announcing

this ruling does not say what brought us to this point, it is clear to anyone who has followed this issue that radical gay activists—students, faculty, and administrators—are largely responsible. It is one thing to respect the rights of homosexual students and those confused about their sexual identity; it is quite another to allow activists in their ranks to deny the religious rights of those who disagree with their agenda.

Public colleges and universities are quick to demand federal funding of their programs. They should not be given a dime if they fail to ensure free speech and religious liberty on campus. Kudos to the Trump administration.