

TRUMP'S RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PANEL UNDER ATTACK

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Ever since President Trump announced on May 1, 2025 that he wanted a Religious Liberty Commission to make recommendations on how to protect our most important freedom, critics have tried to discredit it. The same is true of the Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias; it was created on February 6, 2025, under the aegis of the Department of Justice (DOJ).

The final report of the Religious Liberty Commission will soon be published, but already it is coming under attack, especially by the Associated Press (AP) and the Interfaith Alliance.

On May 9, AP reporter Peter Smith ran a news story on the Commission that teed it up for critics; he did the same thing on May 1 in his story on the Task Force. He listed a series of comments by members of the panel, as well as reported instances of restrictions on religious liberty, followed by remarks from critics. His reporting deserves closer scrutiny.

One of the Commission's members has called for a Presidential Medal of Freedom for "a baker who refused to create a wedding cake for a same-sex couple."

That's right, Jack Phillips, who never denied selling a cake to homosexuals, refused to personally make a "wedding" cake for two men, citing his Christian objections. He won in the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018 but was bullied and badgered by vindictive gay activists and lawyers who sued him in a civil lawsuit. The case bounced around the courts until he finally won again. His courage was exemplary.

Amish parents in New York asserted their First Amendment right

to religious liberty when the state denied them a religious exemption allowing them not to have their children vaccinated. Yet the law allows for medical exemptions. Parental rights are also at stake.

Catholic nuns in Westchester, New York are being told they have to call those who falsely claim to be of the opposite sex "they," and to allow them to use the same room in their care facilities as those of the opposite sex.

The AP reporter notes that "progressive" critics of the Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias claim that accusations against the Biden administration lack documentation. This is false. The Catholic League alone turned over a wealth of documents, and I met personally with one of the DOJ attorneys, offering more information.

It is also noted that one of the members of the panel, Carrie Prejean Boller, was ousted. True. The former Miss California and convert to Catholicism claimed, without evidence, that her critical remarks of Israel were representative of what Catholics think; the Palestinian flag pin that she liked to wear was another expression of her partisanship.

The AP story mentions that some who testified before the panel argued that workplace regulations conflicted with their religious beliefs. Yes, when a nurse is forced by the University of Vermont Medical Center to perform an abortion, despite her religious convictions, that is a serious problem.

A Catholic woman was fired by Blue Cross Blue Shield for refusing the Covid vaccine; she won her court case in 2024. Other instances involve an Hispanic woman who was told to remove a crucifix from her desk at school, and students in Michigan who were told they could not sing a Christian song at a talent show.

The AP piece says the Commission is being sued by the Interfaith Alliance for not having diverse members and

viewpoints. That's a keeper. The Interfaith Alliance is one of the least diverse religious associations in the nation: its idea of religious liberty is so narrow as to make it hostile to any honest interpretation of it. To include those of their ilk on this panel would be to sabotage it.

President Trump's policies on religious liberty are in stark contrast to that of his predecessor. He is expanding this foundational freedom while Biden contracted it. The problem his critics have has less to do with him than it does the plain meaning of the First Amendment.