

USUAL SUSPECTS TRYING TO BLOCK PUBLIC'S ACCESS TO POPE



Bill Donohue comments on groups trying to limit public access to Pope Francis:

Poll after poll shows that Pope Francis is universally popular these days, with millions of Americans—of all religions or no religion—clamoring for an opportunity to welcome him when he arrives on our shores next week. Two groups—the Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) and Americans United for Separation of Church and State—are predictably unhappy about that, and doing all they can to limit the public's access to the pope.

Americans United is unhappy that the city of Cape May, New Jersey is planning to broadcast the pope's September 27 Mass from nearby Philadelphia at the Cape May Convention Hall. The city, which has waived charges at the Convention Center for other non-profit events, organized this one in conjunction with the Cape May Ministerium, a group of clergy representing different denominations. "It's a great opportunity for the city of Cape May to showcase itself," and to "make that available to people who can't attend in person," said Cape May's attorney. No matter, says Americans United; they'll sue if the event takes place.

FFRF got similarly exercised about New York City's giveaway of tickets to see Pope Francis in Central Park September 25. This, the group said, made New York City appear "to be endorsing Pope Francis' sectarian religious message."

FFRF is also in high dudgeon over Pope Francis' scheduled meeting with inmates at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional

Facility in Philadelphia September 27. As prisons are “public-supported,” the group complained, the pope should not have been invited to meet with inmates; nor should inmates have been permitted to hand carve a chair to present to the pontiff, even though they volunteered to do so.

Freedom *From* Religion is an apt name for this group. Obviously they care nothing for the Freedom *of* Religion of those who are incarcerated.