

### Obama's Perspective on Religion

- In his 2008 campaign for the presidency, Barack Obama disparaged working class Christians as narrow-minded bigots, saying "they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them."
- Addressing the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's 33rd annual awards, President Obama excised God from the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," Obama quoted, "that all men are created equal, endowed with certain inalienable rights." Thomas Jefferson, of course, wrote that all men are "endowed by their Creator" with certain unalienable rights.
- Planning a "non-religious Christmas" their first year in the White House, the Obamas "did not intend to put the manger scene on display" according to the *New York Times*. Ultimately they relented, and the crèche was in its usual prominent spot in the East Room. Among the ornaments on a White House Christmas tree was one adorned with a picture of Communist Chinese mass murderer Mao Zedong.
- Speaking in Indonesia, President Obama could not bring himself to proclaim America's official national motto: "In God We Trust." Instead, he substituted "E Pluribus Unum," claiming—incorrectly—that this is our national motto.
- At the 2015 National Prayer Breakfast, in an attempt to deflect guilt from Muslim madmen, President Obama said, "Unless we get on our high horse and think this is unique to some other place, remember that during the Crusades and the Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ." Obama's ignorance was astounding and his comparison pernicious. The Crusades were a defensive Christian reaction against Muslim madmen of the Middle Ages. As for the Inquisition, it was secular authorities, not the church, who burned heretics. Indeed, secular authorities blasted the Church for its weak role in the Inquisition.
- During the White House Easter breakfast, President Obama said, "On Easter, I do reflect on the fact that as a Christian, I am supposed to love. And I have to say that sometimes when I listen to less than loving expressions by Christians, I get concerned." This just a week after he was unable to identify the religious affiliation of those chosen for execution by Muslim barbarians in Kenya. They were Christians.

### Obama Appointees' Record on Religious Liberty

- In his 2008 campaign for the presidency, Barack Obama announced a Catholic National Advisory Council that included 26 Catholic current or former public office holders, *none of whom* supported the Catholic position

on such critical issues as abortion, embryonic stem cell research and school vouchers. Of the 26, 17 had a perfect score from NARAL, the nation's most radical pro-abortion organization.

- In March of 2009 President Obama appointed Catholic Kathleen Sebelius, previously rebuked by her bishop for her extreme pro-abortion record while governor of Kansas, as Secretary of Health and Human Services. She was a defender of George Tiller, the infamous late term abortionist in Kansas who aborted more than 60,000 babies.
- Dawn Johnsen had to withdraw as nominee to be an assistant attorney general after controversy arose over her previous record as an ACLU and NARAL lawyer who sought to strip the Catholic Church of its tax-exempt status.
- Harry Knox, a gay activist with the Human Rights Campaign who had accused Pope Benedict XVI of "endangering people's lives" by not endorsing condom use as a solution to AIDS, was appointed to the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Knox had labeled members of the Knights of Columbus "foot soldiers of a discredited army of oppression."
- Kevin Jennings was named the Obama administration's Safe Schools Czar. Jennings belonged to the anti-Catholic hate group ACT UP, which in 1989 stormed St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City during Sunday Mass, chained themselves to the pews and desecrated the Eucharist.
- Chai Feldblum, a Georgetown law professor, was appointed to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Feldblum said that in conflicts between religious liberty and sexual rights, the latter should triumph; and she had signed a statement, "Beyond Same-Sex Marriage," that demanded governmental *and* private recognition of every conceivable "partnership" and "relationship"—meaning that both the public and private sector (including churches) must grant rights to "queer couples who decide to jointly create and raise a child with another queer person or couple, in two households."
- In 2009 Obama appointed John Holdren, a proponent of forced abortions and compulsory sterilization, as his "science czar."

#### Obama's Policies on Religious Liberty

- Three days after assuming office, Obama announced that he would overturn restrictions on funding abortions overseas.
- Less than a week later, he said he would restore U.S. funding to the U.N. Population Fund, which pays for abortion.

- In February 2009, Obama's newly designed Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships was announced. Its focus was not religious liberty. Instead, its goal was to decide on a case by case basis which funding requests were constitutionally acceptable, calling into question the hiring rights of religious non-profits.
- Obama lifted restrictions on federal funding of embryonic stem cell research, thus allowing the government to be in the business of killing nascent human life.
- Obama rolled out his health care bill, which included funding for abortion.
- The Obama administration reopened a case against Belmont Abbey College, challenging the school's decision not to cover abortion, artificial contraception, and sterilization in its health care coverage.
- The White House had Georgetown University put a cover over Catholic religious symbols so they did not appear as a backdrop when President Obama spoke at the Catholic university.
- Obama became the first president in U.S. history to welcome a gathering of atheists at the White House. Administration officials met with activists from the Secular Coalition for America, an umbrella group that includes American Atheists and other virulently anti-Christian organizations.
- In a direct attack on religious freedom, HHS Secretary Sebelius rolled out what would become the HHS mandate: Catholic institutions would be required to pay for contraception, sterilization and abortion-inducing drugs in their health care plans for employees. Moreover, the policy allowed for religious exemptions for Catholic churches, but not for Catholic non-profits. Its rationale was that since Catholic non-profits employ and serve non-Catholics, they would not qualify for this religious exemption. In effect, Catholic universities, hospitals and social service agencies were being penalized for *not* discriminating against non-Catholics.
- In September 2015, President Obama invited a collection of pro-abortion nuns, Catholic gay activists, assorted dissidents and religious rebels to attend Pope Francis' visit to the White House.

### Trump's Perspective on Religion

- In July 2019, President Trump invited 27 survivors of international religious persecution to the Oval Office. During the meeting he praised and thanked the group for being "a witness to the importance of advancing religious liberty all around the world."

- At a meeting on religious liberty at the 2019 U.N. General Assembly, President Trump remarked that "true tolerance means respecting the right of all people to express their deeply held religious beliefs."
- On January 15, 2019, during a proclamation of Religious Freedom Day, Trump made several references to the importance of religious liberty and values in promoting freedom. He proclaimed that "the right to religious freedom is innate to the dignity of every human person and is foundational to the pursuit of truth."
- On the 2018 National Day of Prayer, President Trump spoke about the important role that people of faith have had in sustaining the values of this country. During a speech in the Rose Garden, he remarked that "Faith has shaped our families, and it's shaped our communities. It's inspired our commitment to charity and our defense of liberty. And faith has forged the identity and the destiny of this great nation that we all love."
- In a speech at the 2019 National Prayer Breakfast, President Trump reaffirmed his commitment to religious liberty. He noted that "As President, I will always cherish, honor, and protect the believers who uplift our communities and sustain our nation to ensure that people of faith can always contribute to our society."
- During the 2019 National Christmas Tree lighting ceremony, Trump made reference to Jesus Christ as the real meaning of the Christmas season. In his remarks, he noted that "Christians give thanks that the Son of God came into the world to save humanity. Jesus Christ inspires us to love one another with hearts full of generosity and grace."

#### Trump Appointees' Record on Religious Liberty

- In February 2019, President Trump nominated William Barr for United States Attorney General. A practicing Catholic, he has proven to be a staunch supporter of the faithful and religious liberty. In September 2019 during a speech at Notre Dame Law School, Barr criticized anti-religion "militant secularists" who "seem to take a delight in compelling people to violate their conscience."
- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has been a defender of religious liberty. In a speech to the Heritage Foundation on October 22, 2019, Pompeo reaffirmed the State Department's prioritization for promoting religious freedom and pro-life policies. In addition, under his leadership the Department announced the formation of a Commission of Unalienable Rights and has made opposing international religious persecution a top priority.

- During his Administration, Trump nominated Judges Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, both of whom have a strong record of ruling in favor of First Amendment rights and religious liberty.
- In 2017, Trump nominated Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education. During her tenure, DeVos has done remarkable work in protecting the religious rights of Christians in public and private schools; she has stood up for school choice and voucher programs, and has advocated for charter schools. In addition, the Department of Education has worked to expand religious exemptions for faith-based programs for federal programs.

### Trump Policies on Religious Liberty

- In May 2018, President Trump signed an executive order to establish a White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative. The Initiative will "provide recommendations on the Administration's policy agenda affecting faith-based and community programs; provide recommendations on programs and policies where faith-based and community organizations may partner and/or deliver more effective solutions to poverty; apprise the Administration of any failures of the executive branch to comply with religious liberty protections under law; and reduce the burdens on the exercise of free religion."
- On May 4, 2017, President Trump signed an executive order that ensures religious organizations are protected from discrimination based on their religious freedom.
- In April 2019, the Office of Personal Management finalized rules and guidelines that will make it easier for religious federal employees to get time off for religious observances and holidays.
- In December 2019, President Trump signed an executive order that will allow for the cutting of federal funds to colleges and universities that do not curb Anti-Semitic discrimination on campus.
- At the U.N. General Assembly in September 2019, President Trump hosted a call to religious freedom event at the U.N. headquarters. In his remarks, he announced the formation of a coalition of U.S. business for the protection of religious freedom and announced that his administration will allocate \$25 million in funds for the protection of religious freedom and religious sites around the world.
- In December 2019, President Trump signed into law a repeal of a section of the Tax Cuts and Jobs act that required religious non-profits and houses of worship to pay taxes on employer provided parking.

- In January 2018, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the formation of a Conscience and Religious Freedom Division within the HHS Office for Civil Rights. The purpose of the division is to "restore federal enforcement of our nation's laws that protect the fundamental and unalienable right of conscience and religious freedom."
- In May 2019, HHS announced a final rule that would exempt federally funded individuals and entities from participating in procedures that go against their religious beliefs.
- On November 1, 2019, HHS announced a proposed rule change that would sustain federal funding for faith-based grantees that refuse to provide adoption services to same-sex couples based on their religious beliefs.
- In May 2019, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) proposed the revision of a rule that would give religious exemption to HUD grant recipients that choose to place transgender persons in housing based on their biological sex.
- In January 2018, the Justice Department designated a new section in the U.S. Attorney's Manual specifically devoted to the protection of religious liberty. The section, entitled The "Associate Attorney General's Approval and Notice Requirements for Issues Implicating Religious Liberty" will require all U.S. Attorney Offices to set up a point of contact for any civil suit involving religious freedom or religious liberty.
- On July 30, 2018, U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced the creation of a Religious Liberty Task Force within the Department of Justice. In January 2018, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced new guidelines that would expand disaster relief to allow churches and other non-profit houses of worship to be covered by federal funds.
- On August 15, 2019, the Labor Department issued a proposal that would expand the religious freedom protections of federal contractors. The Department opened a 30 day comment period for the proposal.
- Between 2017-2019, the Department of Justice obtained 14 convictions in cases involving attacks or threats against places of worship.