



# CATHOLIC LEAGUE

*For Religious  
and  
Civil Rights*

March 27, 2023

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Mr. Chris Reykdal  
Superintendent of Schools  
P.O. Box 47200  
Olympia, WA 98504-7200

Dear Superintendent Reykdal:

On March 6, I wrote Dr. Alan Spicciati, Superintendent of the Auburn School District, about a bigoted remark made by a teacher, Kelly Love; she teaches at Auburn School District 408.

The letter I received on March 21 from Vicki Alonzo, Director of Communications, said that Love's remarks (a tweet) represented her own "personal opinion." Moreover, she said, "Auburn School District staff members do not lose their First Amendment rights to free speech as a public employee." Not a word was said about Love's hate speech.

For the record, Love tweeted about another teacher's interest in alerting parents to some school policies that were being kept from them. In reply, she said, "I cannot disagree with this more. So many students are not safe in this nation from their Christo-fascist parents."

In my letter to Dr. Spicciati, I said, "Such a sweeping anti-Christian remark runs counter to the Auburn School District's policy on equity." I then quoted from it, stating that "Love violated these tenets." I asked what he was going to do about this. Now I know—nothing.

There are three problems with this passivity.

First, if Love had used an obscenity in a tweet discussing sports, that would be inconsequential. But her bigoted remark was aimed at the majority of Americans, and she no doubt has many Christian students in her classroom. How can she be expected to treat them fairly?

Second, there is the question of the Auburn School District's equity policy. It is meaningless unless it is enforced.

"Students are affirmed in their cultural connections." "Teachers are personally inviting." It seems plain that Love cannot measure up to these equity standards. If she had made a racist remark against African Americans, are we to understand there would be no consequences?

Third, it is simply not true to say that public employees in Washington can say whatever they want. Not when it crosses the line.

In January 2020, it was reported that Rafaela Kayryakoff, a first-grade teacher at Meridian Elementary School in Kent, tweeted that Mexicans were one of the "ridiculous immature vile cruel and extremely evil cultures that need to be genocided!" She also tweeted that "Jews dont [sic] belong in Christian countries what do they do not understand?" She also slandered Mormons.

After her principal learned of her tweets, Kayryakoff received a letter of warning from the district. She was accused of violating its equity policy, among other things. She was then required to complete an online training module about implicit bias. She was also sent to another school district. Finally, she resigned.

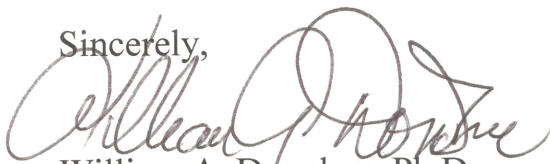
In 2021, Capt. Todd Miller, who served in the King County Sheriff's Department, was suspended without pay for making a racist remark on Facebook. That same year, a detective, Michael Brown, was *fired* for posting a series of racist comments on Facebook.

All three of these state employees were sanctioned, in one way or another, for their bigoted statements. Yet absolutely nothing has been done about Kelly Love's anti-Christian remark. This kind of duplicity is indefensible. Is there one standard for anti-racial and ethnic remarks, and another for anti-religious remarks?



Are you, too, convinced that Love's case is purely a matter of free speech? If so, do you think the authorities erred in sanctioning the three cases I just cited? I would appreciate hearing from you about this matter.

Sincerely,



William A. Donohue, Ph.D.

cc: Dr. Alan Spicciati

Kelly Love

Vicki Alonzo

Tennille Jeffries-Simmons, OSPI Chief of Staff

Michaela Miller, OSPI Deputy Superintendent

T.J. Kelly, OSPI Chief Financial Officer

Jenny Plaja, OSPI Executive Director of Government Relations

Katy Payne, OSPI Executive Director of Communications

Deb Came, OSPI Assistant Superintendent

Maria Flores, OSPI Executive Director of Improvement of Student Learning

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Maddy Thompson, Senior Policy Advisor, Education & College Access  
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Lynn Jacobson, Seattle Times Managing Editor  
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Mario Villanueva, Executive Director, Washington State Catholic Conference



Adrienne Corpuz Joyce, Director of Policy and Communications,  
Washington State Catholic Conference  
Governor Jay Inslee  
Secretary Ross Hunter, Department of Children, Youth and Families  
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