



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on February 18, 2015

## God Grants Men Their Rights

The history of mankind is the history of struggles to be free. Freedom to speak, publish, worship, assemble, and more are the rights most Americans take for granted. But these are the very freedoms most of the world's population, even today, do not enjoy. How it is that we, in America, do benefit from such freedoms? The answer is very clear, although it is something that surprisingly few Americans currently understand.



It would be hard for me to provide a number for the many times I personally have spoken of the “thunderous assertion” in the Declaration of Independence, our nation’s birth certificate. Again and again, I have referred to the portion very near the start stating as a “self-evident” truth that “Men ... are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.”

I have always insisted everyone should stop right there because that short excerpt is more fundamentally a part of America’s identity as can be found anywhere. Rights come from God, not from government. And they don’t come from a monarch or some other source. It follows that, if God grants rights, no one but God can take them away. On this was built the whole system of government in the “land of the free and home of the brave.” Take it away and be prepared for some form of tyranny.

CNN anchor Chris Cuomo either never learned this basic truth or he has deliberately cast it aside. On February 13, during an on-air verbal sparring match over same-sex marriage with Alabama Supreme Court Justice Roy Moore, the judge calmly stated, “Our rights, contained in the Bill of Rights, do not come from the Constitution. They come from God. That’s clearly stated in the Declaration of Independence.”

Cuomo, an attorney, abruptly interrupted Justice Moore and argued, “Our rights do not come from God.... That’s your faith.... They come from man.... Our laws come from collective agreement and compromise.” There could hardly be a sharper difference between Judge Moore’s reality and Chris Cuomo’s myth. The problem is that myth has risen steadily in the U.S. and it now virtually dominates the thinking of a huge segment of the American people.

If government is the dispenser of rights then, ipso facto, government can change its mind and cancel them. There haven’t been many such instances in other countries where government engaged in such treachery because there haven’t been many occasions when a nation began as did the United States.

Shame on Chris Cuomo! We’ll give him the benefit of the doubt and assume that he never learned the basic underpinning of our nation in the first place. Evidently, he wasn’t taught it by any of his teachers or by his father (former New York governor) and older brother (current New York governor). Nowhere in Chris Cuomo’s schooling did this monumentally important, and self-evident, truth get to him.

Sadly, CNN’s Cuomo is not alone. Because of Supreme Court rulings outlawing any semblance of religious instruction in schools and elsewhere, the most important passage in the Declaration of Independence isn’t being taught. Religious ideas are banned because of the “separation of church and



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state” portion of the Constitution which, amazingly, no one can find in that document. But it’s not partisan religious belief that resulted in the Declaration of Independence; it’s common sense. Our nation is being taken away from its remarkable roots in many ways. But losing the truth that rights are granted by God and, therefore, no one but He has power to cancel or suspend them amounts to banning the core of Americanism’s greatness.

Maybe we can thank Chris Cuomo for displaying deficient understanding of his country’s roots. As a result of his ignorance, many Americans have been reminded of this seminally important bit of American history. Let’s hope they never forget it.

*John F. McManus is president of [The John Birch Society](#) and publisher of The New American. This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.*



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