

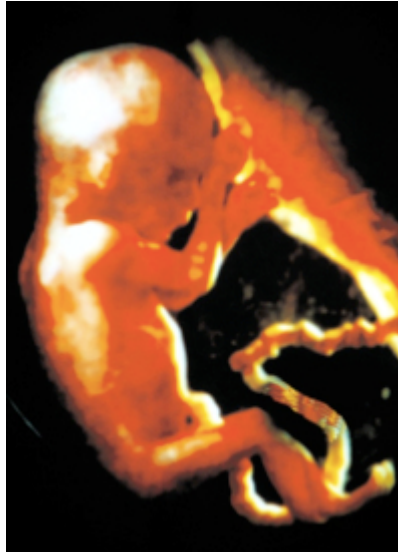


Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 18, 2009

Should Taxes Pay for Abortion, Secularism?

And like so many bills in Congress, this one contains a hodge-podge of different provisions. According to AP, other provisions in the bill are designed to:

- Force General Motors and Chrysler to restore franchise agreements with the approximately 3,000 dealerships they eliminated under restructuring plans.
- Pave the way for D.C. to legalize medical marijuana.
- Eliminate a D.C. school-voucher program.
- Allow for the creation of a needle-exchange program for drug users.



Additionally, AP tells us, “The measure also funds the Treasury Department and White House budgets. It would reduce the budget for the government’s anti-drug media campaign from \$70 million to just \$20 million.... It also contains significant increases for the Securities and Exchange Commission to police the financial markets.”

This bill is a good example of the common practice in Washington of bundling many disparate provisions into a single piece of legislation. It also brings to mind how many things into which government has sunk its claws. And it raises the issue of how, consequently, the government is legislating more values than ever.

The latter point is quite timely given the reaction to my recent [article](#) on the prejudice of atheists. Many readers took exception to my insistence that religious ideas, sentiments and symbols belong in the public square along with those “sanitized” with the label “secular.” They just cannot get past a blind prejudice that inspires them to send “religious” ideas to the leper colony of the philosophical world.

The central argument I use in defense of faith is that if religious ideas are simply man-made (as the irreligious claim) just as secular ones are, it then needs to be explained why they should be relegated to the back of the public bus. In response, some say it’s because they’re “irrational,” but such a defect isn’t peculiar to religion. I don’t think “Thou shalt do no murder” is an irrational prohibition any more than communist collectivism is a rational economic model.

Moreover, the corollary of atheism so often parroted by its adherents that “There are no absolutes” certainly isn’t rational, as it itself is an absolute statement. In keeping with this, it certainly isn’t rational to say that right and wrong are absolutely a matter of perspective but then say that certain things are absolutely wrong, as secularists are wont to do. Why, speak of sexual morality and they’ll complain that you’re judgmental, that you shouldn’t “impose” your values on others. Yet they’re quite sure that racism, sexism, homophobia, and all the other newly minted sins are damnable and that anyone exhibiting them is, as Keith Olbermann would say, “the worst person in the world.” (I’m disappointed I have not as yet made his list.) This is why C.S. Lewis once said about such people, “Their skepticism about values is on the surface: It is for use on other people’s values. About the values



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current in their own set they are not nearly skeptical enough.”

Whether atheists realize it or not, their problem with religion is purely subjective: it offends them. And this brings us back to the House bill in question here. It offends millions when government forcibly extracts money from us and uses it to promote abortion, facilitate drug use and generally try to micromanage our lives. Yet this brazen intrusiveness is usually applauded by those whose eyes cannot abide the sight of “In God We Trust” on a government building.

The reality is that governments create laws, and a law is by definition the imposition of a value. This is because a law states that there is something you must or must not do, ostensibly because it is morally imperative, morally wrong, or a corollary thereof. If this isn’t the case, why enforce it?

Now, call values what you will — religious, secular, Martian; it doesn’t matter — they will always offend some group. Despite this, secularists often behave as if their values are simply some default and that it’s quite impossible for someone to feel the same revulsion for them that secularists feel for values labeled religious. It’s true philosophical chauvinism.

It much reminds me of a discussion I once had with a very nice but naive liberal woman. She was incredulous when I told her I didn’t support Colin Powell, and she was even more befuddled at my divergence from pro-abortion dogma. She actually said about the latter (I’m paraphrasing), “How could you have a different point of view?”

Note that she didn’t say this in a confrontational tone. It was delivered instead with dreamy-eyed bemusement, the attitude of a person trying to process a perspective never before encountered and thus completely alien.

This is a major difference between secularists and people of faith. Using myself as an example, I understand well the atheistic mindset; I know how they think, what their reasoning is. I have been where they are (I used to be an agnostic). In contrast, they generally make no effort to understand the reasoning that brings people to faith, contenting themselves with the idea that such a journey is simply unreasonable. It matters not that great thinkers such as Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, C.S. Lewis and G.K. Chesterton found God. Such a find is simply irrational by their lights. It’s not surprising, though, for to seek to understand the path to faith is to, very likely, find it.

Of course, I don’t expect to be able to bring secularists to God. But I would ask two questions: can you live up to that ideal you so often espouse, the one concerning the importance of seeing matters from others’ points of view? And can you understand that something as subjective as “offensiveness” can never be a reliable guide for law-making?

At the end of the day, some distinctions are artificial. It matters little that we call some ideas offensive or inoffensive, religious or secular. What really matters is whether they’re correct or incorrect. If we determine this, we’ll know if public money should bear the name of God — or be stained with the blood of His unborn children.



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