



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 13, 2016

Christmas Under Assault, but Faithful Fight Back

It has been a tough road the last few years for those who wish to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas, and thus far this holiday season hasn't held much hope for an end to the various and sundry attacks on those celebrating the birth of the Savior.

Several weeks ago, a choir director for a high school in Wausau, Wisconsin, threw in the towel on his students' traditional Christmas concerts after an edict from the school board instituted a nearly total ban on sacred music "as a result of what they claimed were concerns over the amount of religious music being performed by choirs in the district's schools," reported [The New American](#). As a result of the crackdown, the school district's choir directors were limited to "one sacred number for every five secular songs featured at Christmas and other concerts."



While district officials eventually overturned their poorly considered policy, it was merely the opening salvo for a season of aggressive attacks on Christmas. For example, Shaw Air Force Base in South Carolina recently [removed its traditional nativity scene](#) after a supposed complaint by a number of airmen. Predictably, the alleged complaint was inspired by the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, whose founder Mikey Weinstein has been waging war on sound military judgment concerning religious expression over the past few years.

Todd Starnes of [Fox News](#) wrote that Lieutenant Keavy Rake, a spokesman for Shaw Air Force Base, told him that "the Pentagon warned that items that are almost exclusively religious in nature, like a Nativity scene, 'could appear to endorse religion' if they are displayed alone and away from chapel grounds.' Rake said the Pentagon recommended the Baby Jesus either be displayed on chapel grounds or as 'part of a larger secular or multicultural display on base.' Ultimately, base command made the decision to pull the plug."

Tony Perkins of the [Family Research Council](#) responded to the cowardly move by the Air Force, saying that it is "truly a sad state of affairs when a demilitarized zone has to be created on an Air Force base for Baby Jesus. The events in the Air Force alone show that this is much more than a war on Christmas. This is a war on the freedom of religious expression."

Not all Air Force personnel have been cowed by atheist attacks, however. Starnes posted a [YouTube video](#) showing the U.S. Air Force Band performing a "flash mob" at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum on December 3. "What a blessing to know that in spite of the Obama Administration's attacks on religious liberty in the Armed Forces, there are still men and women willing to declare, 'Joy to the World, the Lord is Come!'" wrote Starnes.



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Meanwhile, [CBS News](#) reported December 11 that two young girls in Vancouver, Washington “who were trying to spread holiday cheer were kicked off of a grocery store’s property for singing Christmas carols.” The two girls, Ayla Bascom and Kaitlyn Manseau, showed up at a local WinCo grocery store near their home to sing Christmas carols outside the store. “The girls made a sign stating they didn’t want any money and no one went into the store to file a complaint either,” reported CBS. “Instead, people stopped outside to listen to them sing....” However, the article continued, “the girls hadn’t even been singing for an hour when they were told they had to leave the property by a WinCo employee.”

Ultimately, a corporate attorney for the store chain realized that targeting little girls trying to spread holiday cheer wasn’t helping the store chain’s image, and told the girls they could go back and keep singing.

In Montana, two school districts have simply ignored the silly assaults of a pair of atheist attack groups, which threatened the districts with lawsuits if they didn’t keep their students from singing Christmas carols at a local church holiday festival. According to Focus on the Family’s [CitizenLink.com](#), “the ACLU and the Freedom from Religion Foundation demanded that choir students at Flathead, Glacier, and Whitefish High Schools not participate in the event.” However both of the school districts, Kalispell and White Fish Public Schools, “let the show go on as scheduled,” reported Focus on the Family.”

The conservative legal advocacy group [Alliance Defending Freedom](#) (ADF) went to bat for the districts, noting that student choirs may not be barred from voluntarily performing at such religious-themed events. The ADF later sent a letter to the districts commending them for standing up to the atheist bullies.

“Schools should not have to think twice about whether they can allow choirs to participate in community Christmas events,” said ADF attorney Rory Gray. “Courts have unanimously allowed students to sing Christmas carols at school. Nothing changes when they sing the same Christmas songs at a community festival instead. We commend the districts for rightly ignoring the baseless threats delivered by the American Civil Liberties Union and the Freedom From Religion Foundation.”

ADF Senior Legal Counsel Jeremy Tedesco added that “a handful of misguided complaints and a misunderstanding of First Amendment law should not be allowed to harm students and deprive them of educational experiences that serve the community. We hope other school districts will follow Kalispell’s and Whitefish’s example and reject the religious discrimination these groups promote.”

One state, Texas, has actually instituted a “Merry Christmas law” prohibiting school districts from banning Christmas celebrations on school grounds. “Texas lawmakers sent notices to schools on [December 9] informing them that new legislation allows students and teachers to dress in festive garb and say ‘Merry Christmas’ all they want without fear of punishment,” reported [Charisma News](#). The law also allows “teachers and students to sing Christmas songs, erect Christmas trees, holiday decorations, and nativity scenes, as long as they do not include a ‘message that encourages adherence to a particular religion’s belief,’” added Charisma.

Jonathan Saenz of [Texas Values](#), one of the conservative state groups behind the measure, said he and others “hope to see fewer school districts being naughty and more districts being nice” because of the law.

At least one Texas school district apparently missed the memo from state legislators concerning the “Merry Christmas” law. According to [Fox News](#), Nichols Elementary School in Frisco, Texas “banned Christmas trees and the colors red and green” from a recent school holiday party. Ironically, noted Fox,



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the school is located in the district of State Representative Pat Fallon, co-author of the “Merry Christmas” measure.

“When Gov. Perry signed ‘The Merry Christmas Bill,’ clearly that didn’t solve the issue,” Fallon said in a statement. “The battle rages on. It’s distressing.”

While a school district statement insisted that there was no ban on what students wear or bring to the “winter party,” Fallon charged that the ban remains in place, with the principal explaining that she didn’t want to offend any families who might not be on board with Christmas.

Fallon sent a letter to each school official in the Frisco district, reminding them of the law and what students and teachers were allowed to do. “Texas law clearly permits Christmas-themed celebrations, events, and displays,” Fallon wrote, adding that “the district may also display scenes or symbols with traditional winter holidays,” such as nativity scenes, Christmas trees, and menorahs.

Even as Texas works the kinks out of its new law, lawmakers in other states are forwarding similar bills in an effort to put a stop to attacks on religious expression during the holiday season. According to the [New Orleans Times-Picayune](#), Louisiana State Representative Alan Seabaugh said he would introduce a “Merry Christmas” bill in his state during the 2014 legislative session. Seabaugh said his proposed law would closely mirror the successful Texas measure.

“There is a lot of misperception about what the First Amendment actually allows,” Seabaugh pointed out. “Anti-Christian groups, like the ACLU, want everyone to believe that traditional Christian symbols like nativity scenes and saying ‘Merry Christmas’ are never allowed. That is absolutely not the case.”



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