



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on September 22, 2016

## Religious Liberty Is Code for Bigotry, Claims Obama Appointee

The terms “religious freedom” and “religious liberty” are actually just code words for racism, intolerance, sexism, discrimination, and more, according to a radical left-wing activist Obama appointee serving as chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR). In a [report](#) released this month on balancing religious freedom with government decrees, the controversial outfit also called on policymakers to limit as much as possible religious exemptions on everything from mandated support for homosexual “marriage” to allowing men into girls’ bathrooms. Critics, though, are outraged at the bigotry and intolerance displayed by Obama’s extremist appointee.



Analysts said the Obama administration may actually be laying the groundwork for stepped-up future persecution of Christians and others of faith who refuse to bow to the administration’s anti-Christian demands. Already in recent years, more than a few business owners, for example, have been all but destroyed for refusing to participate in homosexual “weddings.” A county clerk in Kentucky was even jailed for refusing to endorse homosexual “marriages” illegally decreed into existence by a rogue Supreme Court. Even nuns and religious organizations are being bludgeoned by government into financing moral outrages such as abortion and sex changes. And that may be just the beginning.

Other voices on the controversial U.S. commission, though, publicly rejected the Obama appointee’s anti-religious freedom hysteria. Instead of using the force of government to beat down Christians, advocates of tolerance suggested that government decrees should be able to peacefully co-exist with religious freedom. For the Obama-appointed chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, one of four left-wing radicals appointed by Obama to the outfit, not including others appointed by Senator Harry Reid (D-Nev.), that will clearly be a problem.

“The phrases ‘religious liberty’ and ‘religious freedom’ ... remain code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christian supremacy or any form of intolerance,” said USCCR Chairman Martin Castro, a left-wing extremist from Chicago [who boasts of](#) providing “strategic consulting services” on having a “positive social impact” on “diverse communities,” whatever that means. Apparently “diverse communities” do not include people who disagree with his extreme bigotry against people of faith. He also brags about being a “proud product” of “affirmative action in higher education.”

In a statement released with the USCCR report, he blasted religion, particularly Christianity, and its alleged use as a tool of oppression. “Today, as in the past, religion is being used as both a weapon and a



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shield by those seeking to deny others equality,” Castro claimed, relying on a bizarre definition of “equality” popularized in recent years by far-left radicals. “We now see ‘religious liberty’ arguments sneaking their way back into our political and constitutional discourse (just like the concept of ‘state rights’) in an effort to undermine the rights of some Americans.”

Those imagined “rights” being undermined in Castro’s imagination include, for instance, the alleged “right” to force bakers and florists to endorse homosexual “marriage” at government gun-point. By contrast, the sovereign right of the people of the states to govern themselves, and the religious rights of American individuals and churches, are explicitly protected in the U.S. Constitution.

For Castro, though, the imagined right to force other Americans to violate their conscience trumps the constitutionally protected right to live out one’s faith and moral principles. “This generation of Americans must stand up and speak out to ensure that religion never again be twisted to deny others the full promise of America,” he argued. Presumably, he had in mind groups like the Little Sisters of the Poor, who have been fighting for religious liberty and against Obama’s extreme efforts to force the nuns to pay for abortion-inducing drugs and other outrages against their beliefs.

The radical remarks equating religious freedom with hatred and oppression came in a statement released by Castro with a nearly 300-page USCCR screed dubbed [Peaceful Coexistence: Reconciling Nondiscrimination Principles with Civil Liberties](#). Among other primary recommendations, the report claims that “overly-broad [sic] religious exemptions unduly burden nondiscrimination laws and policies.” As such, the report calls for religious liberty to be curtailed. “Federal and state courts, lawmakers, and policy-makers at every level must tailor religious exceptions to civil liberties and civil rights protections as narrowly as applicable law requires,” the report argued, as if the commission could dictate demands to courts and lawmakers.

The report targets a wide array of religious liberties, which the commissioners argue should be restricted or abolished. Among other examples cited of conflicts between religious freedom and “nondiscrimination principles” is “when religious institutions and organizations claim the freedom under constitutional and statutory law to choose leaders, members or employees according to the tenets of their faith, even if the choice would violate employment, disability, or other laws.” In other words, government should have a bigger say in choosing church leaders. “It arises also when individuals claim the freedom to adhere to religious principles regardless of otherwise applicable law governing their conduct,” the report found.

The commission recommended that federal and state laws on religious freedom be modified and “clarified” to further restrict the rights of religious people and institutions. For example, the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act should be changed to ensure that religious freedom applies “only to the extent that they do not unduly burden civil liberties and civil rights protections against status-based discrimination.” Imagine a situation in which the U.S. government claimed that a woman posing as a man must be accepted to the priesthood of the Catholic Church because of “status-based discrimination protections,” and you get the idea.

But not everyone on the commission agreed with the brazen attack on religious freedom, which was viewed as so crucial by America’s founders that it was enshrined in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights. “The secular ... side believes that the nondiscrimination principles should take precedence over religious liberty principles,” explained Peter Kirsanow, a member of the commission who requested that the issue be taken up in the first place but dissented from the outfit’s anti-religious liberty conclusions.



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“I sought to see if a balance could be struck between the two principles and whether they could peacefully coexist,” Kirsanow continued. “Unfortunately it’s pretty clear at least one side doesn’t think that they can.” That “side,” of course, is the side that believes the Supreme Court can invent homosexual “marriage” by judicial fiat, and then have government coerce everyone else into endorsing said “marriages,” regardless of religious beliefs.

Another dissenting commissioner, University of San Diego law professor Gail Heriot, also objected to the report’s conclusions. “The Commission majority takes a complex subject and tries to make it simple — far too simple,” Heriot argued in a statement. “Not many legal or constitutional issues come down to good guys vs. bad guys.” In this case, though, in the view of Obama’s appointees, the bad guys are Christians and Jews who believe the doctrines and teachings of their religions, and the good guys are those who would imprison or destroy those Christians or Jews for their beliefs.

Christian leaders also slammed the bizarre rantings by Castro. Catholic Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, lambasted the Obama appointee’s “reckless” remarks in a statement. “Castro makes the shocking suggestion that Catholic, evangelical, orthodox Jewish, Mormon, and Muslim communities are comparable to fringe segregationists from the civil rights era,” Lori said. “These statements painting those who support religious freedom with the broad brush of bigotry are reckless and reveal a profound disregard for the religious foundations of his own work.”

The archbishop also called for Castro and others to show tolerance toward people with other viewpoints. “In a pluralistic society, there will be institutions with views at odds with popular opinion,” Lori said. “The Chairman’s statement suggests that the USCCR does not see the United States as a pluralistic society. We respect those who disagree with what we teach. Can they respect us?”

The unhinged attack on religious freedom from Obama’s USCCR appointees comes shortly after Obama’s extremist-dominated Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) ruled that displaying the Gadsden Flag (“Don’t Tread On Me”) was creating a “hostile work environment.” As [reported](#) by *The New American*’s Joe Wolverton last month, “the Obama administration’s decision to overrule the employer’s initial dismissal of this complaint will cast a long legal shadow over all employers, public and private.” And the [attacks continue to grow more extreme with each passing day](#).

With the USCCR and other federal bureaucracies increasingly targeting Americans’ most fundamental God-given rights for destruction, it is past time for Congress to step in. Any government agency or commission that attacks religious freedom and hundreds of millions of religious Americans, for example, has no business receiving tax funding from Americans — or even existing in the first place. America was founded on religious freedom. Perhaps once the next Congress begins, lawmakers can start pruning the out-of-control federal bureaucracy, de-funding and abolishing rogue and unconstitutional agencies, beginning with Castro’s anti-constitutional USCCR.

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