



## Trump Condemns Democrat Candidate Calls to Revoke Tax-exempt Status for Churches

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President Trump's appearance on Saturday before 3,000 people gathered at the Values Voter Summit at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., was the highlight of a meeting that drew representatives from several conservative-leaning organizations. The event was billed as a gathering of those who wish to "preserve the bedrock values of traditional marriage, religious liberty, sanctity of life and limited government that make our nation strong."

Trump condemned the call of former U.S. Representative Beto O'Rourke of Texas, a candidate for the Democratic Party presidential nomination, to strip churches and other religious groups of their tax-exempt status if they oppose same-sex marriage.

"As you know," Trump said, "just a few days ago a Democrat running for president proposed revoking the tax-exempt status of many churches and religious groups."

Last week, during a town hall that emphasized "LGBTQ" issues, CNN's Don Lemon asked O'Rourke if religious institutions, such as schools, churches, or charities should have their tax-exempt status revoked if they opposed same-sex marriage. O'Rourke answered yes, and added, "There can be no reward, no benefit, no tax break for anyone or any institutions, any organization in America that denies the full human rights and the full civil rights of every single one of us." He said he would make stripping the tax-exempt status of religious institutions that oppose same-sex marriage a "priority."

None of the other Democratic candidates have publicly disagreed with O'Rourke on going after the religious liberty of millions of Americans, who previously had said, "Hell, yes," he was going to confiscate certain firearms. Apparently, O'Rourke has no more respect for the First Amendment than he does the Second Amendment.

During his nearly 80-minute speech, Trump explained what is going on with the Democratic Party: "They're coming after me because I'm fighting for you. That's a big part of it. They don't like you." Remarks by Barack Obama during his 2008 campaign for president regarding those who "cling" to their guns and Bibles, and the comments by Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential contest that those who supported Trump were "deplorables," seems to confirm Trump's assertion.

Trump also asserted that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat from San Francisco, "hates our



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country.” Trump characterized Pelosi and House Intelligence Chairman Adam Schiff as “bad, bad people.”

Turning to foreign affairs issues of concern to the Values Voters, Trump said, “I made clear to Turkey, that if they do not meet their commitments, including the protections of religious minorities, and also watching over ISIS prisoners that we captured, will impose very strict, strong and severe economic sanctions.”

Trump was introduced by Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council and Pastor Andrew Brunson, who was held in detention for two years inside Turkey, and whose release Trump secured in October 2018. The two prayed with Trump at the podium before Trump began speaking.

Family Research Council was one of many Christian and conservative-leaning organizations that had a presence at the event. Others present in some capacity included the American Conservative Union, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, March for Life, Religious Freedom Coalition, the Heritage Foundation, Vision for Israel, Wall Builders, and the John Birch Society.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, a radical leftist group, issued a broad denunciation of the meeting, centering their attack upon some of the organizations participating at the event. For example, SPLC said the Values Voter Summit “began in 2006 by the action arm of the anti-LGBT hate group Family Research Council.” “Hate group” appears to be SPLC’s catch-all attack on anyone that disagrees with their left-wing agenda, as they used the same derogatory attack on the American Family Association — calling it a “hate group.”

“The Family Research Council has spent decades demonizing LGBTQ people,” SPLC claimed.

The Alliance Defending Freedom, another group providing a speaker, was also described as a “hate group.”

In addition to calling some of the groups “hate groups,” the SPLC denounced the John Birch Society as “an antigovernment group,” which “has pushed conspiracy theories about communism, the United Nations and the Federal Reserve for decades.” In reality, the JBS, which had an exhibit at the summit, is pro-constitutional government and anti the abuse of government power.

A look at the schedule of events, which began on Thursday and concluded on Sunday, reveals no hate, but quite a bit of support for “Judeo-Christian values.” For example, one session held on Thursday was to “Learn how to change the world — starting in your own town.” Sponsored by the Leadership Institute, it proposed to show participants how to “speak persuasively to your community and your legislators.”

Other sessions over the course of the event addressed pro-life victories; religious freedom successes under the Trump administration; advancing religious liberty; the upcoming 2020 elections; conservatives among the younger generation; financial issues; separating facts from fictions about the transgender movement; engaging millennials on socialism, gun rights, and the sanctity of life; the Green New Deal; the progressive assault on Christian Freedom of Conscience; American Education; the Left’s Attack on the Judiciary; and a program honoring Pastor Brunson.

Speakers at the event, besides President Trump, included Representative Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), former Deputy Assistant to the President Sebastian Gorka, former Family Research Council president Gary Bauer, conservative author and radio host Todd Starnes, former Representative Michele Bachmann (D-Minn.), conservative author and political commentator Oliver North, Representative Louie



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Gohmert (D-Texas), Project Veritas founder James O’Keefe, NRA spokeswoman Dana Loesch, conservative activist and former Cincinnati mayor Ken Blackwell, and former Kansas governor Sam Brownback.

All in all, rather than a being convention of haters, it seems that the conference attracted many Americans who are concerned about the leftist and secularist trend that is engulfing the country. To the Radical Left, that is “hate.”

*Photo: AP Images*

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