



Written by [James Murphy](#) on November 16, 2023

Wisconsin City Backs Off Directive Insisting Christmas Decorations Be “Inclusive”

In the Milwaukee suburb of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, unelected bureaucrats attempted to push a “woke” Christmas on city employees by insisting that they utilize “inclusive decorating practices” when decorating public spaces for Christmas. In an email to city employees sent last week, Deputy City Administrator Melissa Cantarero Weiss urged employees to “opt for more neutral and inclusive decorations.”

Badger State conservative news outlet Wisconsin Right Now originally broke the story.



Vladimir Vladimorov/iStock/Getty Images Plus

The original directive asked employees to eschew the colors red and green and refrain from using any religious symbolism while decorating for the holiday. Instead, employees were asked to decorate with snowflakes or “snow people” and to “draw inspiration from the aurora borealis” in decorating for the holiday season.

However, after a great deal of public mockery and a [letter](#) from the First Amendment and religious-liberties organization Liberty Counsel, City Administrator Jim Archambo sent an email clarifying the earlier directive was not a directive, and assured employees “that they are free to decorate in the manner they have historically decorated.”

But the original memo certainly sounded like a demand — not a suggestion.

“As the holiday season approaches, Mr. Archambo and I ask that you take some time to reflect on our commitment to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all residents and visitors to our buildings, as well as our co-workers,” [Weiss wrote](#). “While we understand the significance of this holiday for many, it is important to recognize that not all Wauwatosa employees, residents or visitors celebrate Christmas.”

She continued: “In our ongoing efforts to foster a more equitable and inclusive community, we believe it is crucial to be considerate of how we decorate public spaces during this season.”

“To that end, we kindly ask that departments refrain from using religious decorations or [those] solely associated with Christmas (such as red and green colors) when decorating public spaces within city buildings,” Weiss wrote.

She suggested that employees decorate in themes such as “winter wonderland,” with the aforementioned “snow people,” festive lighting (without red and green lights one would imagine), or the Northern Lights, and went on to thank the chastened employees for their expected cooperation.

“Thank you for your dedication to creating a more inclusive and equitable environment in the public spaces of our public buildings.”

Certainly sounds like a directive and not a suggestion. Liberty Counsel thought so, too, calling the



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memo a “ban” on traditional Christmas decorations.

“Liberty Counsel writes to demand the immediate retraction of the unconstitutional ban on Christmas holiday symbols, decorations, and expression that the City of Wauwatosa (‘City’) sent via email to City employees,” the organization wrote. “Liberty Counsel cautions any City department from unlawful retaliation against any employee who declines this unlawful directive. The Christmas holiday ban violates the U.S. Constitution by showing hostility toward Christianity. The First Amendment does not permit the City to eliminate Christmas holiday symbols or expression in a misguided attempt to be ‘inclusive’ by eliminating all traditional elements of expression regarding a federally and state recognized holiday.”

While not overtly threatening a lawsuit against the city, the group cautioned that they believed grounds for one existed.

“The City’s effort to comprehensively eliminate Christmas symbols is Orwellian. This anti-Christmas (read: anti-Christianity) purge utterly fails to consider the Supreme Court’s recent decisions in *Shurtleff v. City of Boston, Massachusetts*, 142 S. Ct. 1583 (2022); *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, 142 S. Ct. 2407 (2022); and *Groff v. DeJoy*, 600 U.S. 447(2023). The City’s entire legal foundation (such as it was) for its Christmas decoration ban has been overruled by these cases.”

Mayor Dennis McBride fielded much of the backlash caused by the unelected bureaucrats. He hopes that the uproar will “blow over soon,” according to [WPDE.com](#).

“There is no Republican way to plow snow nor a Democratic way to pick up the garbage,” McBride wrote in an email exchange with the outlet. “Likewise there is no Christian way to mow the grass and no Jewish or Muslim way to pave roads.”

Alderman Andrew Meindl, a candidate for the mayor’s office, questioned the city administrators’ intent with the memo.

“Why are holiday colors a priority for city leadership with so many other pressing issues we face as a city?” he wondered. “Why were blue, white and purple deemed ‘inclusive’?”

Wisconsin Right Now is sponsoring a [contest](#) in which contestants may choose their favorite “snow people” meme.



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