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Trump's State Department's New "Commission On Unalienable Rights" Is Comprised Largely Of Right-Wing, Anti-Abortion Hardliners

The State Department Announced The Formation Of A New Commission On Unalienable Rights On May 30 2019 — Then Formally Launched It On July 8, 2019

In Its May 2019 Announcement Of The New Commission, The State Department Noted It Will Have Advisory Powers. "The State Department recently published a brief, enigmatic [notice](#) announcing the formation of a new Commission on Unalienable Rights. With a modest budget of \$385,074 and merely advisory powers, the commission received little attention beyond head-scratching over its strange name. Yet the significance of the endeavor should not be overlooked. It puts the government's imprimatur on an assault upon one of the cornerstones of modern liberalism: international human rights. According to the commission's draft [charter](#), its job will be to explore 'reforms of human rights discourse where it has departed from our nation's founding principles of natural law and natural rights'." [[Washington Post, 6/14/19](#)]

The State Department Formally Launched The Commission In July 2019. "The State Department will formally launch on Monday an advisory commission on human rights that has engendered controversy since it was proposed." [[Washington Post, 7/8/19](#)]

- **Secretary Of State Mike Pompeo Coopted Human Rights-Based Language To Formally Launch State's "Commission On Unalienable Rights."** "Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday unveiled a new Commission on Unalienable Rights, a panel he said is aimed at providing him with 'an informed review of the role of human rights in American foreign policy.'... In remarks at the State Department on Monday, Pompeo noted that "words like 'rights' can be used by good or evil," decrying how some have 'hijacked' human rights rhetoric to be used for 'dubious or malignant purposes.'" [[Politico, 7/8/19](#)]

The Commission On Unalienable Rights Is Likely To Champion "Traditional Values" Using Human Rights As A Justification — Despite The Trump Administration's Consistent Efforts To Undermine Human Rights

The Trump Administration Has Not Supported International Human Rights — Yet Will Likely Try To Use The New Commission And Rights-Based Language To Achieve Their Preferred Policies. "Donald Trump is not known as a supporter of international human rights.

However, late last week, the Trump State Department [announced](#) a new Commission on Unalienable Rights to provide advice and recommendations regarding international human rights policy. Advocacy NGOs are likely to be unhappy, as the commission is likely to attack many of their preferred policies, using human rights — albeit a very different set of rights than most activists prefer — as a justification.” [\[Washington Post, 6/6/19\]](#)

The New Commission Will Likely Prioritize “Natural Family” And “Traditional Values” To Limit Reproductive Rights, Gun Control, And Immigration. “The Trump Commission on Unalienable Rights is likely to champion the “natural family” and “traditional values.”... The United States has sought to purge all references to ‘sexual and reproductive health’ at the United Nations since 2017. This term, favored by mainstream human rights activists, is viewed by conservatives as code for abortion, gay and transgender rights, as well as other acts or identities that they see as ‘unnatural.’...Another likely commission favorite will be the right to individual self-defense as a justification for opposing international and domestic gun control... Natural rights could also be used to justify a tougher stance on immigration, as the expression of the sovereign right of a people to protect its territorial integrity and established culture. This clashes with a long-standing concern of human rights groups, the rights of immigrants and refugees. But it jibes well with the sentiments of nationalist movements in Europe and elsewhere, who often promote the rights of majorities.” [\[Washington Post, 6/6/19\]](#)

Human Rights Advocacy Organizations Have Criticized The Commission As “Politicizing Human Rights For Hate”

Amnesty International: The Trump “Administration Has Actively Worked To Deny And Take Away Long-Standing Human Rights Protections” — The New Commission Will Only Be Used To Undermine Existent Rights-Based Framework Already In Place. “Reacting to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s announcement today of a creation of a Commission on Unalienable Rights, Joanne Lin, national director of advocacy and government affairs at Amnesty International USA said: ‘This administration has actively worked to deny and take away long-standing human rights protections since Trump’s inauguration. If this administration truly wanted to support people’s rights, it would use the global framework that’s already in place. Instead, it wants to undermine rights for individuals, as well as the responsibilities of governments. This approach only encourages other countries to adopt a disregard for basic human rights standards and risks weakening international, as well as regional frameworks, placing the rights of millions of people around the world in jeopardy. International agreements, like the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, have been upheld by prior administrations over the last 71 years, regardless of their party. This politicization of human rights in order to, what appears to be an attempt to further hateful policies aimed at women and LGBTQ people, is shameful.’” [\[Amnesty International, 7/8/19\]](#)

Anti-Abortion Extremists Reportedly Shaped The Formation Of The Commission

Robert P. George, An Anti-Abortion, Anti-LGBTQ Princeton Professor, Is Reported To Have Played A Large Role In Designing The Commission On Unalienable Rights. “One of the conservative scholars who is reported to have played a large part in designing the formation and aims of the mission is [Robert P. George](#), a distinguished conservative professor at Princeton University, who is expected to be among the commissioners.” [\[Pass Blue, 6/4/19\]](#)

- **George Authored Multiple Discriminatory Pieces Of Legislation In Attempts To Ban Same-Sex Marriage.** “George co-authored the Federal Marriage Amendment in

2001, which would have written discrimination into the U.S. Constitution. And in 2004, he helped draft another discriminatory amendment to ban same-sex marriage. He wrote the “Manhattan Declaration,” a 4,700-word document denouncing not just same-sex marriage, but civil unions or any relationship recognition measure.” [\[hrc.org, 3/28/19\]](http://hrc.org/3/28/19)

- **George Has Condemned Abortion As An Act Of “Gross And Manifest Evil”**



Robert P. George ✓

January 23 · 🌐

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Until a few minutes ago, I had never felt physically ill as a result of watching something on television. But the video footage of New York legislators applauding and cheering the monstrous late-term abortion bill they passed yesterday on the anniversary of Roe v. Wade literally nauseated me. The sheer inhumanity of applauding an act licensing and facilitating the killing of six, seven, eight, even nine month babies--babies who could be delivered and survive; babies with fully formed faces, eyelashes, fingernails; babies who hear and are familiar with their mother's voice--turned my stomach. What kind of people are we? How can so many be utterly blind to such gross and manifest evil? These people were cheering. They were *cheering*. Where did this fanatical commitment to ensuring that the lives of children in the womb count for nothing--indeed less than nothing--come from? How did this contempt for human life insinuate itself into people's hearts?

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[\[Robert P. George Facebook, 1/23/15, accessed 6/27/19\]](#)

The Majority Of The Appointed Commissioners Are Anti-Abortion, Anti-LGBTQ

RESEARCH NOTE: Pompeo designated 12 people as involved with the Commission; this document focuses on the eight of them with notable histories of anti-reproductive rights work.

Secretary Of State Mike Pompeo Announced The Panel's Commissioners. “The panel will be chaired by Harvard Professor and Human Rights scholar Mary Ann Glendon and will include Russell Berman, Peter Berkowitz, Paolo Carozza, Shaykh Hamza Yusuf Hanson, Jacqueline Rivers, Kiron Skinner, Meir Soloveichik, Katrina Lantos Swett, Christopher Tollefsen and David Tse-Chien Pan, and F. Cartwrite Weiland.” [\[CBS News, 7/8/19\]](#)

- **Human Rights Advocacy Groups Have Sounded The Alarm Over The Commission's Appointees.** “Most of the commissioners he named publicly are known for their highly conservative views, often framed with a religious slant. The Chair of the Commission, Mary Ann Glendon, a former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, has long opposed sexual and reproductive rights, and, as documented by Equity Forward, has written in the most alarmist of terms about the supposed social harms of marriage equality in our country.” [\[Council for Global Equality, 7/8/19\]](#)

Mary Ann Glendon, Former U.S. Ambassador To The Holy See And Anti-Abortion, Anti-LGBTQ Law Professor Was Named Chair To The Commission On Unalienable Rights

Glendon Supports The Catholic Church’s Anti-Abortion, Anti-Contraception Stances And Has Been Recognized As A “Hero Of The Pro-Life Movement”

Glendon Led The Vatican’s Delegation To The 1995 UN Conference On Women In Beijing, Where She Represented The Pope’s Anti-Reproductive Rights Beliefs. “Mary Ann Glendon, the Harvard law professor who is the Vatican’s surprising choice to head its delegation to the United Nations Conference on Women that starts next week in Beijing... says she could not agree more with John Paul II, a Pope known for his rigid defense of traditional Catholic teachings not only on abortion but also on contraception and the role of women in the church.” [[New York Times, 6/29/95](#)]

Glendon Received Notre Dame’s 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award For “Heroes Of The Pro-Life Movement.” “Harvard Law School Professor and former U.S. ambassador to the Holy See [Mary Ann Glendon](#) received the Evangelium Vitae Medal from the University of Notre Dame’s Center for Ethics and Culture. She received the medal at an April 28 banquet held at Notre Dame in her honor. Named for St. John Paul II’s 1995 encyclical on life issues, the Notre Dame Evangelium Vitae Medal is a lifetime achievement award given to ‘heroes of the pro-life movement.’ It honors individuals whose efforts have served ‘to proclaim the Gospel of human life by steadfastly affirming and defending its sanctity from its earliest stages.’” [[Harvard Law Today, 5/4/18](#)]

Glendon Has Served On The United States Commission On International Religious Freedom (USCIRF); Has Long Advocated For Religious Freedom In Her Work

Glendon Served On The USCIRF From 2012 To 2016. [[uscirf.gov, accessed 6/27/19](#)]

Glendon Said That “Religious Freedom Is Well On Its Way To Becoming A Second-Class Right” In The United States. “Moving now to the state of religious freedom in the U.S. today, I have to begin by saying how thankful I am every time I return from a USCIRF trip to a country where religious minorities live in daily fear of violent persecution. My renewed appreciation for the freedoms we enjoy here at home, however, comes with increasing concern that we are letting something precious slip away. To put it starkly: I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that religious freedom is well on its way to becoming a second-class right—in the sense that it is being demoted from the status of a fundamental right to just one of many competing interests—one that can all too easily be trumped by other rights, claims, and interests.” [[NYU Cardinal Egan Lecture, 2015](#)]

Glendon Fought Hard Against Marriage Equality For Over A Decade Before The Supreme Court’s 2015 Decision

Glendon Penned A 2004 Wall Street Journal Op-Ed Fear Mongering The Detrimental Effects Of Same-Sex Marriage. “If these social experiments go forward, moreover, the rights of children will be impaired. Same-sex marriage will constitute a public, official endorsement of the following extraordinary claims made by the Massachusetts judges in the Goodridge case: that marriage is mainly an arrangement for the benefit of adults; that children do not need both a mother and a father; and that alternative family forms are just as good as a husband and wife

raising kids together. It would be tragic if, just when the country is beginning to take stock of the havoc those erroneous ideas have already wrought in the lives of American children, we should now freeze them into constitutional law. That philosophy of marriage, moreover, is what our children and grandchildren will be taught in school. They will be required to discuss marriage in those terms. Ordinary words like husband and wife will be replaced by partner and spouse. In marriage-preparation and sex-education classes, children will have to be taught about homosexual sex. Parents who complain will be branded as homophobes and their children will suffer.” [[Wall Street Journal, 2/25/19](#)]

Glendon And Robert P. George Have Worked Together For Years Through The USCIRF As Well As The Blackstone Legal Fellowship, A Project Of The Designated Hate Group Alliance Defending Freedom

Glendon And George Served On The USCIRF Together From 2012 To 2016. [[uscirf.gov, accessed 6/27/19](#)]

Glendon And George Are Both On The Board Of Alliance Defending Freedom’s Blackstone Legal Fellowship. [[blackstonelegalfellowship.org, accessed 6/27/19](#)]

F. Cartwright Weiland, A Lawyer Who Has Supported Anti-Abortion Litigation, Was Named Rapporteur Of The Commission

Weiland Supported Texas Unsuccessfully In A Landmark Supreme Court Case In Which The Court Ruled The State Could Not Place Restrictions That Create Undue Burdens On Women Seeking Abortions

While Working At The Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute, Weiland Prepared Amicus Briefs On Behalf Of The State In *Whole Woman’s Health vs. Hellerstedt*. “John D. Colyandro and F. Cartwright Weiland work at the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute, a public policy think tank in Austin. They were involved in the preparation of several amicus briefs filed on behalf of the state in *Whole Woman’s Health vs. Hellerstedt*.” [[Dallas News, 3/2/16](#)]

In An Op-Ed Weiland Coauthored, Weiland Pandered To The “Pro-Life” Community And Discussed Abortion’s Future At The Supreme Court. “As abortion providers now shift their defense from the court of public opinion to the eight highest members of the nation’s judiciary, one wonders what effect this lingering doubt will have on a Scalia-less court. For he surely saw what the public already knows: Detailed legal arguments, undermined by the footage, are camouflage for real moral costs a legislature retains the power to mitigate. There’s a human hand at the 13:22 mark of the Houston tape. One that, severed from a body, will never be held.” [[Dallas News, 3/2/16](#)]

Paolo Carozza, Former President Of The Inter-American Commission On Human Rights And Notre Dame Professor, Was Appointed To The Commission

As An Academic, Carozza’s International Studies Work Has Been Guided By His Anti-Abortion Beliefs

Carozza Has Written Scholarship About “The Right To Life” In Which He Claims The American Public Has Shifted Away From Supporting “Extreme” “Abortion.” “United States where for some time the clear trend in both popular opinion and in law has been to back away from the earlier and more extreme versions of the constitutional right to an abortion.” [[Notre Dame Journal Of International & Comparative Law, 2015](#)]

Carozza Spoke On A 2016 Right To Life Panel On A “Pro-Life World” At Notre Dame. “The Notre Dame Right to Life Club hosted its final panel on a holistic vision of a pro-life world Thursday night in Geddes Hall... Professor Paolo Carozza, director of the Kellogg Institute for International Studies discussed international development and helping the poor abroad. He said a pro-life vision of development needs to acknowledge the value of human life and consists both of individual development and community support to help others develop.” [[The Observer, 11/18/16](#)]

Carozza Has Publicly Opposed The ACA’s Birth Control Mandate

Carozza, Along With Two Dozen Notre Dame Colleagues, Signed A Letter Protesting The ACA’s Mandate That Health Insurance Plans Cover Birth Control, Claiming That Some Contraceptives “Cause Abortion” And That The Rule Is A “Grave Violation Of Religious Freedom.” “Twenty-five Notre Dame faculty members--led by the university’s top ethics expert, and including some of the school’s most eminent scholars--have signed [a statement](#) declaring that President Barack Obama’s latest version of his administration’s mandate that all health insurance plans in the United States must cover sterilizations and all FDA-approved contraceptives, including those that cause abortions, is ‘a grave violation of religious freedom and cannot stand.’ ... Some of the other distinguished Notre Dame faculty who signed the statement condemning Obama’s mandate [include] ... Prof. Paolo Carozza, director of Notre Dame’s Center for Civil and Human Rights.” [[CNS News, 2/12/12](#)]

Kiron Skinner, Carnegie Mellon Professor, State Department Official, And Long-Time Republican Advisor, Was Named Secretariat Of The Commission

Skinner Has A Long History Of Working In Republican Politics...

In August 2018, Skinner Joined Pompeo’s Team At The State Department. “Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has tapped Carnegie Mellon University Professor Kiron Skinner, a nationally known author and Hoover Institution research fellow, as the State Department’s top planner. Ms. Skinner, who has worked with former Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and George Shultz, represents what Mr. Pompeo said is a major personnel addition as he moves to fulfill [promises to rebuild department staffing](#).” [[The Wall Street Journal, 8/30/18](#)]

Skinner Worked On The Trump Campaign And Transition Teams. “During Mr. Trump’s presidential run, Ms. Skinner served as a foreign policy surrogate for the campaign, appearing on television to discuss his objectives. She later joined the State Department and National Security Council “landing teams” during the presidential transition to help staff both entities. She also helped prepare former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson for Senate confirmation proceedings.” [[The Wall Street Journal, 8/30/18](#)]

...Holding Positions Which She Has Used To Defend Her Party’s Anti-Woman Legislation

Skinner Worked As Co-Chair Of The “Women With Newt” Coalition During Newt Gingrich’s Presidential Run, Claimed That The Republican Party’s Anti-Reproductive Rights Efforts Are Not A “War On Women,” About “Government Control.” “But a surrogate for a new constituency group under the Newt Gingrich campaign, specifically designed to woo women, says that the ‘Republican war on women’ narrative (and the questions it’s raised about whether Republicans can win over women voters in November) is a distorted product of hype and hyperbole. ‘At least from the perspective of Speaker Gingrich, the issue is about government control, not about a woman’s right to choose what’s best for her health care,’ Kiron Skinner, a social sciences professor at Carnegie Mellon University and a national co-chair for the Women With Newt Coalition, told The Root. She says that, in Gingrich’s view, the contraception debate is really about broader issues of what employers should be required to do and what the government should pay for. ‘I think you’ll see that he’s a much more thoughtful advocate for women, one that says, ‘You have responsibility and choice in your life, that the government should not be involved with by mandating that you have a particular type of health care regimen,’ Skinner said.” [\[The Root, 3/12/12\]](#)

- **A Month Prior, In The February 2012 Republican Primary Debates, Gingrich Had Claimed That Opposing Birth Control Is Not Extreme, But “Legal Infanticide” And Forcing Religious Organizations To Provide Contraception Is.** “ The first is, there is a legitimate question about the power of the government to impose on religion, activities which any religion opposes. That’s legitimate. But I just want to point out, you did not once in the 2008 campaign, not once did anybody in the elite media ask why Barack Obama voted in favor of legalizing infanticide. So let’s be clear here. If we’re going to have a debate about who the extremist is on these issues, it is President Obama, who as a state senator voted to protect doctors who killed babies who survived the abortion. It is not the Republican.” [\[NBC News, 2/23/12\]](#)

Shaykh Hamza Yusuf Hanson (“Hamza Yusuf”), Classical Islamic Scholar And Founder/President Of Zaytuna College, Was Appointed To The Commission

Hamza Yusuf Has Published Academic Scholarship Calling Abortion “An Assault On Sanctified Life.” “When the angels inquired as to why God would place in the earth “those who shed blood and sow corruption,” God replied, “I know what you do not” (Qur’an 2:30). God knew there would be righteous people who would refuse to shed blood. Abortions are noted for the blood that flows during and after them. For anyone who believes in a merciful Creator who created the human being with purpose and providence, abortion, with rare exception, must be seen for what it is: an assault on a sanctified life, in a sacred space, by a profane hand.” [\[Renovatio, 6/22/18\]](#)

Jacqueline Rivers, Sociology Lecturer At Harvard, Was Appointed To The Commission

Rivers Spoke On A 2017 Harvard Law Students For Life Panel Entitled “Why We Are Pro-Life: Dignity, Equality, Human Rights” — With Glendon

At The Harvard Law Students For Life Panel, Rivers Discussed Her Anti-Abortion Views As A Matter Shaped By Faith, Race, And Socioeconomic Status. “Harvard Law Students for Life hosted a standing room only panel yesterday at noon, featuring Mary Ann Glendon, Robbie George, and Jacqueline Rivers. Their common topic: ‘Why We Are Pro-Life: Dignity, Equality,

Human Rights.’ [Jacqueline Rivers](#) spoke next, beginning with a firm statement that her pro-life views are rooted in her Christian faith: human life is sacred, science indicates that human life begins at conception, and all lives--regardless of race, gender, social condition, stage of development--are created in the image of God. As an African American woman, she said that she had a special concern for abortion's impact upon the African American community (black women make up 14% of the female population but have 40% of the abortions). She spoke at good length about the intersection of poverty, abortion, out-of-wedlock childbearing, and the retreat from marriage. Her work seeks to challenge the ecumenical black church - the most religious ethnic group in the country - to create a movement that is pro-poor, pro-life, pro-family.” [\[Mirror of Justice, 10/6/17\]](#)

Christopher Tollefsen, Professor Of Philosophy At The University Of South Carolina, Was Appointed To The Commission

Tollefsen Authored An Anti-Abortion Article With Robert P. George, A Law Professor Who Has Spent His Career Crusading Against Gay Marriage And Abortion Rights

In Tollefsen And George’s Article, “Embryos And Five-Year-Olds: Whom To Rescue,” They Argued That Life Of A Human Being Begins At Conception And That Fetuses Must Be Given The Same Respect As Human Beings Of Any Age. “As we have noted, it is the standard teaching of every developmental biology textbook we have found that not simply life, but the life of a human being begins at conception... No plausible reason has been given, we think, why some living human beings should be treated as deserving full moral respect and immunity from intentional killing, while other living human beings, differing from the first only in size, developmental stage, and location, should be treated as not deserving such respect. The pro-life view is thus deeply motivated by the principle of the fundamental equality in dignity of all human beings, and certainly not by a desire to manipulate and control. And that conviction is founded on undeniable biological facts, and on a firm commitment to the principle of the equal dignity of each and every member of the human family. [\[Public Discourse, 10/19/17\]](#)

Meir Soloveichik, An Orthodox Rabbi And Professor Of Judaic Studies At Yeshiva University, Was Appointed To The Commission

Soloveichik Has Publicly Spoken Out Against ACA’s Birth Control Mandate

Soloveichik Has Criticized The Birth Control Mandate As A Violation Of Religious Freedom. “‘The putative accommodation is no accommodation at all,’ said the rabbi, Meir Soloveichik of Yeshiva University and Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in New York City. ‘Religious organizations would still be obligated to provide employees with an insurance policy that facilitates acts violating the organization’s religious tenets.’” [\[New York Times, 2/14/12\]](#)

Soloveichik Has Been Recognized For His Efforts Surrounding “Conscience Rights” By Anti-Abortion Extremists

He Was Awarded The 2018 Canterbury Medal By The Becket Fund For Religious Liberty, An Anti-Abortion Extremist Group. “Rabbi Soloveichik, 40, stands out because of his sense of history. But the decision to award him the 2018 Canterbury Medal, an honor given to someone who advances the cause of conscience rights, has more to do with his future potential, according to Bill Mumma, CEO and board chairman of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty,

which sponsors the annual award... "It is one of the great honors of my life to be affiliated with what Becket does," [Soloveichik] said." [\[Deseret News, 5/17/18\]](#)

Soloveichik Also Has Ties To Robert P. George, Anti-Abortion Advocate

Soloveichik Has Described Robert P. George As A Mentor. "It is one of the great honors of my life to be affiliated with what Becket does,' [Soloveichik] said. Past Canterbury medalists include now-President Dallin H. Oaks, first counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Mitt and Ann Romney, and Robert George, a legal scholar whom the rabbi describes as a mentor." [\[Deseret News, 5/17/18\]](#)

- **Robert P. George Has Written That Even In Cases Of Rape, The Fetus Is Not Doing Harm To A Mother And Therefore "The Burden Of Carrying The Baby, For All Its Distinctness, Is Significantly Less Than The Harm The Baby Would Suffer By Being Killed."** [\[The Wrong Of Abortion, 2005, co-authored by Patrick Lee and Robert P. George\]](#)