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

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo [announced the creation](#) of a new [Commission on Unalienable Rights](#) in May 2019. The Commission was [formally launched](#) in July 2019 with a [mandate](#) to advise the Secretary of State on human rights in U.S. foreign policy. Given the Trump administration’s consistent efforts to undermine human rights on the world stage, the Commission’s formation was met with [concerns](#) that it would co-opt human rights language for its preferred policies. Among the conservative ideas the Commission is likely to champion are the [“natural family” and “traditional values”](#) — while limiting [reproductive rights and immigration](#), among other human rights. The Commission largely comprises [right-wing, anti-abortion, anti-LGBTQ hardliners](#) who were all appointed by Pompeo.

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

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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](https://www.facebook.com/robertpgeorge/posts/10156011111111111)]

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

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](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/pompeo-announces-panel-commissioners/)]

- **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](https://www.councilforglobalequality.org/news/2019/07/08/human-rights-advocacy-groups-sounded-the-alarm-over-the-commission-s-appointees/)]

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

Pompeo Appointed Glendon The Head Of The Commission And In Forming It, Drew On Her Ideas Contesting “Women’s Rights Are Human Rights” Her Narrow Interpretation Of Human Rights

The Commission’s New Chair Has A Narrow Interpretation Of Human Rights. “Pompeo’s definition of ‘unalienable rights’ draws on the ideas of a legal scholar who has staked her career on making a stark distinction between human rights and women’s rights. Mary Ann Glendon is a Harvard Law School professor, former U.S. ambassador to the Vatican and outspoken opponent of same-sex marriage and abortion. Pompeo has not just drawn on Glendon’s ideas but also appointed her as the head of the new commission. According [to Glendon](#), ‘Human rights are women’s rights. ... But it is not the case that whatever a particular nation state decides to call a woman’s ‘right’ is necessarily a universal human right.’” [[Washington Post, 8/15/19](#)]

- **Glendon’s Narrowing Of The Meaning Of Human Rights Serves To Execute The Trump Administration’s Efforts To Curtail Reproductive Rights Globally.** “Differentiating between ‘unalienable rights’ and ‘ad hoc rights’ does the same thing as Glendon’s contrast between human rights and women’s rights: They both narrow the meaning of human rights to the natural law and rights of the U.S. political tradition. This undermines the international feminist movement and other movements for social, economic and racial justice that have driven the development of universal human rights over the 20th century. Such a definition legitimizes, for instance, [Pompeo’s recent expansion of](#) the Mexico City Policy, also known as the global gag rule, which denies U.S. foreign aid to organizations offering abortion-related services or advocacy.” [[Washington Post, 8/15/19](#)]

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 Lauded Praise On A Heritage Foundation Fellow’s Anti-Transgender Book That Dismisses Transgender Lived Experiences As Confusion And/OR Mental Illness

The Heritage Foundation’s Ryan T. Anderson Published A Book Calling Transgender People Mentally Ill And Part Of A “Politically Correct Fad.” “When Harry Became Sally depends on readers being skeptical about transgender identities from the start. ‘[O]rdinary Americans recognize the transgender moment to be a politically correct fad built on a shaky platform, and many are pushing back,’ Anderson writes. ‘This book is intended to arm them with knowledge.’ ... Anderson also attempts to convince the reader that these transgender individuals are all mentally ill and would be better off not transitioning.” [[Think Progress, 1/25/18](#)]

In His Book, Anderson Claims To Be Compassionate Towards Transgender People — All The While Misgendering Them And Calling Their Lived Experiences “Misguided Feelings” That “Do Not Change Reality.” “Anderson believes that transgender people are suffering from delusions and claims to be motivated by compassion for people who experience gender dysphoria, while rejecting every aspect of their transitioned identities. ‘Jenner is not a woman,’ he says of Caitlyn Jenner, whom he references on multiple occasions. ‘Regardless of which technical labels the experts apply to him [sic], the crucial point is that his [sic] feelings and thoughts are misguided and they do not change reality.’” [[Think Progress, 1/25/18](#)]

Glendon, In Turn, Called Anderson’s Anti-Transgender Book “Eminently Readable” And An “Insightful Guide.” “Mary Ann Glendon, a law professor at Harvard University, says the book ‘is an eminently readable and insightful guide for all who find themselves perplexed by today’s debates on gender identity.’” [[The Heritage Foundation, 9/3/19](#)]

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 Is On The Board of Directors for First Things, A Religious, Conservative Journal That Believes Life Begins At Conception

Glendon Serves On The Board Of First Things, A Conservative Journal Published By The Institute On Religion And Public Life. [[First Things Masthead, accessed 2/5/20](#)]

The Institute On Religion And Public Life Describes Its Mission As Defending Human Dignity Beginning At Conception And Supporting Government Guided By Religion And Morals. “First Things is published by the Institute on Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and educational 501(c)(3) organization. The Institute was founded in 1989 by Richard John Neuhaus and his colleagues to confront the ideology of secularism, which insists that the public square must be “naked,” and that faith has no place in shaping the public conversation or in shaping public policy. The Institute’s mission is to articulate a governing consensus that supports: a religiously pluralistic society that defends human dignity from conception to natural death; [and] a democratic, constitutionally ordered form of government supported by a religiously and morally serious culture.” [[First Things, accessed 2/5/20](#)]

Glendon Has Direct Ties To Designated Hate Group Alliance Defending Freedom

Glendon Has Served On The Advisory Board Of Alliance Defending Freedom’s Blackstone Legal Fellowship. “A vocal opponent of LGBT equality, Glendon serves on the [advisory board](#) for the Blackstone Legal Fellowship, a project of the Alliance Defending Freedom, the same group that [helped craft](#) Arizona’s license-to-discriminate law.” [[MediaMatters.org, 5/6/15](#)]

- **ADF Is A Recognized Hate Group By The Southern Poverty Law Center For Its Anti-LGBTQ Views.** “Founded by some 30 leaders of the Christian Right, the Alliance Defending Freedom is a legal advocacy and training group that has supported the recriminalization of homosexuality in the U.S. and criminalization abroad; has defended state-sanctioned sterilization of trans people abroad; has linked homosexuality to pedophilia and claims that a “homosexual agenda” will destroy Christianity and society. ADF also works to develop “religious liberty” legislation and case law that will allow the denial of goods and services to LGBT people on the basis of religion. Since the election of President Donald Trump, the ADF has become one of the most influential groups informing the administration’s attack on LGBT rights working with an ally in Attorney General Jeff Sessions.” [[SPLC, Accessed 10/25/19](#)]

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 Falsely Claimed That The American Public Does Not Support Abortion

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](#)]

...However, 61 Percent Of Americans Believe Abortion Should Be Legal In All/Most Cases — “As High As It Has Been In Two Decades Of Polling.” “As of 2019, [public support for legal abortion](#) remains as high as it has been in two decades of polling. Currently, 61% say abortion should be legal in all or most cases, while 38% say it should be illegal in all or most cases.” [[Pew Research Center, 8/29/19](#)]

In Fact, The Percentage Of Americans Who Believe Abortion Should Be Legal In All/Most Cases Is Higher Than It Has Been In 25 Years.

% of U.S. adults who say abortion should be legal/illegal (1995-2019)



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[[Pew Research Center, 8/29/19](#)]

Carozza Spoke On A Right To Life Panel At Notre Dame

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 Called The Rights Rationale Behind Supreme Court Case *Planned Parenthood vs. Casey* “The Justification For The Killing Of Innocent Human Life On A Massive Scale”

Carozza Has Used Natural Law To Dispute The Legality Of Abortion. “Commissioner Paolo Carozza, for his part, has utilized natural law arguments grounded in Christianity to contrast the logic of the Supreme Court’s finding in *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* to conclude that ‘the former conceives of freedom as inseparable from an objective order of truth, justice, and charity; the latter contemplates freedom as pure subjectivity untethered from human reason.’ He goes on to criticize the rights rationale of *Casey* as ‘the justification for the killing of innocent human life on a massive scale.’” [[Columbia Human Rights Law Review, 12/1/19](#)]

During The Obama Era, Carozza And Notre Dame Colleagues Spoke Out Against 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](#)]

- **“Other Leading Organizers Of The Letter Included Prof. Robert George Of Princeton And Prof. Mary Ann Glendon Of Harvard Law School.”** [[CNS News, 2/12/12](#)]

Notre Dame Was The First Major Institution To Roll Back Coverage For Birth Control Under Trump Administration’s Legally Embattled Rule Changes...

The University Announced It Would No Longer Provide Birth Control Coverage To Students And Employees In 2017. “The University of Notre Dame will no longer provide birth control coverage to students and employees, taking advantage of the Trump administration’s decision to weaken the Affordable Care Act’s birth control mandate. As Indiana Public Media notes, the Catholic university previously “made the coverage available through a third-party service separate from the rest of its health insurance and [attempted to sue](#) for the right to not

offer the coverage at all." That lawsuit, against the Obama administration, was unsuccessful. But last month, the Trump administration rolled back the requirement, allowing any company or nonprofit to refuse to cover contraception based on a moral or religious objection. That policy change allowed Notre Dame to opt out of providing contraceptive coverage in any form. Notre Dame is the "first and most important employer publicly to take advantage" of the rollback, [The Los Angeles Times reports](#)." [NPR, 11/3/17]

...However, Notre Dame Then Reversed Course At Least In Part, Stating It Would Provide Coverage From Undefined "Simple Contraceptives" — Causing Widespread Confusion Among The 17,000 People Covered By The School's Health Care

A Few Days After Announcing It Would Opt Out Of The ACA's Birth Control Mandate, The School Reversed Its Decision. "Notre Dame announced on Tuesday that faculty, students, and staff will be able to obtain coverage for contraceptives through their university-sponsored insurance plans. The surprise decision is a reversal of the school's announcement last week that it would discontinue birth-control coverage in light of new religious-freedom protections put in place by the Trump administration." [The Atlantic, 11/8/17]

- **The School Said It Would Not Provide Coverage For Any Drugs That "Kill A Fertilized Egg."** "Notre Dame has decided to ban "abortion-inducing drugs" from third-party-provided insurance plans. It will also begin providing coverage for "simple contraceptives" in the university plan.* The move was announced in a letter from its president, Father John Jenkins, to the university community on Wednesday. It was not immediately clear which drugs the ban entails, such as the morning-after pill, IUDs, or other long-acting contraceptives. That list will be available in March, a spokesperson confirmed. The school's arrangement will still allow access to contraceptives, but will discontinue coverage of any drugs that would "kill a fertilized egg," according to the spokesperson. These drugs "are far more gravely objectionable in Catholic teaching," Jenkins wrote in the letter." [The Atlantic, 2/7/18]
- **Notre Dame Eventually Clarified Its Health Coverage Would Not Cover Certain Forms Such As The Cooper IUD — One Of The Most Effective Forms Of Birth Control.** "The decision caused a considerable amount of confusion for many covered by Notre Dame's insurance — largely because the new plan directly contravened the ACA's no-cost, full-access birth control provision, which had been upheld by the courts despite attempts by the university and the Trump administration to dismantle it. Moreover, the notion that certain contraceptives induce abortion, while popular among the Catholic hierarchy, doesn't comport with science. Notre Dame has said that it will not cover the copper intrauterine device — a small, T-shaped piece of plastic wrapped in copper wire, which is toxic to sperm. While it can also be used as emergency contraception, it is among the most effective forms of birth control and is nonhormonal, which is the best solution for some women. (A spokesperson wrote in an email to The Intercept that faculty with Health Savings Accounts would also be barred from using funds to obtain a copper IUD or other reproductive services the university objects to.)" [The Intercept, 10/11/18]

17,000 People Who Receive Health Care Through The University Have Been Affected By Notre Dame's Mismanaged Decisions Restricting Reproductive Health Care. "This decision is Notre Dame's latest attempt to balance its Catholic character with the demands of pluralism

within its community. Over 17,000 people are covered by the university's health plans, including faculty, staff, students, and their family members." [[The Atlantic, 2/7/18](#)]

Notre Dame Students Sued The University In 2018 Over Its Improper Settlement Agreement With HHS Barring Students From Access To Birth Control As Mandated By The ACA. "Late last month, several women [sued](#) the University of Notre Dame over its refusal to allow individuals who participate in the university's health-care plans to access birth control as legally mandated by the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The lawsuit alleges that Notre Dame improperly entered into a settlement agreement with the U.S. government that permits the school to deny its students, faculty, and staff contraceptive coverage, regardless of the rules of the ACA's birth control benefit. The lawsuit raises thorny questions of administrative law and shows just how far Trump's agencies will go to restrict access to contraception, regardless of laws designed to stop them." [[Rewire.News, 7/9/18](#)]

Carozza Has Also Interpreted Religious Freedom To Permit Employers To Exclude Birth Control From Health Care Coverage

Carozza Has Called Birth Control "Drugs That Can End Human Life In The Womb." "Commission member Paolo Carozza has [argued](#) that religious freedom is 'key to the coherence and viability of the entire human rights project'—a freedom he has [interpreted](#) to include the right of family businesses to exclude from health care coverage 'drugs that can end human life in the womb.'" [[Just Security, 7/9/19](#)]

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

Rivers Is Executive Director Of The Seymour Institute On Black And Policy Studies — A "Pro-Life, Pro-Family" Organization Committed To Defending Marriage As Between Men And Women

Rivers Believes Life Begins At Conception; Her Anti-Abortion Views Are Reflected In The Organization She Leads

Rivers, Who Has Argued That Life Begins At Conception, Is Executive Director Of The Seymour Institute, A "Pro-Life" Organization. "Jacqueline Rivers, who has [cited](#) George and Tollefsen's book as proof that life begins at conception, is also the Executive Director of the [Seymour Institute on Black and Policy Studies](#), an institute with the goal of creating and promoting 'a philosophical and theological framework for a pro-poor, pro-life, pro-family movement within the ecumenical Black Church both domestically and internationally.'" [[Columbia Human Rights Law Review, 12/1/19](#)]

The Seymour Institute's Position Is That Marriage Is Between Husband And Wife

A "Key Initiative" Of The Seymour Institute Is Defending The "Sanctity Of Human Life" And The Idea That Marriage Should Be Heterosexual. "A [key initiative](#) of the Institute is devoted to defending 'the right of the church to pursue the practice of biblical faith and promote in society the sanctity of human life and the correct understanding of marriage as a conjugal partnership of husband and wife.'" [[Columbia Human Rights Law Review, 12/1/19](#)]

In A 2014 Colloquium Sponsored By The Vatican, Rivers Gave A Talk With Her Husband, Reverend Dr. Eugene Rivers, In Which She Warned That Marriage Between Same-Sex Couples Gives A “Profoundly False And Damaging Message” To Children

Rivers And Her Husband Spoke At A 2014 Vatican-Sponsored Humanum Colloquium “Affirming Traditional Marriage.” “The son of divorced parents who belonged to the Nation of Islam when he was growing up in Chicago, Rev. Dr. Eugene Rivers has been speaking out for the revival of Christian family values in the black community for more than 30 years. Now located in Boston, he is a nationally-known inner-city pastor of a Church of God in Christ, the largest historically-black Pentecostal denomination in the US. His wife, Dr. Jacqueline Rivers, earned her Ph.D. in African-American Studies and Sociology at Harvard University, where she met her husband. She is the Executive Director of the Seymour Institute for Black Church and Policy Studies, founded by Rev. Rivers. The couple presented the eloquent closing statement, entitled “A New Affirmation of Marriage,” at the Vatican-sponsored Humanum colloquium affirming traditional marriage in November (see our December 2014 issue for complete text).” [[Inside the Vatican, 1/1/15](#)]

Rivers Claimed Extending The Right To Marry To All Was Destroying The “Permanent Bond” Of Marriage. “Dr. Rivers called marriage a ‘permanent bond’ and a ‘divinely established order’ that ‘creates unity at every level of husband and wife: physical, emotional, volitional and spiritual.’ However, she said, ‘sexual partnerships between persons of the same sex are being legally recognized as ‘marriages,’ thus abolishing in law the principle of marriage as a conjugal union and reducing it to nothing other than sexual or romantic companionship.’” [[Inside the Vatican, 1/1/15](#)]

Rivers Claimed Marriage Equality Was Sending A “Profoundly False And Damaging” Message To Children That They Do Not Need A Mother And A Father. “Echoing Pope Francis’ statement that ‘children have a right to grow up in a family with a father and a mother,’ Dr. Rivers warned that “the unavoidable message” of same-sex marriage ‘is a profoundly false and damaging one: that children do not need a mother and father in a permanent complementary bond.’” [[Inside the Vatican, 1/1/15](#)]

Rivers, Who Is A Sociology Lecturer At Harvard, Spoke At A 2017 Event Hosted By Harvard Law Students For Life With Mary Ann Glendon, A Harvard Colleague And Chair Of The Commission On Unalienable Rights

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.” [\[Mirror of Justice, 10/6/17\]](#)

Rivers Signed Onto A 2016 Open Letter To Hillary Rodham Clinton Calling Her Pro-Choice Position “Reminiscent Of Totalitarianism” And A Denial Of Religious Freedom

The 2016 Open Letter Calls For “Biblical Principle And Natural Law” To Determine Abortion Laws In The United States

Rivers Signed Onto The Letter Expressing Concern Over The “Increasing Moral Complicity With Abortion.” “In [a letter to Hillary Clinton](#), Rivers co-signed onto an argument that demonstrates how she views the right to abortion as situated in relation to natural law: ‘Biblical principle and natural law, both of which prohibit the taking of innocent human life, compel our concern about the increasing moral complicity with abortion.’” [\[Columbia Human Rights Law Review, 12/1/19\]](#)

The Letter Called Clinton’s Pro-Choice Position “Reminiscent Of Totalitarianism” And A Denial Of Religious Freedom

The Letter Accused Clinton Of Totalitarianism, Denying Religious Freedom Due To A Speech Calling For Reduced Stigmatization Of Abortion. “Secretary Clinton, we are also very concerned about your position regarding unborn children and the black church’s commitment to defend them. In April 2015 in a speech before the National Organization of Women you stated ‘Far too many women are still denied critical access to reproductive health care and safe childbirth... Laws have to be backed up with resources and political will. And deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural biases have to be changed...’ For political leaders to call for changes in citizens’ beliefs is reminiscent of totalitarianism. In our view, such a proposal constitutes a denial of our religious freedom.” [\[Seymour Institute, Open Letter To Hillary Clinton, October 2016\]](#)

The Letter Called Abortion “The Deliberate Destruction Of Human Life In Its Most Vulnerable State”

The Letter Called Equates Opposing Abortion With Opposing Racism. “The vast majority of black churches hold biblical teaching, which is eternal, as authoritative for doctrine and practice. Abortion is the deliberate destruction of a human life in its most vulnerable state. Biblical principle and natural law, both of which prohibit the taking of innocent human life, compel our concern about the increasing moral complicity with abortion. For the same reasons that we as black Christian leaders oppose racism, unjust wars, capital punishment and euthanasia, we oppose the violent denial of life to the unborn through abortion. It is our view that human life is a gift of God that we are called upon to protect, nurture and sustain, because we are created in God’s image. Therefore, our opposition to abortion is a logical outgrowth of our view that there must be justice for all. Particularly relevant is the innocence of the unborn child. The Bible places an extremely high value on human life and particularly on the lives of the innocent who are under the special protection of God. Those who take the life of the innocent violate a key

biblical principle as well as a fundamental principle of natural justice.” [[Seymour Institute, Open Letter To Hillary Clinton, October 2016](#)]

Rivers Signed A 2015 Open Letter Stating That Allowing Marriage For Same-Sex Couples Is A Threat To Religious Freedom

Shortly Before The Supreme Court Affirmed LGBTQ Couples’ Right To Marry, Rivers Signed Onto A Letter Defending Marriage As “The Union Of One Man And One Woman”

The Letter Defended Marriage As “The Union Of One Man And One Woman.” “At this significant time in our nation’s history with the institution of marriage before the United States Supreme Court, we reaffirm our commitment to promote and defend marriage—the union of one man and one woman. As religious leaders from various faith communities, we acknowledge that marriage is the foundation of the family where children are raised by a mother and a father together. Our commitment to marriage has been expressed on previous occasions, including the Letter of Shared Commitment and Letter on Marriage and Religious Liberty. This commitment is inseparable from affirming the equal dignity of all people and the necessity of protecting their basic rights.” [[Open Letter from Religious Leaders to All in Positions of Public Service, 4/23/15](#)]

The Open Letter Falsely Insinuated That Only Children Raised By Heterosexual Couples Could Be Raised In Stable, Loving Homes

The Letter Argued That The State Has An Interest In Blocking Marriage Between Same-Sex Couples For “The Well-Being Of Children.” “The state has a compelling interest in maintaining marriage as it has been understood across faiths and cultures for millennia because it has a compelling interest in the well-being of children. Every child has a mother and a father, and every child deserves the opportunity, whenever possible, to be raised by his or her own married mother and father in a stable, loving home. Marriage as the union of a man and a woman is the only institution that encourages and safeguards the connection between children and their mother and father. Although this connection cannot always be realized and sustained—and many single parents, for example, are heroic in their efforts to raise their children—it is in the best interests of the state to encourage and uphold the family founded on marriage and to afford the union of husband and wife unique legal protection and reinforcement.” [[Open Letter from Religious Leaders to All in Positions of Public Service, 4/23/15](#)]

The Letter Fear-Mongered That Marriage Equality Has “Serious Consequences” For Religious Freedom

The Letter States That Marriage Equality Infringes Religious Freedom, And Those Opposed To Marriage Equality Must Be Protected By The Government. “The redefinition of legal marriage to include any other type of relationship has serious consequences, especially for religious freedom. It changes every law involving marital status, requiring that other such relationships be treated as if they were the same as the marital relationship of a man and a woman. No person or community, including religious organizations and individuals of faith, should be forced to accept this redefinition. For many people, accepting a redefinition of marriage would be to act against their conscience and to deny their religious beliefs and moral convictions. Government should protect the rights of those with differing views of marriage to express their beliefs and convictions without fear of intimidation, marginalization or unwarranted

charges that their values imply hostility, animosity, or hatred of others.” [[Open Letter from Religious Leaders to All in Positions of Public Service, 4/23/15](#)]

Rivers Has Called Religious Freedom A “God-Given Right And Responsibility,” And Fear-Mongers That Such Freedom Is Under Attack To The Detriment Of Black Americans

In Remarks Entitled “Why Religious Freedom Matters To Me,” Rivers Called Religious Freedom A “God-Given Right And Responsibility.” “Dr. Jacqueline Rivers began the session with her remarks titled “Why Religious Freedom Matters to Me.” She labeled religious freedom as a “God-given right and responsibility,” and urged those in attendance to live consistently within their religious convictions. She expounded on the meaning of religious freedom, calling it service for the poor and citing examples of giving food to the hungry, housing to the elderly, and working with the police in Boston to turn around a huge crime wave. Dr. Rivers closed by speaking of the importance of sharing our religious beliefs, referring to Peter and John in Acts chapter 4, who were forbidden by the Sanhedrin to teach or preach: “as for us, we cannot help speaking about the things we have seen and heard.”” [[International Center for Law and Religion Studies, accessed 2/17/20](#)]

In Speaking At A 2015 Georgetown Panel, Entitled “Religious Freedom: Rising Threats To A Fundamental Human Right”, Rivers Called Out “Intolerance Of Faith” As A Threat To The Black Community

Rivers Spoke On A 2015 Panel Entitled “Religious Freedom: Rising Threats To A Fundamental Human Right.” [[Georgetown University Berkeley Center For Religion, Peace & World Affairs, 7/16/15](#)]

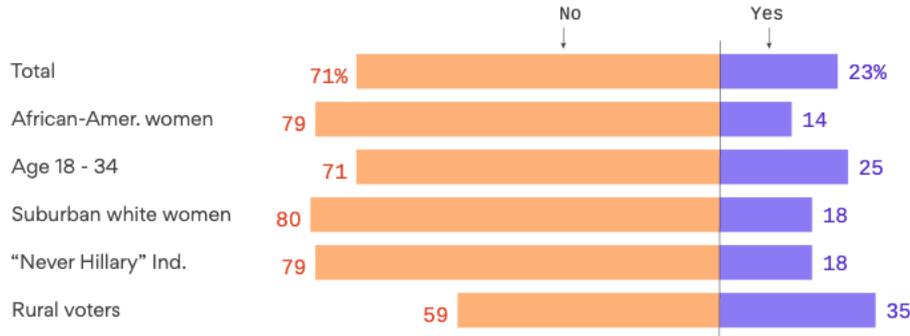
Rivers Called “The Rising Intolerance Of Faith” A Threat To The Black Community, Particularly Black Women. “In a society in which there is rising intolerance of faith and taking a stand against the culture, that really becomes to some extent a threat to us in the black community and in particular to black women.” [[Georgetown University Berkeley Center For Religion, Peace & World Affairs, 7/16/15](#)]

At The 2015 Georgetown Panel, Rivers Made False Claims With Regard To Black Women’s Support For Abortion

On This Panel, Rivers Falsely Claimed That Black Women “Are More Likely To Oppose Abortion”... “Black women... we are more likely to oppose abortion.” [[Georgetown University Berkeley Center For Religion, Peace & World Affairs, 7/16/15, 40:12](#)]

...In Reality, The Majority Of Black Women Oppose Overturning Roe v. Wade.

Would you like to see the Supreme Court make abortion illegal?



[Axios Poll, 9/12/18]

Human Rights Groups Focusing On LGBTQ Rights Have Decried The Commission And Its Appointees, Including Rivers

LGBTQ Advocacy Group GLAAD Found That The Majority Of The Commission's Appointees, Including Rivers, Have Histories Of Fighting LGBTQ Progress. "An [analysis by LGBTQ advocacy group GLAAD](#) found that 7 of the 10 people named to the commission have a history of "fighting against LGBTQ progress." Among the members flagged by GLAAD are...Jacqueline Rivers, who in 2014 [said](#) same-sex marriages diminish straight unions." [NBC News, 7/10/19]

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

Tollefsen Has Been Called "Perhaps The Commission's Most Prolific Publisher On Abortion"

Tollefsen Has Decried Abortion As Immoral And Resulting In A "Culture Of Death"; Compared Embryonic Research To "Nazi Science." "Tollefsen is perhaps the Commission's most prolific publisher on abortion. In addition to his joint work with [Robert P.] George, Tollefsen has called abortion an 'immoral act,' compared state-sponsored embryonic research to 'Nazi science,' and asserted that he is 'increasingly mindful of the way in which the presence of abortion in our world itself works to darken the natural light of reason. As the culture of death proceeds apace, the light of natural reason requires the light of Christ to see even what is obvious.'" [Columbia Human Rights Law Review, 12/1/19]

Tollefsen Is A Frequent Contributor To *Public Discourse* — A Journal Published By Ultra-Right Wing Think Tank, The Witherspoon Institute — Writing Anti-Abortion, Transphobic Pieces

The Witherspoon Institute, Which Runs *Public Discourse*, Is An Ultra-Right Wing, Anti-LGBTQ, Anti-Abortion, Anti-Feminist Think Tank

The Witherspoon Institute Is Anti-LGBTQ And Believes Marriages Should Only Be Heterosexual. “The second pillar of a decent society is the institution of the family, which is built upon the comprehensive sexual union of man and woman. No other institution can top the family’s ability to transmit what is pivotal—character formation, values, virtues, and enduring love—to each new generation.” [[Public Discourse, 2019](#)]

Witherspoon’s Center On Religion and Constitution Takes The Position That All Abortions Are “Tragic Wrongs.” “It is by now a familiar question from liberal journalists when interviewing pro-life candidates: ‘You’re against all abortions — what about in cases of rape and incest?’ Pro-lifers need to learn how to answer this question, because they can always expect it. The question tugs at heartstrings and aims at exposing a weakness. The appeal to compassion for rape and incest victims must be answered with real compassion for both parties in any pregnancy — mother and child. As for the politics of it, a pro-lifer can always say, ‘I am for any legislation that reduces the number of abortions and legally restricts a grave injustice. If that means a bill that eliminates most abortions that are legal now but makes an exception for rape and incest, I’m for it. But that doesn’t mean I’m for the exception. Every abortion is a tragic wrong, and we must work to restore respect for the sanctity of every life, from conception to natural death, no matter what the circumstances.’” [[National Review, 8/21/12](#)]

The Editor Of The Witherspoon Institute’s Journal, *Public Discourse*, Published A Glowing Review Of A Book About The “Takedown Of Contemporary Feminism” And Criticizes The Second-Wave Feminist Movement’s “Stigmatization Of Full-Time Motherhood.” “Sadly, that hasn’t stopped [The Feminist Mystique’s] message—in particular, its stigmatization of full-time motherhood and exaltation of paid work outside the home—from permeating and shaping our culture. After examining the (largely negative) impact of other influential feminists, Charen spends several chapters covering topics that will be familiar to readers of *Public Discourse*: the contemporary quest to abolish sex differences, the widespread conflation of pro-woman with pro-abortion ideals, the rise of the hook-up culture, and what Charen calls ‘the campus rape mess.’ Here Charen is characteristically unafraid of political incorrectness. She decries the ‘kangaroo courts erected by universities’ that ‘have dispensed with sacred rights protecting the accused, including the right to be represented by counsel, the right to confront witnesses, and the presumption of innocence.’” [[Public Discourse, 1/25/19](#)]

Tollefsen Has Written Numerous Articles For *Public Discourse* Refuting Gender Transitions And Defending Gender Binaries

Tollefsen Wrote That “It Is Impossible For Someone To Change His Or Her Sex, And All Attempts To Do So Involve Mutilation.” “As animals that reproduce sexually, humans in the paradigm case are either male or female, with the sexes specified by reproductive roles they can potentially fulfill. According to this account, it is impossible for someone to change his or her sex, and all attempts to do so involve mutilation.” [[Public Discourse, Christopher Tollefsen, 7/13/15](#)]

Tollefsen Believes That “Attempts To Change One’s Biological Sex All Fail.” “No transplant, much less any reconstructive plastic surgery, can integrate a male sex organ into the biological life of a being whose root capacities are female, or vice versa. Nor is it possible that an entirely new set of capacities, dynamically oriented contrary to the orientation already worked out from within the organism’s biological identity, could be integrated into the life of that organism in such a way as to really be a part of his or her biological life. Thus, attempts to

change one's biological sex all fail. That is an undefeatable reason against trying to do so." [[Public Discourse, Christopher Tollefsen, 7/13/15](#)]

Tollefsen Warned That The Erasure Of Gender Binaries And The Denial Of “Capacities And Dispositions” That Are Associated With “The Male And Female Sexes,” Respectively, Would Amount To “Cultural Tyranny.” “On the other hand, it does seem clear that in general the male and female sexes are associated with somewhat different ranges of capacities and dispositions, which are important for a person's orientation to the entire range of human good, not just that of marriage and parenting. The attempt to efface all gender differences as they emerge from sexual differences (and are seen, for example, in the ways that male and female children characteristically play) is a mistake, and one that could only be furthered only by a kind of parental or, on a large scale, cultural tyranny.” [[Public Discourse, Christopher Tollefsen, 7/14/15](#)]

Tollefsen Has Also Written Anti-Abortion Articles For *Public Discourse*

Tollefsen Defined Abortion As The “Intentional Killing Of The Unborn Child.” “It seems more plausible to think that abortion causes the death of an unborn child, and that a ‘direct’ abortion is an intentional killing of the unborn child. Not only does such a definition avoid the problem cases just mentioned, it draws attention to what is wrong with abortion in a way that the ‘ending of a pregnancy’ definition does not. For while ending a pregnancy is, just as such, a serious matter—under most circumstances, mothers surely owe it to their unborn children to provide them with a uterine home until birth—the wrong of direct abortion is, more specifically, the wrong of intentionally killing one's unborn child, not the wrong of expelling it from the womb.” [[Public Discourse, Christopher Tollefsen, 10/1/10](#)]

<p>Tollefsen Has Strong Ties To Anti-Reproductive Rights, Anti-LGBTQ Advocate Robert P. George, With Whom He Has Co-authored Several <i>Public Discourse</i> Articles And An Anti-Abortion Book</p>
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Tollefsen And George's Collaboration On Anti-Abortion Projects Is Well-Documented. “Commissioners Robert P. George (who is also credited with drafting the Commission Charter) and Christopher Tollefsen have co-authored a book entitled ‘Embryo: A Defense of Human Life.’ In another collaborative piece, George and Tollefsen preview how they might approach key human rights concepts such as equality in the context of abortion: ‘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.’ George has argued that ‘the choice of abortion is objectively immoral’ and has stated that abortion rights are in opposition to equality and human rights.” [[Columbia Human Rights Law Review, 12/1/19](#)]

Tollefsen Authored A 2017 Anti-Abortion Article For *Public Discourse* With 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 Argue 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, Robert P. George and Christopher Tollefsen, 10/19/17](#)]

In 2015, Tollefsen Wrote Another Piece With George Defending Life As Beginning At Conception

In Their Co-authored Piece, Tollefsen, George And Patrick Lee Wrote That Fetuses Are Human Beings. “Senator Rubio is on the firmest possible scientific ground when he says that science shows that the child in the womb, from the very point of successful fertilization, is indeed a human being.” [[Public Discourse, Patrick Lee, Christopher Tollefsen, and Robert P. George, 8/18/15](#)]

In Their 2015 Article, Tollefsen Et Al. Insinuated That Abortion Is Morally Equivalent To The Genocide Of Jewish People And Slavery. “Do all human beings have a right to life, or are some ‘not yet persons’ (the unborn, the newly born), or ‘no longer persons’ (those suffering from severe dementia or in minimally conscious states), or lifelong ‘non-persons’ (those congenitally severely cognitively disabled)? Are all human beings equal in worth and dignity? Pro-lifers say yes. Professor Singer and other honest, informed abortion advocates say no. Science cannot settle *that* dispute. It cannot tell you that it is wrong to kill the physically handicapped on the ground that they are, as the Nazis said, ‘useless eaters.’ For that matter, it cannot tell you whether people may be enslaved or pillaged on account of their language or race.” [[Public Discourse, Patrick Lee, Christopher Tollefsen, and Robert P. George, 8/18/15](#)]

Tollefsen Also Collaborated With George On A Book Entitled “Embryo: A Defense Of Human Life”

“Embryo: A Defense Of Human Life” Was First Published In 2008 — Then Republished By The Witherspoon Institute In 2012. [[Academia.edu, Christopher Tollefsen CV, accessed 2/19/20](#)].

Human Rights Groups Focusing On LGBTQ Rights Have Decried The Commission And Its Appointees, Including Tollefsen

GLAAD: The Commission Is A “Farce.” Sarah Kate Ellis, the CEO of GLAAD, called the commission a “farce” and accused the Trump administration of “knowingly appointing activists who have made careers out of fighting against LGBTQ progress and is now providing them an opportunity to export their anti-LGBTQ activism around the world through the U.S. State Department.” [[NBC News, 7/10/19](#)]

GLAAD Noted Tollefsen’s Past Transphobic Remarks After His Appointment To The Commission. “Among the members flagged by GLAAD [is]... Christopher Tollefsen, who in 2015 said gender transitions are a [‘mark of a heartless culture.’](#)” [[NBC News, 7/10/19](#)]

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 Explained In An Interview That He Thought The Birth Control Mandate Was A Threat To Religious Liberty. "I testified in Congress regarding the (Affordable Care Act's contraception) mandate, which I thought was a threat to religious liberty because of how it was being applied at the time." [[Deseret News, 5/17/18](#)]

Soloveichik Praised President Trump And Vice President Pence For Their Work Rolling Back The Birth Control Mandate

When Asked If He Was Pleased With The Trump-Pence Administration's Approach To Religious Freedom, Soloveichik Answered, "Absolutely," And That He Was "Delighted" Regarding Their Efforts To Roll Back The Birth Control Mandate. "Absolutely. I was certainly delighted to hear of their decision to [alter the contraception mandate](#) to obviate religious liberty concerns." [[Deseret News, 5/17/18](#)]

Soloveichik Has Been Recognized For His Efforts Surrounding "Conscience Rights" By Anti-Abortion Extremist Groups Including The Becket Fund For Religious Liberty

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](#)]

The Becket Fund For Religious Liberty Is Best-Known For Its Efforts To Roll Back The ACA's Birth Control Mandate, Including Through The *Hobby Lobby* Supreme Court Case

Becket Has Defended Plaintiffs Protesting That They Provide Their Employees With Health Insurance Coverage For Contraception As Mandated By The ACA. "Becket broke onto the national scene thanks to the Affordable Care Act's contraception mandate. Its clients Wheaton College, an evangelical liberal arts school, and Catholic organizations like the Little Sisters of the Poor and Eternal Word Television Network, are among the 319 plaintiffs claiming the law's requirement to provide female employees with insurance plans that include payment for various contraceptives violates religious freedom." [[TIME, 10/7/14](#)]

Becket Represented Hobby Lobby In The Supreme Court Case That Ruled The Corporation Would Be Exempt From The ACA's Birth Control Mandate. “The Supreme Court’s controversial Hobby Lobby decision has thrust a once little-known boutique law firm into the center of a growing conservative movement to make faith-based exemptions as potent a legal tool as free speech has been for liberals. The tiny Becket Fund for Religious Liberty was the legal power behind the Supreme Court’s decision last month to extend religious rights to corporations for the first time... In the Hobby Lobby decision, the justices ruled that the religious owners of the chain of craft stores do not have to provide full contraceptive coverage for female workers as required under the Affordable Care Act. In her dissent, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said the decision carried ‘startling breadth’ and would open the door for other religious-minded businesses to seek exemptions from federal laws.” [[Washington Post, 7/20/14](#)]

Soloveichik Spoke On A 2017 Anti-LGBTQ Panel Sponsored By An Extremist Group In Which He Equated LGBTQ Sexual Orientations And Secularity To Paganism

Soloveichik Spoke On A 2017 Panel To Defend The “Sanctity” Of Heterosexual Marriage. “In the face of consistent attacks against the understanding and practice of traditional marriage by a litany of sources, including Hollywood, media and government, Cardinal Dolan’s prescription for countering the prevailing cultural climate involves faith and fortitude. ‘We are not alone in our battle to defend the sanctity of marriage. God is on our side,’ Cardinal Dolan said in his remarks at an interfaith evening in defense of marriage March 9... Also making presentations at the Manhattan gathering were Elder David A. Bednar of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), and Rabbi Meir Soloveichik of Congregation Sheirith Israel in Manhattan, the oldest Jewish congregation in the United States.” [[Catholic New York, 3/15/17](#)]

Soloveichik Fear-Mongered The Present-Day Threat Of “Paganism” As Characterized By The Rise Of Secularism And Non-“Traditional” Sexuality. “In the question period following the formal presentations, Cardinal Dolan and Rabbi Soloveichik addressed the rise of secularism in today’s society. ‘A lot of what we are experiencing is actually a return of a world view that is a religion in its own right,’ the rabbi explained. ‘It is paganism.’ Paganism, the rabbi said, is marked by the divinization of nature and a wholly different approach to sexuality than traditional mores.” [[Catholic New York, 3/15/17](#)]

The 2017 Event Soloveichik Spoke At Was Sponsored By The Witherspoon Institute, Which Is An Ultra-Right Wing, Anti-LGBTQ, Anti-Abortion, Anti-Feminist Think Tank

The 2017 Event That Soloveichik Spoke At Was Sponsored By The Witherspoon Institute. “The event was sponsored by the Witherspoon Institute, an independent research center that works to enhance public understanding of the moral foundations of free and democratic societies.” [[Catholic New York, 3/15/17](#)]

The Witherspoon Institute Is Anti-LGBTQ And Believes Marriages Should Only Be Heterosexual. “The second pillar of a decent society is the institution of the family, which is built upon the comprehensive sexual union of man and woman. No other institution can top the family’s ability to transmit what is pivotal—character formation, values, virtues, and enduring love—to each new generation.” [[Public Discourse, 2019](#)]

Witherspoon’s Center On Religion and Constitution Takes The Position That All Abortions Are “Tragic Wrongs.” “It is by now a familiar question from liberal journalists when interviewing pro-life candidates: ‘You’re against all abortions — what about in cases of rape and incest?’ Pro-lifers need to learn how to answer this question, because they can always expect it. The question tugs at heartstrings and aims at exposing a weakness. The appeal to compassion for rape and incest victims must be answered with real compassion for both parties in any pregnancy — mother and child. As for the politics of it, a pro-lifer can always say, ‘I am for any legislation that reduces the number of abortions and legally restricts a grave injustice. If that means a bill that eliminates most abortions that are legal now but makes an exception for rape and incest, I’m for it. But that doesn’t mean I’m for the exception. Every abortion is a tragic wrong, and we must work to restore respect for the sanctity of every life, from conception to natural death, no matter what the circumstances.’” [[National Review, 8/21/12](#)]

The Editor Of The Witherspoon Institute’s Journal, The Public Discourse, Published A Glowing Review On A Book About The “Takedown Of Contemporary Feminism” And Criticizes The Second-Wave Feminist Movement’s “Stigmatization Of Full-Time Motherhood.” “Sadly, that hasn’t stopped [The Feminist Mystique’s] message—in particular, its stigmatization of full-time motherhood and exaltation of paid work outside the home—from permeating and shaping our culture. After examining the (largely negative) impact of other influential feminists, Charen spends several chapters covering topics that will be familiar to readers of Public Discourse: the contemporary quest to abolish sex differences, the widespread conflation of pro-woman with pro-abortion ideals, the rise of the hook-up culture, and what Charen calls ‘the campus rape mess.’ Here Charen is characteristically unafraid of political incorrectness. She decries the ‘kangaroo courts erected by universities’ that ‘have dispensed with sacred rights protecting the accused, including the right to be represented by counsel, the right to confront witnesses, and the presumption of innocence.’” [[Public Discourse, 1/25/19](#)]

Soloveichik Also Has Strong Ties To Robert P. George, An Influential Anti-LGBTQ, Anti-Abortion Ideologue

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](#)]

George And Soloveichik Spoke On A Panel Together In Which George Claimed That Religious Expression Is “Under Constant Threat From The Tyranny Of Secular Progressivism”

George And Soloveichik Spoke On The January 2020 Panel Together To Express That Religious Expression Is Under Attack. “Free religious expression in American higher education is under constant threat from the tyranny of secular progressivism, a leading scholar of religious liberty said Jan. 12. Robert P. George, Princeton University’s McCormick professor of jurisprudence and a former chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, spoke at a forum on the religious formation of ‘America’s rising generation’ with Orthodox Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, one of his former students. The event was sponsored by the Tikvah Foundation in partnership with the Museum of the Bible... The Jan. 12 event was co-sponsored with the Ethics and Public Policy Center and the Robert P. George Initiative on Faith,

Ethics and Public Policy, which is part of the Baylor University in Washington program.”
[CatholicPhilly.com, 1/14/20]

- **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](#)]

Soloveichik Lauded Praise On An Anti-LGBTQ Book Authored By Robert P. George Entitled “What Is Marriage? Man And Woman: A Defense”

In His Praise For The Book, Soloveichik Called The Institution Of Marriage As Between Heterosexual Individuals. “What Is Marriage? is the most insightful, eloquent, and influential defense of marriage as it has been historically and rightly understood. People of all traditions—and everyone who cares about the future of this central and sacred social institution—owe Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson, and Robert P. George an extraordinary debt.” [[Rabbi Meir Soloveichik, nomblog.com, 11/8/12](#)]

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

Hamza Yusuf Has Published Anti-Abortion Academic Scholarship

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](#)]

Yusuf Believes That Scripture And Science Should Be Used Hand In Hand To Advance Anti-Abortion Causes. “[Yusuf] further argues that “[s]cripture and science, taken together, can lead believers to rethink our understanding of when life begins, of the miracle of revelation, and most certainly of abortion.” [[Columbia Human Rights Law Review, 12/1/19](#)]

Yusuf Believes That The Supreme Court’s Jurisprudence On Abortion Is “Far From A Settled Matter”

Yusuf Has Insinuated That The Supreme Court’s Decision On Abortion Could Be Reopened. “Hamza Yusuf Hanson has looked at Supreme Court jurisprudence on abortion and stated that ‘the Supreme Court has made its decision, but for many it is far from a settled matter.’” [[Columbia Human Rights Law Review, 12/1/19](#)]

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](#)]