



## Focus on Religious Freedom

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**Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; 1<sup>st</sup> amendment**

### **March for Life Students Kicked Out of Smithsonian Museum**

Catholic students were expelled from the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum on Jan. 20, 2023, for refusing to remove hats expressing their pro-life beliefs. "...they were accosted several times and told they would be forced to leave unless they removed their pro-life hats. The group all wore the same blue hat that simply said 'Rosary PRO-LIFE.' Other individuals in the museum were wearing hats of all kinds (of messages) without issue," said the American Center for Law & Justice (ACLJ) "The museum staff mocked the students, called them expletives, and (said) the museum is a 'neutral zone' where they could not express such statements." <sup>(1)</sup> As they exited the building, the employee who forced them out rubbed his hands in glee.

This was clearly a violation of First Amendment protections of freedom of speech and freedom of religion, and not the first time that pro-life students experienced discrimination during the National March for Life. In 2019, a Covington Catholic HS student was libeled and vilified by the mainstream media, accused of an action he didn't commit, and was subsequently vindicated by cell-phone videos. The teenager sued, and press giants such as the *Washington Post* and *CNN* settled out of court.

### **FBI Retracts Its Plot to Surveil so-called "Traditionalist Catholics"**

"Deeply committed Catholics are the last people the authorities should be concerned about," said Bishop Joseph Strickland in response to an FBI agent's, turned whistleblower, document that the agency planned to conduct surveillance on those they thought had "radical-traditionalist Catholic ideology." <sup>(2)</sup>

Bishop Strickland said that while it's true that "committed traditionalist Catholics will defend the unborn and others who are helpless," any "attacks of violent aggression are antithetical to what it means to be a radically committed traditional Catholic...Sadly, the experience of (pro-life) Mark Houck provides evidence that this type of surveillance is not beyond the realm of possibility." <sup>(3)</sup> Fortunately, on Jan. 30, Houck was acquitted of charges that could have sentenced him to eleven years in prison.

Following intense backlash, the FBI released a statement saying it is retracting their plan against Catholics.

***"The Bible clearly says that faithfulness and persecution often go hand in hand."  
-Billy Graham, Evangelist***

(faithwire.com, 2/9/23(1); lifesitenews.com, 2/1/23; aclj.org, 2/9/23; washingtonexaminer.com, 2/9/23; lifesitenews.com, 2/8/23(2)(3); dailycaller.com, 2/9/23)