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NYC Atheists inc.

An Affiliate of American Atheists



THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN AMERICA? MIKE PENCE—PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE

by Kenneth Bronstein

Now that the last votes have been counted, now that the theater of choosing a Cabinet is playing out its last act and the signal-to-noise ratio of the election is being recalibrated, let's take our eyes off the President-elect and move them to the right. Yes, I said to the Right . . . to the Far Right—to Vice-President-elect Mike Pence—the most dangerous man in America.

Keep looking at Mike Pence and do not be deceived. He's clean-cut, fresh-faced, compact, smiles, speaks quietly and eloquently—often without notes. Looks you right in the eye. Has a firm handshake and connects easily to people. Mid-Western pleasant, he's a graduate of Hanover College with a law degree from the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law. Raised a Catholic in a family of pro-Kennedy Democrats, he heard the siren call of the Evangelicals in the 1990s and never looked back.

Pence ran openly supported the Tea Party movement as a self-described “Christian, Conservative, and Republican, in that order.” In 2012, Pence was elected Governor of Indiana, now positioned to follow an agenda of his own devising that was a foretaste of what we can expect for the next four years.

Be afraid; be very afraid. A quick search of Google results yields a torrent that would take weeks to plumb, but is an accurate and chilling reflection of how many organizations familiar with his record and character are reporting the news and their agita in every medium. I've included a sampling of opinion to show I'm not the only one calling him Public Enemy Number One! He displays well in public but, with substantial experience at playing both the Congress and his own state legislature, he excels at working behind the scenes to achieve his goals. And when it serves his purpose, he can look straight at the camera and lie.

During the Vice-presidential debate Pence was asked his opinion of some of Trump's more outrageous statements, i.e. grabbing at women's crotches, etc. Pence's answer was to simply deny that Trump had ever made such remarks (even though they were widely broadcast and undeniable). So have a look at what Pence's opposition has to say about some of his favorite targets. You may well be affected when he takes aim. And bear in mind that he may be president one day before we even know what hit us.

ABORTION

It's not an exaggeration to state that Pence is no foot soldier in this battle—more its Commander-in-Chief. While an article in the *National Review* goo.gl/ziYdOH goes into some detail about House Enrolled Act 1337, which Pence supported, remember that, as governor, he signed the most stringent anti-abortion regulations in



Photo: Michael Vadon

America, banning them even in cases where the fetus had a “genetic abnormality” such as Down's syndrome and making doctors, along with the mothers who might request the procedure, criminally responsible. A Federal judge blocked the law from going into effect, but the ban is temporary and will certainly be attacked and appealed by Pence and his minions.

A quote to remember: in July, Pence promised that he and Donald Trump would send *Roe v. Wade* to the “ash heap of history.”

THE ENVIRONMENT

For his state and Congressional record, Pence has earned a 10% rating from the League of Conservation Voters. Taking clean air and water for granted? Read the hard facts in detail: goo.gl/bhp2fz.

And hang on to the fact that the new head of the Environmental Protection Agency will be Oklahoma's Attorney General (Scott Pruitt)—a sworn enemy of the EPA who has earned Breitbart's approval as Trump's best choice yet. Pence is likely to complement Pruitt's overt campaigns with effective behind-the-scenes maneuverer's to pass anti-environmental legislation.

EDUCATION

Pence is an enthusiastic supporter of vouchers for private schools, religious schools and charter school programs. He has overseen Indiana's diversion of \$53 million from public schools to achieve this goal, and was the first governor to try to repeal Common Core—even voting against George W. Bush's “No Child Left Behind” initiative. He will work closely with the new Secretary of Education (Betsy DeVos), an avowed believer in vouchers and the value of a Christian education. goo.gl/pcRQ2U



GUN CONTROL

Need you ask? He has aced an “A” rating from the NRA, refusing to consider even assault rifle controls of any kind. In response to the continuing toll from unhinged shooters, unlike Obama he will not ask “how many more events like this must we endure before something is done”. goo.gl/PzLY5m

IMMIGRATION

This issue is going to remain front and center, or Right, for quite a while. You can be sure that Pence will employ all his skills to keep it as divisive as possible. goo.gl/ETUHJ9

LGBTQ RIGHTS

The rainbow coalition stops at Pence’s office door. One of his most deplorable actions was to oppose Federal funding to support treatment for patients with HIV and AIDS—unless the government simultaneously invested in programs to discourage people from engaging in same-sex relationships. It is not too much of a stretch to find conversion therapy becoming mandatory as a logical extension of his purpose,

He has resisted anti-hate crime laws that would have included acts against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. You can find much more information in Mark Joseph Stern’s article in Slate: goo.gl/E1uXvM

CONCLUSIONS

The beneficiary of widely reported recent public approval for his unflappable response to the pleas of the cast of *Hamilton* to “protect all Americans”, Pence (who had been booed when he was taking his seat) remained in the theater to hear them out, then turned to his children to say “That’s the sound of freedom!” It was a PR coup—his one shining moment in a lifetime career of discouraging dissent and supporting measures that would benefit corporate America but impact most Americans cruelly now and in the future.

The fact that he is seemingly rational and stable (as opposed to his boss) must not be construed as an invitation to consider him a friend of the common man. Or woman. Like I said at the beginning: do not be deceived! For all his affability, his record as Congressman and Governor speaks for him, loud and clear. And his ability to work ever more effectively behind the scenes, which will serve the Trump agenda well, makes him Public Enemy Number One.

What can be done about it? Well, some women who are not pleased with his ways have come up with a few moves to troll the trollmeister himself: one, Periods for Pence, can be found in (of all places) the National Review goo.gl/fIYmnf. The other, a “*let’s fight fire with fire*” model is detailed in goo.gl/ZQmu2l.

But there are more, less antic strategies that must be employed to keep Pence from expanding the control of Congress by the Far Right,



Photo: Gage Skidmore

funded by the Koch brothers, big oil, big tobacco, and big pharma. In particular, Pence’s identity as the most powerful Christian supremacist in US history should be a code red for NYCA: goo.gl/XiDsO8

Based on the overwhelming evidence of his character and his skill at camouflaging his actions, I believe that once in office Pence will use his authority to orchestrate the inclusion of “stealth riders” into pending legislation seemingly unrelated to them. So they will become law and continue to resonate long after they have been slipped into history by his cunning hand. Finally, Pence will use his influence to lobby strongly for the nomination of Conservative Justices to the Supreme Court. Again, with long-lasting consequences.

You’ve seen a little of what others have to say about the future if Pence is not opposed. Spend a little time on Google. If you don’t add your voices to the chorus, you will live to regret it. Finally, it goes without saying that there will be no possibility of Separation on Pence’s watch.

WHAT WE CAN DO?:

The election is over. To counteract the threat Pence poses, and to remedy the false confidence that kept too many voters from pursuing the single-ticket mission, we must seek out and join forces with like-minded organizations to ensure that Pence cannot win his war against American principles.

It’s up to us to clean up the mess and create a campaign for the future before dissent becomes dangerous.

We want your suggestions about the cleverest and most effective strategies to keep Public Enemy Number One from having his way.

Raise your hand and speak up. Send me your ideas, and unchain your imagination don’t be afraid to use your imagination! It’s time to circle the wagons and fight for our future.

Don’t be afraid; turn fear into action!

PRESIDENT'S "SERMON"

by Kenneth Bronstein

For all of you who didn't vote because you were sure Hillary would win anyway; for all of you who voted down-ballot only for the same reason or because you "didn't like either of them", the moment of retribution is at hand.

Perhaps you are just waking up to how bad the next four years will be? Let's count the ways: first, a Cabinet of high-ranking military men and CEOs in key positions, most of whom are opposed to the very ideas they are supposed to protect. An environmental chief who is currently suing the EPA; a labor czar who is opposed to the minimum wage, health coverage, paid sick leave, and is a fan of automation. Then there's the former Goldman-Sachs executive (remember the sub-prime mortgage meltdown?) planned to run the Treasury Department, and the pediatric surgeon named to run the Department of Housing and Urban Development. As for Secretary of State? The buddy of Vladimir Putin (recently described by Senator John McCain as a gangster and a thug), the CEO of Exxon. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

If you are able to recover from the signs and portents, think Supreme Court with up to four Justices nominated by the President-elect and a very dark future for a very long time. Still not convinced? Think about this: goo.gl/N811PN the tip of another iceberg entirely.

Finding something to stem this crisis is not optional. In a perfect world, a solution would present itself before January 20. Since that's not likely to happen, there is much that NYC Atheists can do, sooner rather than later. Individual action is fine, but acting as a unit is better, especially when we join with the nationwide "none" community and push back. So numbers count!

HERE'S OUR ESSENTIAL AGENDA:

- Do everything you can to help us secure financial support. Donate yourself, and strong-arm everyone you know who can understand how urgent action has become.
- If you have mastered social media, don't keep Facebook, Twitter or the other essentials to yourself; share your skills with NYCA on a regular basis. Raise our profile and keep it front and center.
- If you relish graphics, political cartoons or tag lines, we will welcome their impact. Again, share them.
- Like writing? Keep an eye on the Internet and churn out press releases.
- How about political chess? With the Republican playlist, you are up against a team of 24/7 strategists. We are interested in any good ideas you have to beat them at their own game. Speak up!

By the time 2017 rolls around, you will be all too aware of the size of the problem. But if you do nothing, it will spiral out of control. So step up to the plate, and remember that you are not alone; it looks like Republican control of the Senate will evaporate as more and more prominent members are willing to vote across the aisle against the Trump's agenda. They can use your encouragement.

AMERICAN ATHEISTS 2017 CONVENTION



NYC Atheists

AUGUST 19-21

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

(COINCIDES WITH
TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE)

ATHEISTS ARE FACT CHECKERS

NYCA 2016 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

New York City Atheists is a 501(c)3 educational organization. All dues, contributions and gift memberships are 100% tax deductible. Through our programs and activities, we have worked to raise awareness of our principles, our vision and, above all, of our existence as Atheists. We have done it through our Speaker Meetings, our Website, our Meetups, our Cable Shows, our Street Tabling and our Newsletter to enhance our visibility—all of which are funded by your membership.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
Street Address: _____ Apt #: _____
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Email: _____ @ _____
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Annual: By mail (see below) or by credit card, visit www.nycatheists.org

Monthly: By credit card *only*, visit www.nycatheists.org

Gift Membership: Submit two (2) forms, one (1) for donor, one (1) for recipient

ANNUAL

Individual \$25
Family \$50
Friend \$100
Sustainer \$250
Patron \$500
Benefactor \$1000
Life \$5000

MONTHLY

See payment options on web-site.

Additional Donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____

NYC Atheists Inc. is a non-profit (501c) non-partisan, educational association with these purposes and goals:

- To promote the total and absolute separation of church and state.
- To educate and inform the public about Atheism.
- To provide a forum for discussion about Atheism.
- To develop and engage in educational, cultural, charitable and social activities that are beneficial to the members of the NYC Atheists Inc., the Atheist community and the community at large.

With the continued growth of our membership, we gather strength in numbers and will more effectively counteract the threat of the troubling times from the Trump presidency.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Make checks payable to:

NYC Atheists Inc. Membership;
P.O. Box 6060
New York, NY 10150-6060

Credit card payment:

www.nycatheists.org/nyca-membership

Our civil rights efforts for Atheist goals can be strengthened if you make NYCA the beneficiary of an insurance policy, bank account, IRA or property. Remember NYCA in your estate planning. Inspire future generations of NYC Atheists!

nycatheists@gmail.com • 212-330-6794



IN THE NEWS

- American Atheists win Kansas city \$65,000 handout to Baptist convention case: goo.gl/GFIMbo
- American case wins Tennessee Sheriff Constitutional rights case: goo.gl/UrOuNO
- American Atheists wins Florida new law requiring student disclosure of Pledge of Allegiance rights: goo.gl/5iDhjH
- Planned Parenthood fears it may be first casualty of rekindled abortion war: goo.gl/k1ZUNe
- Why most people leave religion? They just ‘stop believing’: goo.gl/ddOup6
- Donations to Religious Institutions Fall as Values Change: goo.gl/ZcW1zJ
- Satanic leader: After-school clubs send positive message: goo.gl/QS7wNa
- Muslim teen first to compete in hijab for Miss Minnesota: goo.gl/bDaGUE
- Christian home rejects donation from Atheist, who then raises more: goo.gl/BeudsY
- From Fins Into Hands—Scientists Discover a Deep Evolutionary Link: goo.gl/3JPPd2
- Keeping kosher—It may be bad for your economic health: goo.gl/EoZGR0
- Professor Watchlist Is Seen as Threat to Academic Freedom: goo.gl/tER86l
- Texas to implement rules requiring burial or cremation of fetal remains: goo.gl/BXstkh
- Roaring Fork congregation stands tall after fire destroys church: goo.gl/V1dZgU
- Betsy DeVos and God’s Plan for Schools: goo.gl/vWLCVp
- John Kasich Signs One Abortion Bill in Ohio but Vetoes a More Restrictive Measure: goo.gl/oZdqJ2

ATHEISM IS HERE AND NOW

PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT INTO LAW

(Washington, DC, Dec. 15, 2016)—The American Humanist Association celebrates the passage of HR 1150, the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, in the U.S. Congress, and urges President Obama to sign the bill into law.

The AHA lobbied both Democrats and Republicans for inclusive language that would recognize the rights of humanists, atheists and other nonreligious individuals, in addition to defending theistic religious minorities.

The Act states that “the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion are understood to protect theistic and non-theistic beliefs as well as the right not to profess or practice any religion.” The Act also condemns “specific targeting of non-theists, humanists, and atheists because of their beliefs” and any attempts to forcibly compel “non-believers or non-theists to recant their beliefs or to convert.”

The persecution of openly humanist and atheist writers has become an area of increasing concern especially after the string of murders of secular bloggers and publishers by religious extremists in Bangladesh.

The American Humanist Association and other international advocates for religious freedom have also been critical of the flogging of secular writers in Saudi Arabia, as well as a Saudi law that equates atheism with terrorism. “Legislators are finally recognizing the human dignity of humanists and granting the nontheistic community the same protections and respect that have been given to religious communities,” said Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association. “With the increasing global persecution of humanists and atheists at the hands of religious authoritarians, we’re proud that Congress and the US Department of State are standing for the liberty of all people, both religious and non-religious,” Speckhardt added, in reference to findings from the recent release of the International Humanist and Ethical Union’s 2016 Freedom of Thought report. “A historic piece of legislation that for the first time in our nation’s history

recognizes non-theists, the International Religious Freedom Act is the result of extensive advocacy efforts from the humanist community and the support of our religious allies,” said Matthew Bulger, legislative director of the American Humanist Association. “Religious freedom for all people, theists and non-theists, is an American value we must protect.”

The International Religious Freedom Act will also strengthen the standing of the International Religious Freedom Office and the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, and promote other actions meant to foster religious freedom abroad.



Photo: Barbara Mancini

January 8, 2017

Sunday 12 noon

NYC Atheists Brunch

Speaker: Barbara Mancini

Subject: Why I Aided My 93-Year-Old Father To Commit Suicide

A Pennsylvania county judge has thrown out an assisted suicide case against a 58-year-old nurse named Barbara Mancini, who was accused of homicide last year for allegedly handing her 93-year-old father a bottle of morphine. This case was also featured story on CBS' 60 Minutes.

Location: The Press Box Restaurant, 932 Second Avenue between 49th & 50th Sts.— 2nd Floor.

Cost: Brunch is \$20, includes buffet entrees, salad, one soft drink, coffee, tax and tip.

JANUARY 2017

UPCOMING EVENTS



Photo: Lee Moore

January 17, 2017

Tuesday 7pm

We Want To Hear Your Opinion

NYC Atheists Discussion Meeting

Group Leader: Lee Moore

Topic: Will Decided Near Date of Meeting

Location: Stone Creek, 140 East 27th St., 3rd/Lexington avenue—Rear Room

Cost: Free, participants are encouraged to purchase drink/food to compensate Stone Creek for their space.



Photo: The Soul Fallacy

January 26, 2017

Thursday 6:30pm

NYC Atheists Monthly Meeting

Speaker: Julien Musolino Ph.D Rutgers

University: Psychology Department and the Center for Cognitive Science.

Book: Soul Fallacy

Professor Musolino dismisses the claim that the soul has been proven by science and that science shows we gain from letting go of our soul beliefs.

Location: SLC Conference Center, 15 West 39th St. 3rd Floor

Cost: \$10 donation to help cover room rental.

JANUARY 2017

- 08** Sunday
NYCA Brunch / Speaker 12 noon*
- 17** Tuesday
NYCA Meet-up discussion group 7pm**
- 26** Thursday
NYCA Monthly Meeting 6:30 pm ***

- * **Press Box Restaurant & Pub**
932 Second Ave. (49/50th St.) - 2nd Floor
- ** **Stone Creek Bar and Lounge**
140 East 27th St. (3rd/Lex.) - Rear Room
- *** **SLC Conference Center**
15 West 39th Street - 3rd Floor



NYC Atheists

NYCA CABLE SHOWS

Wednesday	MNN	RCN	FIOS
Atheism in History 5:30 pm	1997	84	35

Thursday	MNN	RCN	FIOS
NYC Atheists 5 pm	67	85	36
My Road to Atheism 5:30 pm	67	85	36

NYC Atheists
 P.O. Box 6060
 New York, NY 10150-6060
www.nycatheists.org

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