

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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May 18, 2022

SENT VIA EMAIL & U.S. MAIL: governoroffice@iq.ok.gov

The Honorable J. Kevin Stitt
Governor
State of Oklahoma
Oklahoma State Capitol
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

Re: Hypocritical religious comments on cruel anti-abortion law

Dear Governor Stitt:

We are writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to object to comments you recently made regarding S.B. 1503. FFRF is a national nonprofit association with more than 36,000 members across the country, including many members in Oklahoma. FFRF protects the constitutional separation between state and church and educates about nontheism.

It is our understanding that you recently gave an interview about S.B. 1503, a copycat of Texas's notorious S.B. 8, which you signed into law earlier this month.¹ This near-total abortion ban does not contain an exception for pregnancies that result from rape or incest, meaning that, for instance, a child raped and impregnated by her father would be forced to give birth.

You defended this abjectly cruel and heartless policy by saying that “God has a special plan for every single life.”² Apparently by “every single life,” you specifically mean blastocysts and embryos, but *not* living, breathing rape survivors.

Your hypocrisy highlights the danger of making policy decisions based on personal religious beliefs, a topic we have written to you about multiple times in the past. If you were serious about your oath of office, to uphold the U.S. Constitution and its

¹ Catherine Sweeney, *Gov. Kevin Stitt supports abortion restrictions on rape victims. Critics say he doesn't understand the trauma those victims will face*, State Impact Oklahoma (May 17, 2022), available at stateimpact.npr.org/oklahoma/2022/05/17/gov-kevin-stitt-supports-abortion-restrictions-on-rape-victims-critics-say-he-doesnt-understand-the-trauma-those-victims-will-face/.

² *Id.*

separation between religion and government, you would set your personal religious beliefs aside and do what was in the best interest of *all* Oklahomans, rather than sacrificing the health and autonomy of pregnant Oklahomans in order to advance your crusade of turning every pregnancy into a birth.

Reproductive tyranny is a linchpin of all totalitarian regimes—and theocracies. As the U.S. Supreme Court is poised to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, upending a long-established constitutional right along with decades of precedent, state governors should take immediate action to resist this religiously motivated assault on reproductive health care. Instead, you have shown a total disregard for imperiled Oklahomans, citing your personal religious beliefs once again to justify a denial of basic human rights.

Most Americans, and Oklahomans, do not share your radical religious views. This includes the vast majority of non-religious Americans, which are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population by religious identification — 35 percent of Americans are non-Christians, and this includes more than one in four Americans who now identify as religiously unaffiliated.³ A recent survey found that 21 percent of Americans born after 1999 are atheist or agnostic.⁴

Your imposition of religious hypocrisy is an insult to those Oklahomans, as well as to the core American values of bodily autonomy and state/church separation. If you do not believe in the American ideals of allowing doctors and their patients to make their own medical decisions, and of abiding by our secular Constitution, you should resign.

Very truly,



Annie Laurie Gaylor & Dan Barker

Co-presidents

ALG/DB:rdj

³ Pew Research Center, “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace,” (Oct. 17, 2019) at <https://pewrsr.ch/2VPiFS7>.

⁴ *Atheism Doubles Among Generation Z*, The Barna Group (Jan. 24, 2018), <https://www.barna.com/research/atheism-doubles-among-generation-z/>.