



CATHOLICVOTE

February 28, 2024

POLITICO

1000 Wilson Blvd, Floor 8  
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Mr. John Harris and Ms. Goli Sheikholeslami:  
CC: Jan Bayer, President News Media USA, Deputy CEO Axel Springer:

We are compelled to bring to your attention a series of statements made on Feb. 23 by POLITICO National Investigative Correspondent Heidi Przybyla during an appearance on MSNBC, in which Ms. Przybyla demonstrated a disqualifying lack of knowledge of the United States of America's founding documents and a profoundly prejudicial view toward American religious groups.

Ms. Przybyla declared that the uniting belief of "Christian nationalists" is that "rights as Americans, as all human beings, don't come from any earthly authority," not once acknowledging that our own Republic was founded on the belief that our rights come from God, not earthly kings or government. This understanding of the origin of human rights is clearly articulated in the Declaration of Independence and its proposition that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights." And it has been reiterated and embraced by every President of the United States since George Washington.

As a National Investigative Correspondent for Politico, Ms. Przybyla is charged with reporting accurately on American government, politics, and law. It is deeply disturbing, therefore, that she appeared unaware of the opening of the Declaration of Independence or to its references of "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God."

Equally concerning is Ms. Przybyla's smearing of the Christian faith reflected in her comments. Her statements constituted an attempt to spread misinformation about Christians by creating the perception that they hold unique beliefs that pose a distinct and, in her words "extremist," threat to our country. Setting aside the inaccuracy of her commentary, she was manifestly trying to demonize the Christian community and sow fear through propaganda. Przybyla's attacks on God as the source of our dignity and rights are also a direct attack on the unifying call of the civil rights movement, including Martin Luther King Jr., who reminded us of our common creed, which grounded human dignity and rights explicitly in a creator God, that no government has a right to take away. Her public platform and ability to reach millions makes this case even more disturbing.

Moreover, Ms. Przybyla's statements are representative of a consistent pattern of singling out Christian organizations and individuals, as evidenced by her recent articles targeting efforts to support a Catholic school and her selective interpretation of sources to advance an anti-Christian ideological agenda.

Comments like Ms. Przybyla's can and often do have life and death consequences for faith communities. In 2023, American places of worship experienced more than double the amount of violence than the year prior, according to a recent report on hostility against U.S. churches. Last year, a shooter targeted a Christian day school in Nashville, killing three nine-year-old students and three staff. Since May 2020, Catholic churches have endured more than 400 attacks – from having rocks and bricks thrown through their windows to arson, firebombing, and a growing number of incidents involving property defacement and destruction resulting in tens of millions of dollars in damages.

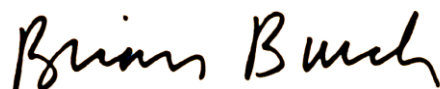
Meanwhile, attacks on the Jewish community – members of the same Judeo-Christian faith tradition that is central to our nation's founding – have risen dramatically. In the weeks following Hamas's October 7 massacre of innocent Israeli civilians, antisemitic incidents in the U.S. have soared 400 percent. Antisemitism in the U.S., much like the anti-Christian sentiment espoused by Ms. Przybyla, is also fueled by false stereotypes and propaganda that seek to portray Jewish Americans as a threat to our society.

Rhetoric like Ms. Przybyla's, which demonizes religious groups, is profoundly dangerous. It can motivate disturbed individuals who may be predisposed to commit violence against faith communities. We the undersigned believe that Ms. Przybyla's comments reflect a pervasive bias that not only prevents her from accurately and fairly covering issues related to religion and religious communities, but Politico's silence suggests it condones these attacks on people of faith. Ms. Przybyla owes people of faith an apology, as does her employer. Politico must confirm that such offensive comments have no place within its organization.

Sincerely,



Tony Perkins  
President  
Family Research Council



Brian Burch  
President  
Catholic Vote