

## Carlos Hoyt - Racialization & Supernaturalism: Exploring the Relationship between Atheism and Antiracialization

On Sunday, July 10, AFS will welcome a new and important speaker, a globally highly-regarded one, for our Zoom meeting for **Carlos Hoyt**.

Hoyt's "study of and stance on race and racialization has always had a twin," he says—which he has



**Carlos Hoyt**

"not yet given the attention it deserves. Racialization is to race as supernaturalism is to religion/spirituality. Antiracialization is to racism as atheism is to theism."

Hoyt promises discussion, not merely lecturing, saying "I look forward to wondering with you about race and religion as common expressions of a common human susceptibility to connect compelling chimeric dots that result in bad maps, templates, doctrines, and actions."

Hoyt recommends, if people have time, watching his TEDx talk in preparation for the conversation on the 10th. That video can be found here: [TEDx Talk, Charting a Course Beyond Racism](#) (17.5min). As you watch the video, think: can you imagine swapping the theme of race for the theme of religion/god? Doing so will prepare us for an exploration of parallels between Hoyt's views on race and racialization and religion/spirituality and supernaturalism.

Carlos Hoyt, Ph. D., is a psychotherapist and provides consultation and training on matters related to social identity, social bias, and social justice. He has worked as Assistant Professor of Social Work at Wheelock College in Boston, MA, and has held teaching and leadership positions at Simmons College, Lesley University, Boston University, and several independent schools, providing instruction in clinical skills and practice, group

### Calendar

Aug 14	General Meeting on Zoom	1 pm
Sep 11	General Meeting on Zoom	1 pm
Oct 9	General Meeting on Zoom	1 pm

All events are via Zoom unless noted and are subject to change.

dynamics, multicultural assessment, and cultural competence.

His approach in all forms of engagement with this challenging area of education, training, and growth combines preparing participants to interact fully, empathically, courageously, and candidly; grounding all content in facts and critical thinking; facilitating experiential opportunities for participants to be active synthesizers versus passive receptacles; and an emphasis on praxis – the translation of cognitive growth into personal action. Carlos's first book, *The Arc of a Bad Idea: Understanding and Transcending Race*, was published in 2016.

More information about Carlos can be found at his website, [carloshoyt.com](http://carloshoyt.com).

The Hoyt program, free and open to the public, will be preceded by a few minutes of social distanced socializing starting about 12:30 P.M. EDT in US, for any interested. The program will start at about 1 P.M. (EDT) on Sunday, 10 July, via Zoom. "We welcome those who are not freethinkers but who just want to know more about history and human thought in general. All freethinkers are of course welcome—and we hope that they will decide to join as members in due course. The link and time for the meeting are shown below.

### AFS July Meeting July 10, 2022 1:00-2:30 PM (EST)

To join Zoom meeting go to this link:  
[us02web.zoom.us/j/89006560911](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89006560911)

**For the latest in upcoming AFS events, join our Meetup group!**  
[meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society](https://meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society)

## Programs and Speakers

All programs are on the second Sunday of each month at AF Hall, 4775 N. Church Lane SE, Atlanta, GA, 30339 unless presented online due to global pandemic (see link on page 1). Programs start at 1:00 PM, but feel free to arrive at 12:30 for socializing. Visitors are always welcome.



The views and opinions expressed by speakers at AFS do not necessarily reflect those of AFS members or its policy.

10 July	Carlos Hoyt
14 Aug	Nick Fish
11 Sept	Ben Burgis, "Christopher Hitchens: What He Got Right, How He Went Wrong, and Why He Still Matters"
9 Oct	Massimo Pigliucci, "The Quest for Character: How to Make Sure That Our Politicians are Not Crooked"
13 Nov	Valerie Tarico
11 Dec	Annie Laurie Gaylor
8 Jan	Chuck Miller, "Religion and White Supremacy"

## AFS Email List

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To keep up to date on the Atlanta Freethought Society calendar of upcoming events, please join our Meetup group: [meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society](https://meetup.com/Atlanta-Freethought-Society).

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*The Atlanta Freethought Society is a member-run organization dedicated to advancing freethought and protecting the rights and reputation of freethinkers, agnostics, atheists and humanists.*

We welcome anyone who is interested in learning about living a good life free from religion through attending AFS speeches, debates, and discussions. We employ protests, letters to the editor, broadcast appearances, and any other reasonable and civil means available to achieve our mission.

We define freethought as "the forming of opinions about life in general and religion in particular on the basis of reason and the evidence of our senses, independently of tradition, authority, or established belief."

We actively support a strict separation of church and state as the best means to guarantee liberty for all, regardless of religious belief or lack of belief.

We seek to educate ourselves on many topics but especially on religion and non-religion. We do this through a series of thought-provoking speakers and programs, and by maintaining a web forum and an extensive library of freethought, religious, and related books, pamphlets, videotapes, and audiotapes.

We provide an organization where freethinkers and non-theists can develop friendships, talk freely, socialize and enjoy each other's company. We do not discriminate against anyone on such irrelevant grounds as race, sexual orientation, age, gender, class, or physical disability. We welcome members and leaders of all political parties and preferences. Any who are like-minded are welcome to join us.

Because we are designated by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) educational organization, contributions to AFS are tax deductible.

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### Atlanta Freethought News

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## Supreme Court Okays Religious Proselytizing by Public School Staff

[atheists.org](http://atheists.org)

On Monday, June 27, the church-state separation watchdog American Atheists expressed shock and disgust at the Supreme Court's 6-3 decision in *Kennedy v. Bremerton* to allow staff-led prayer in the public school system.

That decision overturned decades of Supreme Court precedent, explicitly abandoning the Lemon test and allowing school officials to inject their own religion into public school classrooms. In 1963, the Supreme Court struck down mandatory classroom prayer in *Abington School District v. Schempp*, which was consolidated with a case brought by **Madalyn Murray O'Hair**, the founder of American Atheists.

"The Supreme Court just opened the door for coercive prayer to return to our schools. It shows just how far toward theocracy we've slid in recent years," said **Nick Fish**, president of American Atheists. "Students are, and always have been, allowed to pray. But giving coaches, teachers, and other authority figures the green light to engage in the sort of coercive prayer at issue here is nothing less than an outright assault on the religious freedom of young people by this out-of-control Court."

The case decided today involves a football coach, **Joseph Kennedy**, who said he "made a commitment with God" to proselytize. After each game, Kennedy encouraged players from both teams to kneel around him at the 50-yard line as he held up each team's helmet and led students in prayer.

"The Supreme Court will inflict serious damage on students with this decision," warned **Geoffrey T. Blackwell**, Litigation Counsel for American Atheists. "Coaches greatly influence the lives of student athletes, both on and off the field. They determine whether students sit or play—even whether they have a shot at a full-tuition college scholarship. Whether intentional or not, Kennedy's behavior coerced students to pray so they could stay on their coach's good side and get playing time."

Following Kennedy's proselytizing, the Bremerton School District stepped in to protect students' freedom of religion, presenting fair and reasonable accommodations to Kennedy. But he rejected all of them, turning football games into a media spectacle. And when he didn't get his way, he pretended to be a victim, sued, and has now won at the Supreme Court.

"School staff, including teachers, will now feel they can force their personal religious beliefs—no matter how extreme—on students. In a country with people from so many different religions, and where more than a quarter of Americans espouse no religion, this is a recipe for disaster," added Blackwell.

"This is another example of the Supreme Court playing favorites," said **Alison Gill**, Vice President for Legal & Policy. "Christian plaintiffs like Kennedy, with claims that should be dismissed, are instead permitted to bring their cases to the highest court in the land, in order to further certain Justices' ideologically biased agenda."

"With school staff apparently now allowed to proselytize, students will lose their religious freedom whenever they enter school," said Fish. "Parents—especially nonreligious and religious minority parents—will have little say about the religious beliefs staff impose on students. So much for 'parents' rights' and students' religious freedom."

"Once again, the Christian extremists on the Supreme Court are moving us into terrifyingly uncharted territory—and increasingly toward an America with less equality and fewer rights," he added.

## SCOTUS Forces Maine to Fund Christian Schools

[atheists.org](http://atheists.org)

On June 21, the church-state separation watchdog American Atheists condemned the Supreme Court's 6-3 ruling in *Carson v. Makin*, which forces Maine to financially support discriminatory Christian schools—and Christianity itself.

"With this decision, the Supreme Court has betrayed our nation's founding principle that the government should not fund religion, including a majority religion like Christianity," said **Geoffrey T. Blackwell**, Litigation Counsel at American Atheists. "This Court is destroying the Establishment Clause of the Constitution, which protects all Americans—especially atheists and members of minority religions."

American Atheists highlights the disastrous consequences of this ruling:

- The Supreme Court's ruling directly affects Maine taxpayers, forcing them to fund religious indoctrination, notably by discriminatory denominations of Christianity.
- *Carson v. Makin* may be cited in the future to force taxpayers in other states to fund religious activities, even beyond education.
- The two private religious schools involved in the lawsuit maintain policies that discriminate based on gender identity and sexual orientation. However, Maine's Human Rights Act protects students from discrimination because of characteristics including sexual orientation and gender identity. *Carson v. Makin* undermines these protections in Maine and elsewhere.
- This ruling considers Christian schools qualified to replace a religiously neutral education in Maine counties that are too rural to maintain their own secondary schools. This harms Maine families, especially atheists, and religious minorities, and all families and children who wish to be free from religious proselytizing by members of another religious group.
- *Carson v. Makin* legitimizes discriminatory Christian schools and paves the way for them to replace religiously neutral public education in states across the country.

"The religious conservative majority on the Supreme Court is intent on placing the interests of Christians above all others, including individuals' fundamental rights," said **Alison Gill**, Vice President for Legal and Policy at American Atheists. "These justices will keep working at breakneck speed to undermine nondiscrimination

**Carson V. Makin cont. page 5**

# Trumpers Want Your State To Have An Established Church

by Rob Boston • au.org

Several American colonies (and later states) used to have officially established churches. In New England, Congregationalism reigned. In Virginia and the Carolinas, Anglican was the officially preferred faith. Maryland was founded as a Catholic colony with toleration toward other Christian groups.

The adoption of the First Amendment in 1791 didn't affect these official, state-backed churches because the Bill of Rights was originally limited to the federal government. But they all faded away anyway. Massachusetts, the last state with an official church, disestablished it in 1833.

What happened? The simple answer is that these official unions of church and state failed because they did not serve the people or further the cause of religious freedom. People did not want them, and they could not survive.

Amazingly, there are people among us today who want to return to that old, failed system and allow state officials to establish whatever religion they see fit. In reaction to the Supreme Court's ruling in *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*, America First Legal (AFL), a group of former Trump administration officials, issued a statement urging the high court to eventually rule that the provision of the First Amendment that bars laws "respecting an establishment of religion" does not

apply to the states.

"AFL is hopeful that the justices will build on this ruling and eventually disincorporate the Establishment Clause, which fully protects the rights of states to decide whether and to what extent they will establish religion within their borders," the group asserted in a statement.

Just to be clear, under this scheme, Utah could declare itself officially Mormon. Mississippi and Alabama could establish the Southern Baptist faith. Minnesota could adopt Lutheranism. These official churches would then start receiving direct taxpayer support. Their symbols would become intertwined with the state. Their doctrines would control public education. Public policy would reflect their tenets.

What would happen to the people who dissent from these official, state-imposed faiths? If the past is any guide, it won't be very pleasant. During the last period of established churches in America, people were taxed to support the official church whether they belonged to it or not. Some dissenters were denied civic privileges; others were imprisoned, or even executed, because they dared to profess doctrines that offended government officials.

The ex-Trumpers aren't the only ones pushing this line. U.S. Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-Colo.) recently told members of a Colorado church, "I'm tired of this separation of church and state junk. It was not in the Constitution, it was in a stinking letter and it means nothing like what they say it does." Her comments led to a schooling from AU Vice President of Strategic Communications Andrew Seidel.

The last few weeks have been difficult ones for advocates of separation of church and state. AFL's statement and Boebert's outburst are reminders of why we need to keep up the fight. Remember, there are always people who are eager to make things even worse.

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# A New Day In The Fight For Reproductive And Religious Freedom

By Rob Boston • au.org

Friday was a difficult day. At Americans United, we've been monitoring Supreme Court rulings as the term winds down. We knew, based on the leaked draft that appeared in *Politico*, that the high court was almost certain to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. But to see it officially released as a ruling of the court was still a shattering blow.

The news only got worse in the days that followed. As we had warned, anti-abortion zealots have no intention of stopping here and already are plotting a series of new moves. These include attacks on certain forms of birth control, state laws that would punish people who seek abortions in other parts of the country and a federal law banning abortions after 15 weeks.

The mood of the country is unsettled, and many Americans are worried – rightly so – that other rights may soon come under attack. While several members of the court majority in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* insisted that its ruling is limited to the issue of abortion, Justice Clarence M. Thomas was having none of it. In his concurring opinion, he listed several cases that, in his view, are ripe to be overturned. These include *Griswold v. Connecticut*, a 1965 ruling that protects the right of married couples to use birth control; *Lawrence v. Texas* from 2003, which struck down state laws criminalizing same-sex relationships between consenting adults; and 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which extended marriage equality nationwide.

Shortly after the ruling in *Dobbs* came down, Americans United President and CEO Rachel Laser said in a [statement to the media](#), "Abortion bans undermine religious freedom by attempting to impose one religious viewpoint on all of us. Americans United is readying religious freedom litigation which will bring this argument to our courts."

We'll have more to say about that litigation in the weeks to come. For now, be assured that Americans United is **no stranger to the battle for reproductive freedom**. Now in its 75th year, Americans United fought entrenched religious interests in the 1950s and '60s to secure adults' right to access birth control. In 1973, when *Roe* was handed down, AU supported the ruling. When legislative attacks on *Roe* began, Americans United was one of the few organizations to call them what they were: attempts to force all Americans to live by the religious rules of some.



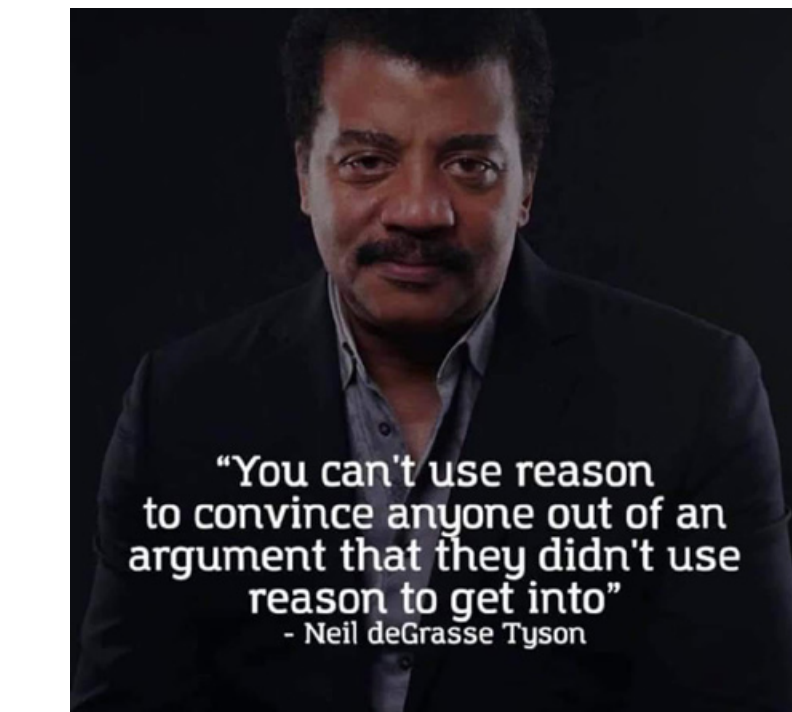
The months and years ahead are not going to be easy; many Americans may lose rights they thought were secure. There's more than a whiff of theocracy in the air.

But if Christian nationalists believe that Americans United, its allies and the millions of people we represent are simply going to roll over, they are about to learn they've got another thing coming. P.S. If you're not a member of Americans United, **now's the time to join**.

protections, replace public education with a discriminatory religious 'education,' and force Americans to fund conservative Christianity and other religions. This will harm countless Americans, especially children."

"Extremists are weakening our democracy," said Nick Fish, president of American Atheists. "Calls to reform and expand the Court to limit the impact of its dangerous Christian nationalist wing will only grow louder, as the Supreme Court tries to establish what can only be described as a theocracy. Today's decision is appalling, but it isn't the first and it won't be the last."

"As Justice Sotomayor said in her dissent, 'the Court leads us to a place where separation of church and state becomes a constitutional violation.' Today it's public schools; tomorrow it will be abortion. Who knows what comes next? We are embarking on dangerous, uncharted territory," Fish added.



## Carson V. Makin cont. from page 3

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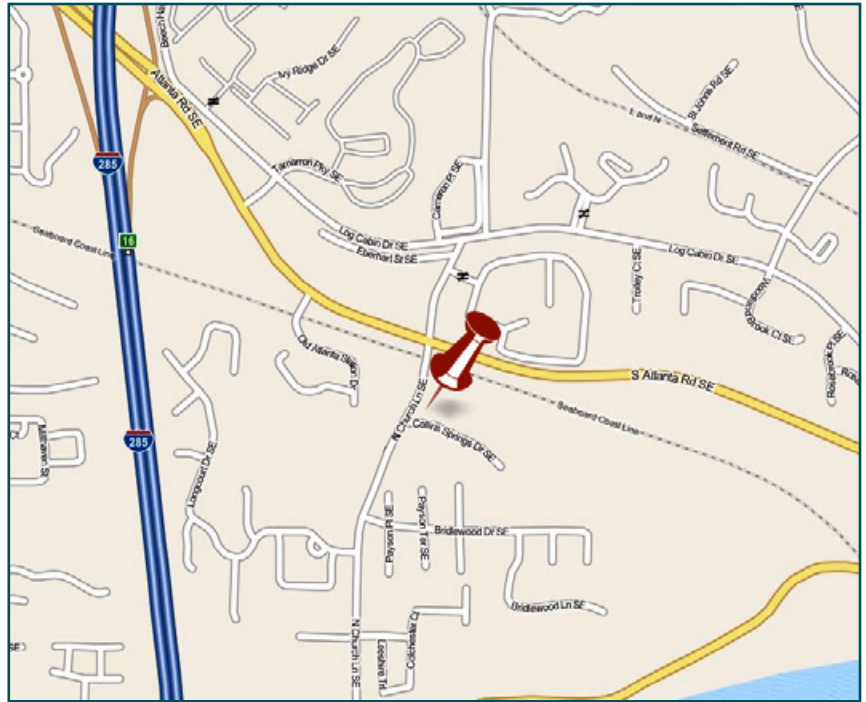
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*Dare To Think  
For Yourself!*



**AF Hall  
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**Carlos Hoyt  
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(via Zoom)**



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