

# OPINION

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## Political Censorship

### IRS suppresses Bush critics

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS  
Churches, social justice organizations and other nonprofits are prohibited under the law from doing any political campaign work. If they break the rules, the Internal Revenue Service can come in and snatch away the organization's tax exempt status.

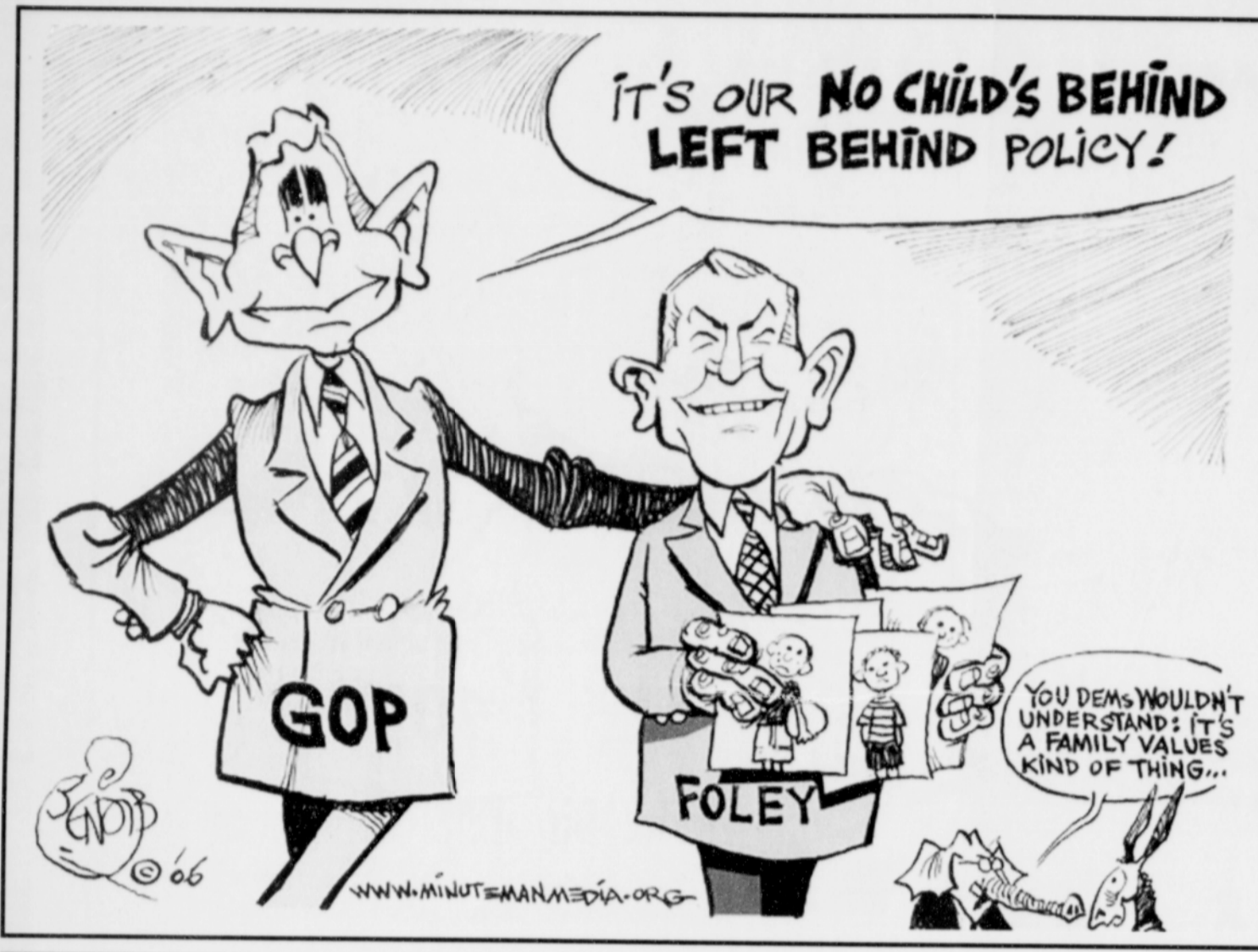


The law was first introduced in 1954 by then-Sen. Lyndon Johnson who wanted to stop verbal attacks against him by some nonprofit organizations in his home state of Texas. It seems the law is once again being used to silence dissenting political voices. The IRS

has been attacked for its views. After Julian Bond, the NAACP's chairman, made negative remarks about the president in a speech at the group's national convention, the NAACP received a letter from the IRS requesting information related to the speech. The NAACP, the country's oldest civil rights organization, refused to comply. That resistance was rewarded in the courts. We can only hope All Saints Church will also be victorious.

The Bush administration supports conservative Christian organizations through its "faith-based" initiatives. Those very same groups have a huge impact on the current administration's policy decisions - issues such as stem cell research,

*Intimidating progressive voices in this country - whether through wire tapping or IRS sanctions - will only eliminate what little piece of democracy this nation has left.*



## Cutting and Running from Iraq?

Where's the enlistments from war's proponents?

BY JIM HIGHTOWER

Karl Rove's red-hot buzz phrase for this fall's election is "cut-and-run Democrat."

It's meant to be hurled with a derisive sneer at anyone who dares oppose George W's war of lies and failure in Iraq. But wait -- the obvious response to this is that those in the administration itself cut and ran long ago.

When it comes to standing firm in Iraq, who is actually standing there? Not Mr. Bush's two daughters or eight nieces and nephews.

They're all of prime enlistment age, but they chose to cut and run rather than sign up for their Daddy's war.

Not the loved ones of Cheney, Rummy, or any of the other ardent warmongers in

Bush's top circle - they cut and ran, too.

Then there's Congress. A recent "New York Times" article practically wailed that Sen. Max Baucus' nephew had been killed in Iraq, saying it "showed how death and grief can invade the halls on Congress." Indeed, this young man's

death is horrible, as are those of the 2,700 other Americans who have been sacrificed in this wretched war. But while feeling the pain of this one senator, let's not forget that Congress continues to throw our young people, our public treasury, and our global reputation into the wasteland of Iraq -- yet, of 535 members of Congress, only six have close relatives whose lives have been put at risk there. The loved ones of the other 99 percent of lawmakers have chosen not to take a stand in Iraq.

The same is true of the right-wing media blatherers, the military contractors that are profiting from the war, the Wall Street financial

powers, and the other elites who damned sure aren't volunteering to have their kids become "boots on the ground."

To stop this war in its tracks, require that all these cut-and-runners be a part of it. If Bush's war is not worth putting their families at risk, it's not worth the risk of any family.

Rep. Charles Rangel has a bill that confronts the hypocrisy of these cut-and-runners. To learn about his Universal Service Act, call 202-225-4365.

Jim Hightower is the best-selling author of "Thieves In High Places: They've Stolen Our Country And It's Time To Take It Back."

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has once again gone after an organization that dared to present a view that contradicts those of the conservative right that currently runs this country. Is the IRS aggressively seeking to make sure nonprofits play by the rules or is the organization a pawn in a master plan that seeks to limit freedom of expression?

All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, Calif. is the IRS' latest target. A guest speaker at the church made antiwar comments a few days before the 2004 presidential elections. Now the IRS wants the church to turn over documents that relate to those remarks.

Believing the probe is politically motivated, the church's leaders voted to challenge the IRS in court. By refusing, the church forces the IRS to either drop the case or to ask the Justice Department to take the church to court.

The IRS' investigation is a clear act of political censorship. It is apparent that the current administration wants to suppress voices that oppose the war in Iraq and the Bush administration at large.

This isn't the first time an orga-

abortion and gay rights are all heavily influenced by the Christian right. The president himself often uses his faith to justify his actions. And, when mobilizing voters for the 2004 elections, the president's chief strategist relied heavily on conservative churches and organizations to spread his "message."

Yet, the federal government now wants to challenge a liberal church, returning to that old dictum, saying church and state should be separate. The hypocrisy is appalling.

The Justice Department should begin its own investigation. One that looks into these IRS challenges to find out whether they actually have a legal basis or are politically motivated. Our government agencies cannot be used as political pawns. Intimidating progressive voices in this country - whether through wire tapping or IRS sanctions - will only eliminate what little piece of democracy this nation has left.

*Judge Greg Mathis is national vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*

## Letters to the Editor

### Fight The Good Fight

Thanks to the Portland Freeman. Anyway, as that community rebuilds and fight the good fight, along with the local authorities to resolve these events and rid their community of hate mongers, it is nice to know that this local newspaper cares enough to shed light on civil rights offenses no matter where they originate!

Carl Washington  
North Portland

## Settle with Foxworth

Mayor Tom Potter should not spend taxpayers money in "vigorously" defending demotion of Police Chief Derrick Foxworth.

Potter should negotiate an out-of-court settlement since the private e-mails to Foxworth's girlfriend are protected forms of free speech and privacy afforded to all U.S. citizens by the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

Foxworth does not have to even prove he was racially discriminated to be afforded his free speech rights.

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