

THE COMMITTEE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



Defend Freedom of Conscience

If you believe that no government may legitimately tell us what to think about religion, morality, and politics; if you share our support for freedom of conscience, religious freedom, and free speech, then please use the form below to join us by adding your name as a signer to The Committee for Religious Freedom's Statement of Support for the three-judge panel decision in *Thomas v. Anchorage Equal Rights Commission*.

This Committee, which needs everyone's support, includes nationally-known Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish leaders: *First Things* Editor Rev. **Richard John Neuhaus**, nationally-known author Rabbi **Daniel Lapin**, Roman Catholic Bishop of Salt Lake City Most Rev. **George H. Niederauer**, *Life & Times* host **Hugh Hewitt**, Former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican **William A. Wilson**, and Pastor **Laurence White** of Houston's Our Savior Lutheran Church. Please read our full statement and list of signers at our web site (www.cppf.org) or in *CPR's* Nov./Dec. 1999 issue.

These Religious and Community leaders support the January ruling in *Thomas v. Anchorage Equal Rights Commission* which upholds First Amendment religious freedom guarantees against lawsuits that would force landlords to choose between sacrificing their livelihood or renting against their religious convictions to unmarried couples. That ruling is now under review by an 11-judge panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

"Landlords are accused of violating civil rights if they object on religious grounds to being forced to choose between renting to unmarried couples or going out of business," our statement reads. "But is it not *their* freedom of conscience and *our own* First Amendment Religious Freedom rights that are under attack?" If you agree that these rights should be defended, please sign and return this form today. Thank you.

I support the Statement of The Committee for Religious Freedom.		Optional: <input type="checkbox"/> Please keep me informed of the Committee's activities.
_____ Signature	_____ Date	_____ Daytime telephone
_____ Name and mailing address		
_____ 24-hour FAX		

Times' publisher, Kathryn Downing, was formally indicted for criminal neglect of the sacred principles of daily journalism. She tried to split the profits of a Sunday magazine supplement with its cover subject, a new downtown arena. She pleaded ignorance. She didn't know that a daily journalist never touches the money. Of course, she didn't know that, because she was plucked from another realm and put in charge of one of the world's great newspapers (it once called itself that) by the *Times Mirror* CEO, Mark Willes, who also doesn't know the rules. He once marketed cereal at General Mills, or so they say.

UNLESS SHE is so personally torn with guilt that she cannot face the attendant at the parking garage, Ms. Downing will survive this and so will Mr. Willes. They will survive until they displease Wall Street, which so far has cared not a whit about the Staples Center scandal. It isn't known how many of the *Times'* million-plus readers care about it, but clearly the paper's own holy scribes care passionately. They demanded Mr. Shaw's special boring section, and some of them got their pictures in it. Michael Parks, the editor, was in it, too, but there was no glory for him. He is the biggest goat in the eyes of his staff because they think he knew about and should have stopped this tawdry arrangement that Ms. Downing and her ad-salespeople cooked up. He is a Pulitzer winner himself and cannot plead anything but a bad memory.

Most *Times* readers would rather be told if it must do tricks for local johns like the Staples Center. But daily newspapers promote entertainment venues, especially the downtown ones, even when they're not getting a cut. Just as they shill for the paid sports and movies and television that inundate our off-hours.

But, oh, how this Staples deal got the press of the land into a lather. Coverage in all of the mushrooming number of media-watching media. A flood of tears for how far the *Times* has fallen from the glory days of Otis Chandler (who inserted himself at the height of the scandal with an open letter to the staff from Mt. Sinai, blasting Willes/Downing). The *American Journalism Review* commissioned William Prochnau, the hagiographer of David Halberstam and other Vietnam correspondents in his book *Once Upon a Distant War*, to put a full section together on the "Lost Angeles Times."

Really, the most damning of Mr. Shaw's findings was that the initial exposure of the Staples deal, which came in a couple of aggressive local weeklies, hardly dented the staff's consciousness. It was only when the

New York Times and then the *Wall Street Journal* picked up on the story, and lent a note of Eastern opprobrium to the affair that the house journalists grew wild with rage. Mr. Shaw writes that his colleagues know little and care less about what these weeklies produce. Anyone who cared more about competing in Los Angeles than about the high priesthood of journalism would read them, because they contain good local stories that are not in the *Times*.

On that score, the efforts of a third alternative news source, the *LA Weekly*, should be noted. This left-liberal sheet is publishing the deepest political coverage in the market. An example was a cover story on Ron Unz that, while telling you everything you wanted to know about the man (and more), also pinpointed the bind he was in trying to get the GOP senatorial nod. He was going to be at odds with Tom Campbell on just those social issues — abortion, gay marriage, and the like — that he cared least about. On the rest of his agenda, there was little difference. Shortly after the piece ran, Unz dropped out.

The *Times* should devote a 14-page section some time to the many meaty stories in its huge and dynamic circulation area that it habitually misses. Self-flagellation over an ad deal is not one of them.



You won't find working stiff in the good seats at the Staples Center, and you won't find much cheering for the home team Lakers, either, the *Orange County Register* reported. What a surprise! It's a palace built for the haughty rich — fortunately with less government assistance than the Los Angeles City Hall crowd planned to give the developers until they were smoked out.



Delaine Eastin may yet have to answer for the condition of California's public schooling. A scandal that resurfaced near the end of the year in her Department of Education may finally invite some critical press attention to that bureaucratic and kleptocratic miasma. The Clinton Justice Department (!) blew the whistle on Eastin's attempt to paper over the misuse of millions of federal tax dollars on bogus ESL courses run by Latino pressure groups such as *Hermanidad*. (David Horowitz's *Heterodoxy* earlier had publicized the background to the story, including the political pressure put on one of Eastin's career staff who had unearthed the problem.) The feds' notice to Eastin (who claims she cleaned up the management of the program) drew spot stories in papers across the state — some of which had touched on the story in its early outcropping in 1998. But the

San Francisco Chronicle continued a blackout.

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No one could ever accuse Senator Ross Johnson of missing an opportunity to pander to his middle-class base. And he was in fine form with his proposal on behalf of Senate Republicans to use the surplus taxpayer take to slash in half the tuition at the University of California and Cal State universities. The best thing to come of the state's fiscal problems of the 1990s were the increases in charges to those attending these campuses to levels more approaching the actual cost of providing the instruction there (such as it sometimes is). Because there is no means testing, the subsidy works out to be a massive transfer of wealth from working Californians to the reasonably and often exceedingly affluent families that populate these student bodies. Which is precisely why Senator Johnson wants to add to the largess. The proposal was duly noted in news stories and drew a smirk here and there. But where was the libertarian *Orange County Register*, which editorialized not a whit about its local guy? And might Johnson's customary ally, Senator John Lewis, or his staff chief, Dennis Brown, not have some qualms about being in league with the leftist lobbies that always fought Pete Wilson's moves to kick up the tuition?

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Somewhat along those lines, *The Wall Street Journal/California* was the site of an interesting exchange between Velma Montoya, a (Reaganite) UC regent who

objects to the creation of another law school at UC Riverside (enough lawyers is enough, she basically says), and Manuel A. Ramirez, presiding justice of the state court of appeal in Riverside. Justice Ramirez was clear, in a letter to the editor, as to what he hoped a UCR law school would produce: "the right kind of lawyers with a broad and powerful view of the law." Felix Frankfurter types, he underlines. Right on, Ms. Montoya.

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You knew there'd be this type of story: lead article on the *LA Times* "state page": "Good Times Yield Child Care Crisis." The economy is putting too many parents to work! For reporters who hang around the "helping professions," there will always be woe to report. Of course, when the economy is bad, then there is child abuse. Now there is neglect because, good as it is, it still costs too much for most families to get "care." And by families, the article is implicitly referring to one-parent households, but we don't want to go there, do we?

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The *Wall Street Journal* devoted a front-page story to the pinch that redwood-country California school districts are having because of the curbs on logging — and hence on the revenues that flowed to those schools. Interestingly, there was no state executive or legislative official quoted in the story. Usually you can't shut such people up when it comes to underfunding of schools. Of course, it gets complicated when you've got your enviro allies on the other side

CPR

THE MIDNIGHT ECONOMIST

Educational Reform, Egalitarian Rhetoric

*People differ greatly in interests, ambitions, talents, proclivities — and intellectual competence.
We all are God's children, but not every young person is a young scholar.*

W I L L I A M R . A L L E N

IN DESCRIBING the scale of educational operations in California, the magnitudes of people and of dollars are impressive. In the current year, the University of California alone has more than 160,000 customers, and is spending more than \$3.5 billion — nearly \$22,000 per body. All state higher education has more than 1.4 million young scholars, and

the bill is more than \$12 billion. Enrollment over the next half dozen years is expected to grow by 500,000, an increase of 35 percent. Despite the massiveness of

William R. Allen is a discouraged and frustrated elitist in the UCLA Department of Economics who abhors hypocritical misdirection and waste.