

Dear Supervisors:

Please do not consent to Supervisor Hidahl's proposed proclamation to perpetually declare July "American Christian History Month" for the reasons listed below. In short, Supervisor Hidahl copied - verbatim - 9 "WHEREAS" portions and the entire "RESOLVED" portion of a political declaration adopted in 2021 by the Constitutional Party of Pennsylvania. The Constitutional Party was described in 2009 as a "Patriot Group," meaning a category of parties that "advocate or adhere to extreme anti-government doctrines."

Yesterday's "Patriot Groups" now include anti-governmental groups including the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, Three Percenters and Patriot Front. Leaders of the Proud Boys and Three Percenters were tried and found guilty of seditious conspiracy against the United States. Oath Keepers sentenced thus far have received enhancements for terrorism; they are literally domestic terrorists in the U.S. legal system.

Supervisor Hidahl's proposed declaration is a sham, and government overreach of the highest order. He copied a political statement without any legitimate legal foundation or factual documentation, and now asks for it to be voted upon by "consent," without divulging its source or his affiliation with it. That is, Supervisor Hidahl should be questioned and asked to answer whether he is a member of the Constitutional Party whose political document he copied verbatim, and/or why he proposes to have a political party's ideology become the public statement of El Dorado County.

Supervisor Hidahl seeks to subordinate all other faiths, including those with no religious affiliation or belief, to personally impose his cut and paste affirmation of Christian domination by way of a political party whose entire 2021 membership was only 137,367. You should not allow this to happen, and further question why this item is on the agenda to begin with. The citizens of El Dorado County, like me, should not have to do basic homework to discover the reality behind political schemes like this proposal. That's supposed to be the role of the Board Chair, CAO, and County Counsel as they formalize Board agendas - to weed out items that are uninformed, purely political, and outside the scope of the County's Strategic Plan and the Board's Unity of Purpose. Item 22 has all those characteristics and is a poor reflection of the Board's role to be strategic leaders for El Dorado County.

Vote to remove Item 22 from the July 18th consent calendar, and condemn this blatant individual act of political overreach by voting NO on the item in the clearest terms.....

.Sincerely, Joseph Connolly

BASES TO VOTE "NO" ON ITEM 22 OF THE JULY 18TH CONSENT CALENDAR.

1. The proposed proclamation is a virtual cut and paste copy of a 2021 declaration by the Constitution Party of Pennsylvania State Committee ("CPPA"), which was adopted on October 6, 2021.

You can view the CPPA declaration at this link: <https://www.constitutionpartypa.com/declaration-of-american-christian-heritage-month.html>

2. Supervisor Hidahl's draft proclamation includes verbatim copies of portions of the CPPA declaration.

The CPPA declaration includes 28 "WHEREAS" statements and a "RESOLVED" summary.

Supervisor Hidahl's draft proclamation copied, verbatim, 9 "WHEREAS" statements from the CPPA declaration.

Supervisor Hidahl's draft proclamation copied, verbatim, the entire "RESOLVED" portion of the CPPA declaration.

3. The Constitutional Party was founded in 1992 as the U.S. Taxpayers Party, and has been known as the Constitutional Party since 1999.

See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_Party_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_Party_(United_States)); See also <https://constitutionparty.com/about-us/history/>

4. The Constitutional Party is characterized as having a "Far Right" political position, with ideology including "Christian Right" and "Christian Reconstructionism."

"Christian Reconstructionism" is described by the Southern Poverty Law Center as "introduc[ing] the idea of dominionism – the rule of society and politics by Christians and Christian institutions – which some white Christian nationalists have adopted, as well as others in patriot and antigovernment groups."

See "Antigovernment General" review at <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/antigovernment-general#state-by-state>

5. In 2009, the Southern Poverty Law Center described the party as a "Patriot Group," a category of parties that "[g]enerally ... define themselves as opposed to the "New World Order" or advocate or adhere to extreme anti-government doctrines."

See <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2009/patriot-groups>

6. Today, previous "Patriot Groups" are identified as "antigovernment groups" which includes extremist groups such as the Proud Boys, Three Percenters, Patriot Front and Oath Keepers.

See <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/antigovernment-general#state-by-state>

7. The Constitutional Party and CPPA remain listed on the current SPLC list of anti government groups.



Leo Bennette Cauchon <leo.bennettcauchon52@gmail.com>

Fwd: Please pull Consent Item 22

1 message

Leo Bennett-Cauchon <leobennettcauchon@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 18, 2023 at 8:03 AM

To: leo.bennettcauchon52@gmail.com

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Leo Bennett-Cauchon** <leobennettcauchon@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Jul 17, 2023 at 9:25 AM

Subject: Please pull Consent Item 22

To: <bosfive@edcgov.us>, <bosfour@edcgov.us>, <bosone@edcgov.us>,

<bosthree@edcgov.us>, <bostwo@edcgov.us>, edc.cob@edcgov.us <edc.cob@edcgov.us>

CC: <tschmid@edcgov.us>

Dear EDC Board of Supervisors:

I urge you to remove today's "American Christian Heritage Proclamation" from the consent agenda. A nationally controversial proclamation such as this merits a fuller discussion. My prayer is that an inclusive discussion collaboratively creates a Proclamation that radiates the humility and love that unites all believers. I am confident that EDC's diverse religious communities, as well as Bridging Divides, could be helpful in drafting a proclamation on religious heritages which unites us more rather than adding to what divides us.

The proclamation as currently worded has been extremely divisive across our nation. Please pause and consider; where do the words of this proposed proclamation come from. They are not original words from Supervisor Hidahl. The words are rooted in Christian Nationalism. The words are taken from extreme proclamations proposed by the Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation, Project Blitz, the Constitution Party, and other far right activist groups. These proclamations mostly have failed to pass, a result which I pray good faith and good governance will help you as a board to also achieve.

Reading the proposed Proclamation I note with interest that only the 3rd "Whereas" is explicitly Christian. The First Continental Congress of 1774 did indeed open its 3rd day with prayers from the Anglican Prayer Book read by Rev. Jacob Duché. This was the start of the nondenominational acknowledgment of God similar to what is practiced at your meetings. Today government bodies inclusively acknowledge ideas of God outside of just Christianity.

As a Catholic, a faith once persecuted in our country, and a faith that is in repentance for historically persecuting others, I find inspiration in President Biden's acknowledgment of both diverse religions and no religion during our second Catholic president's religious freedom proclamation of 1/2023:

"Faith has sustained me throughout my life. ... But for far too many people within our borders and beyond, practicing their faith still means facing fear and persecution. ... let us work together to ensure that people of all religions — and no religion — are treated with equal dignity and respect."

As a modern Episcopalian, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry said about the source of today's proclamation: "It's not conservative Christianity. Obviously, it's not liberal Christianity either. What we're actually describing is an ideology that's not really a religion, but it looks like a religion and invokes language and symbols that have religious traffic. ... If you look at the complex of white Christian Nationalism as an ideology, you lay it alongside Jesus of Nazareth and we're not even talking about the same thing."

Amanda Tyler, of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, has evaluated the threats of today's proclamation: "Christian Nationalism strikes at the heart of the foundational ideas of what religious freedom means and how it's protected in this country, and that is with the institution of separation of church and state."

The 6th "Whereas" of today's proclamation quotes our first Catholic president who, like all of our presidents, acknowledged God in his inaugural address: "The rights of man(sic) come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God".

President Kennedy later said in his address: "... remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. ... Let

both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.”

Please listen to these better angels and do not proclaim “American Christian Heritage Month” to be designated exclusively in El Dorado County in perpetuity every July.

Sincerely,

Leo Bennett-Cauchon
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