



Vol. XXXIX No. 8  
August 2025

# HUMANIST Monthly

A Publication of the Capital District Humanist Society  
*Connecting the Secular Humanist Community of Upstate New York, Western Massachusetts, and Southern Vermont*

**Sunday, August 10th, 2025**

***In Person at 12:30 PM and Online at 1:00 PM***

## **The Shadow Gospel: How Anti-Liberal Demonology Possessed U.S. Religion, Media, and Politics**



**Whitney Phillips; Mark Brockway**

When people talk about the chaotic, increasingly precarious political landscape in the United States, they often blame polarization and the culture wars. *The Shadow Gospel* tells a very different story. Analyzing eighty years of densely overlapping religious and secular messages preaching the dangers of liberalism, the book shows us the root causes of the problems we face today, some of which are satiric conspiracy theorizing, the crusade against “wokeness” and LGBTQ existence. It also helps explain the most vexing elements of our politics: that the most potent source of religious messaging and influence in the United States is secular, that the most ruthless destroyers of Republicans are other Republicans.

By offering new ways of thinking about religious influence, the left/right dichotomy, and the appeal of Donald Trump, *The Shadow Gospel* reveals the true roadblocks to pluralistic democracy and emphasizes what people across the religious and political spectrum stand to lose if we don’t exorcise our anti-liberal demons. There are no easy solutions to our vast and complicated political problems. It is long past time to drag the shadow gospel out into the light, and make use of some of the actions that folks can take to set us on a path toward a brighter future.

Whitney Phillips studies information politics and media ethics and is an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon. She earned a BA in philosophy from Humboldt State University in 2004, an MFA in creative writing from Emerson College in 2007, and a PhD in English from the University of Oregon in 2012. She has authored and co-authored five academic books and a digital ethics guide for teens. Her most recent book is the topic of this program.

Mark Brockway hails from Denver, CO. He earned a PhD at the University of Notre Dame, and a BA in political science at the University of Oklahoma. He is currently an assistant teaching professor in political science at Syracuse Univ. His research centers on political identity and activism. He investigates the consequences of changing political and social identities for party politics. His research also examines religion and politics, political polarization, and public opinion. He is co-author of *The Shadow Gospel*.

The program will take place both in person (at 12:30 PM) and online (at 1:00 PM) via Zoom. The in-person event will be held at Pinnacle Living at 45 Forts Ferry Road in Latham, NY. It is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available at the in-person meeting before the speaker’s presentation, but **please bring your own beverage**. Current paid CDHS members will automatically receive an invite to the on-line meeting via email. If you are not a current paid CDHS member, please see the paragraph below to request an email invitation to attend.

This event is free and open to the public. It will be held at Pinnacle Living at 45 Forts Ferry Road in Latham, New York and via Zoom. If you are not a current paid CDHS member, please follow the instructions below to request an email invitation to attend.

**ANYONE WHO IS NOT A CURRENT PAID MEMBER of CDHS can attend.** Send an email request to: [CDHS.Albany@gmail.com](mailto:CDHS.Albany@gmail.com). Please send the request several days prior to the meeting.

The Capital District Humanist Society provides a supportive community for exchanging ideas, heightening our knowledge of the world and ourselves, fostering moral and ethical growth, and promoting the principles of secular humanism. CDHS is a member organization for people with humanist values. Our values include commitment to free inquiry, rational thought, lifelong education, democracy, social concern, and fellowship.

### **Capital District Humanist Society, Inc.**

Established 1986

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CDHS is affiliated with:

The American Humanist Association (AHA)

Center for Inquiry (CSI)

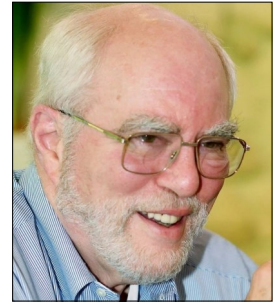
Humanists International (HI)

The Secular Coalition for America (SCA)

On Sunday, September 14th, 2025, 12:30 PM (In Person) and 1:00 PM (Online)  
The Capital District Humanist Society Presents:

## U.S. Policy on China

Since the Obama Administration announced its Pivot to Asia policy in 2011, U.S.-China relations have been in a downward spiral. The trade war, the pandemic, growing technology competition, rising tensions in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, and contrasting approaches to the Russia-Ukraine conflict have collectively fed a sense of fatalism that the countries were heading toward the abyss of outright economic decoupling and a disastrous military conflict.



Dr. Joseph Gerson

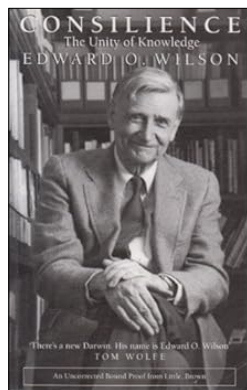
Dr. Joseph Gerson is President of the Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security, and was a member of the Nihon Hidankyo Nobel Peace Prize delegation in December 2024. He served as Co-chair of the Committee for a Sane U.S.-China Policy, and former Vice-President of the International Peace Bureau, Vice President of the Nobel Peace Prize recipient organization, the International Peace Bureau, and as Director of Programs and Disarmament Coordinator the American Friends Service Committee's Northeast Region. He was a co-founder of the United for Peace and Justice Coalition. He has often delivered keynote speeches in Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the annual World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs.

Dr. Gerson did his undergraduate work at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and received his PhD in politics and international security studies from the Union Institute and College.

His books include *Empire and the Bomb: How the U.S. Uses Nuclear Weapons to Dominate the World*, *The Sun Never Sets...Confronting the Network of U.S. Foreign Military Bases*, *The Deadly Connection: Nuclear War and U.S. Foreign Military Intervention*, and *With Hiroshima Eyes: Atomic War, Nuclear Extortion and Moral Imagination*. His articles have appeared in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the *Boston Globe*, *Eurasia Review*, *Common Dreams*, *Truthout* and other publications.

This program will take place both in person (at 12:30 PM) and online (at 1:00 PM) via Zoom. The in-person event will be held at Pinnacle Living at 45 Forts Ferry Road in Latham, NY. It is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available at the in-person meeting before the speaker's presentation. Current paid CDHS members will automatically receive an invite to the on-line meeting via email. If you are not a current paid CDHS member, please see page 1 to request an email invitation to attend.

CDHS Book Group is reading  
*Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* by Edward  
Osborne Wilson. The group  
meets on the 2nd and 4th  
Thursdays.



Contact Frank Robinson if you would like to join  
the spirited and informative  
discussion.

### CDHS Executive Council

Executive Director	Don Porterfield
Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	Roland Tozer
Programs, Publicity	Fred Levine
Publications	Carol Quantock
Social Activities	Candace Fuller
Membership, Telephone	Judith Herbert
Meetup Coordinator	Fred Levine
Compliance	Vacant
Member at Large	Vacant

### Appointed Positions

Hospitality	Sue Parry
Room Arrangements	Frank Robinson
Caring Network	Rosina Ansaldo

## **Volunteer Opportunities On the CDHS Executive Committee**

**EC Vacancies:** CDHS is continuing its search for volunteers to fill the three vacant positions on the Executive Committee: Secretary, Compliance Officer, and Member-at-Large. Two of these positions, Secretary and Compliance Officer, require a minimal amount of work done on a monthly basis. None of the positions are difficult, but all are necessary for records and reporting purposes. Contact Don Porterfield at [CDHS.Albany@gmail.com](mailto:CDHS.Albany@gmail.com).

## **Candidates for Election for CDHS Executive Council Positions**

CDHS will be holding an on-line election in September for positions on our Executive Council (EC). We will be using the ElectionBuddy System that we used for the EC election last year. Voting will begin in early September and continue through mid-September. Each CDHS membership level (Individual, Family, Sustaining, Patron, or Life) is entitled to one vote. More information about the election will be provided in the September newsletter and email messages to the membership.

Members that have been nominated for positions on the EC include:

- ◆ **Executive Director** – Don Porterfield
- ◆ **Treasurer** – Roland Tozer
- ◆ **Membership** – Heather Drinkwater
- ◆ **Newsletter** – Carol Quantock
- ◆ **Socials** – Dee Fuller

**We are also seeking nominations for candidates for two open positions (Secretary and Compliance Officer)** on our Executive Council. The EC meets monthly and duties for each position are:

### ***Secretary***

- ⇒ Take minutes of EC meetings, send draft to EC members for review. Update as necessary.
- ⇒ Maintain archive of approved minutes of past meetings.

### ***Compliance Officer***

- ⇒ Review financial statements, bank statements, and account reconciliations provided by the Treasurer.

If you have been a member of CDHS for over one year, please consider volunteering your time and efforts in one of these roles. CDHS is a volunteer organization and relies on members to volunteer their time to help maintain CDHS as a successful and effective organization. Please contact Don Porterfield at [cdhs.albany@gmail.com](mailto:cdhs.albany@gmail.com) if you would like to run for one of these positions.

## ***In Memoriam: John Hendricks, 1954-2025***

Long time CDHS member John Hendricks passed away Thursday, July 17th at the Hudson Park Rehab & Nursing Home after a brief illness.

After graduating from Albany Business College, John served as a Security Specialist in the US Air Force, then pursued a career as a graphic designer and was part of the founding team behind *Metroland Magazine*. He also launched several businesses over the years, including Graphics Unlimited and Alternative Ink, with his most recent venture, Success Secrets, until his recent retirement.

John's memorial services were held on July 23rd at the Langan Funeral Home in Schoharie. His survivors include his wife, June, a daughter, grandson, a brother, several nieces and nephews, as well as family and friends.

Memorial contributions may be made in memory of John to the Alzheimer's Association Northeastern NY Chapter, 1003 New Loudon Rd. #201, Cohoes, NY 12047, OR the Logan Strong Foundation, PO Box 2168, Scotia, NY 12302.

## RECAP OF OUR JULY SPEAKER'S TALK

by Frank Robinson

Journalist Murray Carpenter has authored the book *Sweet and Deadly: How Coca-Cola Spreads Disinformation and Makes Us Sick*.

He cited a growing body of research showing that sugar-sweetened beverages are a leading cause of U.S. ill-health. Coca-Cola (originally named for an ingredient you can guess - FSR) is a big part of that picture. This is a major global company with \$47 billion in annual revenue, \$300 billion market value, and 21 "billion dollar brands."

Carpenter said chronic "diseases of lifestyle" are becoming more endemic. Obesity is a big part of this. He noted that drinking one 12-ounce can of Coke daily increases the risk of Type 2 Diabetes by 25%.

That can has 39 grams of sugar. A 20-ounce can has 65 grams, and Carpenter showed a plastic bag holding that much sugar. He could hardly lift it (slight exaggeration; but it's a lot of sugar).

It was also noted that Coke has a lot of caffeine — in fact, sodas comprise a bigger share of global caffeine consumption than coffee and tea.

Carpenter asserted that Coca-Cola has followed the "tobacco playbook," a public relations strategy to counter scientific information. Other examples are Exxon Mobil and Purdue Pharma.

A further relevant strategy is "price mixing," offering the product in containers of different volumes, including "mini-cans," the aim being to get the most money per unit of volume.

Another problem ingredient endemic in modern food products is high fructose corn syrup. It's very abundant and cheap (and makes things taste good). But in health terms, calorie-for-calorie it's worse than plain old sugar, because the body metabolizes it differently.

Asked about Diet Coke, Carpenter said he strongly favors it as a halfway-house alternative to the Full Monty. However, he said it tricks the brain into thinking it's getting sugar, and pointed out that it actually has more caffeine than regular Coke.

A recording of this presentation is available at: [https://youtu.be/s6r7KX\\_BOQ](https://youtu.be/s6r7KX_BOQ).

## AUGUST SOCIAL—BRONCK HOUSE

If you choose to join us for a tour of the Bronck House Museum in Coxsackie, you will not only be taking a trip to Coxsackie, but you will be traveling back to the year 1663. You'll learn about how a single room stone house grew into a Dutch Colonial home with many amenities for the time period. The 1738 enlargement by Bronck's grandson features typical characteristics of Dutch architecture, including sloping dormers and parapet gables. The home and surrounding farm remained in the Bronck family for eight generations before being donated to the Greene County Historical Society. Today, rooms are decorated with 18th-century woodwork and feature many Bronck family pieces.

Outbuildings include a 19th-century kitchen dependency and three barns (among them the state's first 13-sided barn), as well as displays of agricultural tools, sleighs, and wheeled vehicles.

We will meet at the Pegasus Restaurant (<https://www.pegasuson9w.com/>) at 11:30, Saturday, August 23rd. The restaurant is within easy walking distance of the museum.



The tour will begin at 1 PM and last for approximately 1.5 hours.

There is a \$15 entrance fee.

Email Dee Fuller at [candacelf13@gmail.com](mailto:candacelf13@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

Coxsackie has a beautiful waterfront park and is an interesting little town to walk around.





# Churches Endorsing Candidates: What Could Go Wrong?

*(Email from Scott MacConomy, the Secular Coalition for America, July 21, 2025)*

If it's up to the IRS, churches are about to become arms of political campaigns. Churches, synagogues, and mosques, actually. The IRS wants to officially ignore the Johnson Amendment's prohibition on church leaders endorsing political candidates in church. The IRS has joined with faith-based plaintiffs in a court filing asking that the Johnson Amendment not be enforced against the plaintiffs.

Furthermore, the IRS has asked the court to rule that the Johnson Amendment does not apply to "speech by a house of worship to its congregation, in connection with religious services through its customary channels of communication on matters of faith, concerning electoral politics viewed through the lens of religious faith." Even if the judge in this case doesn't go along with the IRS in his ruling, I'm pretty sure the IRS will try to accomplish its evisceration of the Johnson Amendment some other way.

The Johnson Amendment applies to every organization that has nonprofit status with the IRS. This includes about 350,000 houses of worship of various denominations and about 1.1 million other nonprofits. Nonprofits don't pay taxes and people who donate to them get to deduct their contributions. The Secular Coalition for America is one of those 1.1 million.)

The Johnson Amendment has not been interpreted as requiring a total ban on politics. Houses of worship have been allowed to:

- ⇒ Provide members with nonpartisan information regarding an election.
- ⇒ Organize voter registration drives.
- ⇒ Host candidates as speakers provided that each one is given an equal chance to speak.
- ⇒ Hold discussions about the relationship between church doctrine and ballot issues.

Now the IRS wants to allow faith leaders to specifically endorse or oppose candidates. What could go wrong? Congregations already get together regularly to hear guidance from faith leaders they probably respect. Now they will hear variations on "God wants you to vote for this candidate." and in some settings "That candidate is a demon." (I'm not making that up, and it's an accusation some people take seriously.)

How valuable would such an endorsement be? I think we'll find out because I think endorsements will be offered or solicited, legally or illegally. Currently it's not illegal for a political campaign to donate to a nonprofit. How many churches, synagogues, or mosques could use a new roof? Candidates will be appearing in person to accept endorsements with a campaign speech, too. State and local candidates will be seeking endorsements, not just federal candidates. I can also see strife within congregations over who should be or has been endorsed by their faith leaders.

Another problem: it's unclear whether the language proposed by the IRS about political speech reaching churchgoers over "customary channels of communication" includes people who watch religious services streamed online or on TV, rather than just those who attend services in person. You can be sure some churches will test that out and spread their political message as widely as possible.

America's system of government functions best when religion is protected from political interference and when politics is protected from religious interference. The founders wrote a secular Constitution to establish a secular government. The Johnson Amendment supports that goal.

The Secular Coalition is prioritizing this one. We [sent a letter to the Secretary of the Treasury](#) urging him to reverse this new legal position from the IRS. We worked with Congressmen Raskin and Huffman on [a letter from the Congressional Freethought Caucus to the IRS commissioner](#), and on an op-ed by Raskin and Huffman. The Johnson Amendment has not been repealed from the United States Code so we don't need to pass a bill to restore it, but a Congressional resolution in support is an option being discussed, and other ideas. I'll let you know when you can help.

Your advocate,

Scott MacConomy  
Director of Policy and Government Affairs  
Secular Coalition for America



Join the bunch for lunch! We will gather at Diner Time, 813 Loudon Road, Latham, on August 21st at 12:00 Noon. The date for the July Lunch Bunch get-together is September 18th. Please let Rosina Ansaldo know by Wednesday evening if you'll be joining them.

**NOTE: If you know of a great local eatery, please don't be shy; recommend it!** We'd like to give our local restaurants a chance by rotating them every few months and returning to the ones that get enthusiastic thumbs up. Please send ideas to Rosina Ansaldo. Thanks!

# New memo lets government workers push Christianity on colleagues—even if they're the boss

(by Hemant Mehta, from *The Friendly Atheist*, July 28, 2025)

## ***The memo raises major concerns about religious favoritism, power dynamics, and workplace pressure***

In a completely unnecessary (but not-at-all surprising) move, the Trump administration's Office of Personnel Management issued a memo today announcing that it's now perfectly fine to proselytize at work.

While it doesn't apply only to Christians, it's a rule undoubtedly designed for Christians.

The five-page memo, issued by OPM Director Scott Kapor (a former venture capitalist who just got confirmed to the job this

- *Display and Use of Items Used for Religious Purposes or Religious Icons:* Employees should be permitted to display and use items used for religious purposes or icons of a religiously significant nature, including but not limited to bibles, artwork, jewelry, posters displaying religious messages, and other indicia of religion (such as crosses, crucifixes and mezuzahs) on their desks, on their person, and in their assigned workspaces.

month), says it's about "Protecting Religious Expression in the Federal Workplace." But since that was already legal, you have to read a lot further to discover what this is really about. Specifically, the memo outlines certain actions that "should not result" in any kind of punishment.

One of them involves displaying religious icons in your personal space.

If you want to display a giant cross in your cubicle, or put up a sign saying non-believers will burn in hell (or implying as much in a "bless your heart" sort of way), it's now perfectly fine. The same applies, I guess, if you put up a sign saying "Satan loves you," but you get the feeling that's not going to be accepted the same way...

This rule creates obvious conflicts. There's a very fine line between wearing a personal religious symbol (a yarmulke or cross necklace, for example) and telling everyone in the office that your religious beliefs are front and center even at work.

Colleagues may battle it out to see who can out-Jesufy each other. Non-Christians will be made to feel like outcasts. If atheists or Satanists put up symbols of their own beliefs, they could be considered hostile to everyone else in a way that a more traditional symbol will not be. What happens when someone posts one of the Bible's anti-gay "clobber verses" in an office that has LGBTQ employees?

And what happens when it's not a colleague but a supervisor who's promoting faith? Are employees going to be expected to agree in order to get a promotion? Would criticizing that faith or expressing a different one hinder advancement in the workplace? Even if that's explicitly forbidden, how would you know if it was your religious differences, not the merit of your work, that led to you being held back?

It's the same reason public school teachers shouldn't have giant Bibles on their desks: Because of the power dynamic, it puts pressure on students to go along with it, or at the very least, stay quiet if there's any disagreement.

But that's not even the most concerning rule. That honor goes to the one that opens the door to religious "Conversations Between Federal Employees" because it gives a green light to workplace proselytizing:

- *Conversations Between Federal Employees:* Employees may engage in conversations regarding religious topics with fellow employees, including attempting to persuade others of the correctness of their own religious views, provided that such efforts are not harassing in nature.<sup>16</sup> Employees may also encourage their coworkers to participate in religious expressions of faith, such as prayer, to the same extent that they would be permitted to encourage coworkers participate in other personal activities. The constitutional rights of supervisors to engage in such conversations should not be distinguished from non-supervisory employees by the nature of their supervisory roles. However, unwillingness to engage in such conversations may not be the basis of workplace discipline.

Employees may engage in conversations regarding religious topics with fellow employees, including attempting to persuade others of the correctness of their own religious views, provided that such efforts are not harassing in nature. Employees may also encourage their coworkers to participate in religious expressions of faith, such as prayer, to the same extent that they would be permitted to encourage coworkers participate in other personal activities. The constitutional rights of supervisors to engage in such conversations should not be distinguished from non-supervisory employees by the nature of their supervisory roles. However, unwillingness to engage in such conversations may not be the basis of workplace discipline.

(Continued on page 7)

In the appendix, the memo offers a specific example:

During a break, an employee may engage another in polite discussion of why his faith is correct and why the non-adherent should re-think his religious beliefs. However, if the nonadherent requests such attempts to stop, the employee should honor the request.

You know the most annoying Christian in your office? Now imagine you work for the government. The Trump administration is giving that person full license to use you for theological target practice.

The rule says harassment isn't permitted, sure, but what's the difference between that and "mild" proselytizing?! What's the acceptable way for Christians to tell colleagues they deserve to be tortured for all of eternity but there's a way to escape that fate if they join your book club?

At what point does it cross the line?

I imagine many federal workers don't want anyone wasting their time talking about their religious beliefs along with other controversial topics—but it's possible that saying, "Karen, please shut up about Jesus" would be considered harassment in a way that pushing the Bible on them wouldn't be.

The memo doesn't specify who gets to make the final call on any conflicts.

You better hope it's not your supervisor, though, since the document explicitly gives that person permission to promote faith. As an example of what's permitted, it even says "a supervisor may post a handwritten note inviting each of his employees to attend an Easter service at his church." How could anyone know if that's a mere invite or a direct order with subtle consequences for not going along with it?

There's a reason conversations about faith, just like politics or anything else potentially divisive, is supposed to be kept to a minimum at work, especially if you work in a secular space like the federal government. You work alongside people from varying backgrounds, some of whom may hold very different views from you, yet you all have a shared mission. It's better to focus on the task at hand rather than allowing distractions to interfere with the culture of the workspace.

This memo, however, says certain kinds of distractions are permitted because they're religious—hell, it endorses those distractions—when a better memo would try to tamp down conversations that aren't centered around work or that include people who want nothing to do with them. Instead of putting a stop to workplace harassment, this memo puts a jolt in it while pretending to solve that very problem.

The new rules don't make life better for Christians since they already had the right to be annoying. But it does make life tangibly worse for people who are not Christian by forcing them to deal with religious colleagues who see them as nothing more than people in need of "saving."

The rules create friction when the government should be trying to avoid it entirely. It's not that the memo changes any laws, but it gives cover to Christian Nationalists who believe they can treat everyone in their lives as potential converts, and who think their church extends everywhere they go.

The Washington Post points out that religious speech in the government was never prohibited in the first place, which makes you wonder why this memo is even needed:

For example, 1997 guidance from the Clinton administration called for agencies not to "suppress employees' private religious speech in the workplace while leaving unregulated other private employee speech that has a comparable effect on the efficiency of the workplace."

Republicans will likely say this isn't about elevating Christianity since it applies equally to all beliefs. But when this administration openly promotes Christianity above all other religions and pretends like "anti-Christian bias" is a real problem, there's no reason this memo should be seen as anything but a cover for white evangelicals who don't understand boundaries.

It's fun to think of situations where critics engage in malicious compliance by promoting Satanism, but it's unfair to put those employees in a situation where their careers may be at risk by doing that. And make no mistake, Muslims and Satanists and other non-traditional believers have the most to lose by doing what Christians are now permitted to do.

What about promoting atheism? It's possible that's not allowed at all. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of religion. However, the document says...

... Title VII does not cover all beliefs. For example, social, political, or economic philosophies, and mere personal preferences, are not "religious" beliefs within the meaning of the statute.

Since atheism is not a religion, it likely falls under "personal preferences," which means promoting a slogan like "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life" would be illegal while a similar statement linked to a Bible verse would be okay.

In a statement, the Freedom From Religion Foundation called the memo "shockingly unconstitutional":

"These shocking changes essentially permit workplace evangelizing, but worse still, allow supervisors to evangelize underlings and federal workers to proselytize the public they serve," says Annie Laurie Gaylor, FFRF co-president. "This is the implementation of Christian nationalism in our federal government."

It's not clear if there's any recourse to fight this, including any lawsuits. But you can be damn sure this memo will lead to far more confusion than it resolves.



# ONE HUNDRED BLACK MEN ALBANY, NY CAPITAL REGION ANNUAL FAMILY FISH FRY

SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 2025  
1:00 – 5:30 P.M.



NISKAYUNA COMMUNITY CENTER PARK  
2682 AQUEDUCT ROAD, NISKAYUNA, NY 12309

Join us for good food & a great cause!

ADULTS \$25 / AGE 10-19 \$10  
Children Under age 10 FREE

TRI-CITY PUBLIC SAFETY PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

518-928-7557 | [100bm-albanyny.com](http://100bm-albanyny.com)

For more information, please contact Fred Levine at [flevine3@gmail.com](mailto:flevine3@gmail.com).



# Ask Governor Hochul to Sign The Medical Aid in Dying Act Into Law

CDHS member Sue Parry provided this information about how you can reach out to NY Governor Kathy Hochul to ask her to sign the Medical Aid in Dying Act into law. You can take action by clicking here: <https://www.medicalaidindyingny.org/take-action>, which provides an easy way to send an email to the Governor.

These are some suggested messaging points that supporters, supportive organizations, and high-level influencers can use as they craft their own messages to the Governor:

The Medical Aid in Dying bill is an extraordinary piece of legislation that touches the lives of many New Yorkers, beyond those who are terminally ill.

This is a time for Governor Kathy Hochul to shine: it is 100% consistent with her strong support, advocacy and leadership to defend and protect personal autonomy to make reproductive health choices.

Medical aid in dying is supported by a majority of New York voters who are Catholic, Jewish and Protestant, as well as the organizations Catholics Vote Common Good and New York Unitarian Universalist Justice.

For those coming from a Catholic perspective, emphasizing how the Governor can square her own Catholicism with signing the bill will be important. One way to do this is to emphasize how important religious freedom is, and that she is the Governor of all New Yorkers who share a wide variety of faith beliefs, and that those who disagree with medical aid in dying because of their Catholic faith are free to refrain from participating because of the bill's strong conscience clause protections, which apply to healthcare providers (doctors, nurses, hospice workers, and pharmacists) as well as religious healthcare facilities.

This is the right thing to do from a moral and political perspective.

**Moral:** People in other states and jurisdictions -- now 11, as Delaware just approved a medical aid in dying bill last month -- have the power and autonomy to pass on their own terms, without unnecessary pain, and surrounded by the people they love most.

**Political:** There is overwhelming public support for medical aid in dying, with more than 70% of New Yorkers in support of the bill. More importantly, majority support of New Yorkers across every demographic line: Republicans, Democrats, and independent voters; voters from every region of the state; voters from across the religious spectrum; and voters from every race. It is a rare opportunity for the Governor to be able to do something supported by such a wide diversity of New Yorkers. It has also garnered near universal agreement from professional organizations that represent doctors (MSSNY, the New York State Academy of Family Physicians); lawyers (the NYS Bar Association, the Women's Bar Association); nurses (NYSNA, the New York State Nurses Association); psychiatrists (the New York State Psychiatric Association); organizations that support bodily autonomy (Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts, NOW-NYS and NOW-NYC), and civil society groups like the League of Women Voters of NYS, the StateWide Senior Action Council, the New York Civil Liberties Union, Housing Works, GMHC, SAGE (services and advocacy for LGBTQ+ elders), the Latino Commission on AIDS, and Indivisible chapters across the state, among many others.

In swiftly signing the bill, the Governor has the opportunity to say: "I don't want to see one more New Yorker suffer as they die in pain and without the dignity and autonomy that this law will afford."

Finally, those who encourage her to sign the bill can emphasize that this bill is about life. While this bill recognizes the inevitability of death that will come to all of us at some point -- hopefully after many long and happy years -- it is not really about death at all. It is about life, and living our lives to the fullest, even in our last months, hours, and even moments. It is about being able to die the way that we've lived -- consistent with our own faith, our own values, and our own beliefs.

**C**apital District Humanist Society, Inc. PO Box 11209, Loudonville, NY 12211-0209  
(518) 533-2666 E-mail us at [cdhs.albany@gmail.com](mailto:cdhs.albany@gmail.com)  
Visit us on the web at [humanistsociety.net](http://humanistsociety.net)

The Capital District Humanist Society (CDHS) is an independent, non-profit (and non-prophet), non-partisan and strictly non-religious educational and social organization for those who share humanist values: commitment to education, rational and free inquiry, democracy, social concerns and fellowship. CDHS is affiliated with the four major humanist organizations - the American Humanist Association (AHA), the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), the Secular Coalition for America (SCA) and the Humanists International (HI).

There are five types of CDHS member support: Individual, \$50/yr.; Family, \$80/yr.; Sustaining, \$100/yr.; Patron, \$150/yr.; and Lifetime Member, one contribution of \$1000 or more.

**Members** receive our publication, *The Humanist Monthly*, and vote each September on the make-up of the governing Executive Council. Members are eligible for election to the Executive Council and may also serve as appointed officials. Members are welcome to attend Executive Council meetings.

The IRS recognizes CDHS as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Therefore, all donations, both cash and materials with established "fair market value", qualify as charitable contributions for income tax purposes.

**Donations** are gratefully accepted to help speed our growth. CDHS is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization under the IRS Code. Financial disclosure information and our annual report are available upon request.

**If you know** of someone who may be interested in CDHS, please pass this newsletter along or give us the name; we will send a sample copy or two with no obligation.

**We value your input.** In the best humanist tradition, CDHS has no rigid picture of itself. We ask you to join us, not follow us. What activities and services would you like CDHS to provide its members? Send us your suggestions, questions, and comments.

# Calls to Action/Get Involved

- ◆ Join George Takei to Condemn Concentration Camps (from Jay Kuo, Substack, July 27, 2025): Many know that George Takei, along with his family, was forced at gunpoint from their home by the U.S. military and imprisoned in an internment camp—despite being an American citizen. Add your voice to George’s petition to collectively let our elected officials know that we are watching and we are outraged at [https://www.thepetitionsite.com/983/564/587/?TAP=2430&source\\_id=jay](https://www.thepetitionsite.com/983/564/587/?TAP=2430&source_id=jay).
- ◆ Tuesday, July 29, 6:00 PM: Special Screening of HOW TO SAVE DEMOCRACY, a documentary feature film at the Crandall Public Library, 251 Glen St., Glens Falls (<https://www.mobilize.us/indivisibleadksaratoga/>)
- ◆ Sunday, August 3, 12:00-2:30 PM: March with Indivisible ADK/Saratoga in the Schuylerville Turning Point Parade (<https://www.mobilize.us/indivisibleadksaratoga/>)
- ◆ Thursday, August 7, 7:00 PM: Skeptical Inquirer Presents “Misguided” with Matthew Facciani. Free , but reservations required (<https://skepticalinquirer.org/video/misguided-matthew-facciani/?emci=ea18da20-c468-f011-8dc9-6045bda9d96b&emdi=9ad48b18-d46b-f011-8dc9-6045bda9d96b&ceid=2851992>)
- ◆ Sunday, August 10, 1:00-3:00 PM: Progressive Schenectady Picnic Concert, 2682 Aqueduct Rd., Niskayuna ([https://www.mobilize.us/indivisible/event/813183/?followup\\_modal\\_context=organization\\_newsletter\\_custom\\_recommendations](https://www.mobilize.us/indivisible/event/813183/?followup_modal_context=organization_newsletter_custom_recommendations))

**Editor’s note:** Each month, this column will highlight events, action items, or other items of interest to CDHS members. If you are aware of any other volunteer opportunities that would be a good fit for CDHS, please contact Don Porterfield at CDHS.Albany@gmail.com, and type in **Community Events** in the subject line.



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<https://www.humanistsociety.net>

Find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CapitalDistrictHumanistSociety>

## MEMBER SUPPORT FORM

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / ZIP Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the Humanist Society? \_\_\_\_\_

*All this information will be included in our Directory, which is distributed to members only, unless you request otherwise by checking and signing here:* ☐ I do not want to be listed in the CDHS Member Directory \_\_\_\_\_

Levels of Member Support	Annual Payment	Date ____/____/____
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership	\$ 50	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership	\$ 80	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Member	\$100	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$150	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member	one-time contribution of \$1000 or more	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional tax-deductible donation	\$ _____	_____

***Please make checks payable to CDHS***

☐ Please send me additional information