



Vol. XXXIX No. 12
December 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, December 14th, 2025

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

Valley of Forgetting

For hundreds of years, the residents of isolated rural villages around Medellin, Columbia have been losing their memories, before, inevitably, their lives are cut short in their forties or early fifties. Jennie Erin Smith was drawn in by this medical mystery, and spent nearly a decade deeply immersed in the lives of these people, living with them; attending doctor's visits, funerals, and autopsies. She also closely followed the doctors and researchers who overcame incredible challenges to pursue the science behind early onset Alzheimer's.

A graduate of Columbia University, Jennie Erin Smith writes on medicine, biology, wildlife, natural history and Latin America. She also contributes several pieces a year to the New York Times science section, and writes regularly for several medical journals, primarily summarizing research in oncology and neurology. She also writes a semimonthly column on regulatory affairs in Latin America for the Regulatory Affairs Professionals Society. Jennie has also written in the past for the Wall Street Journal, the Times Literary Supplement, The New Yorker, and others. She is currently Senior Biomedicine Reporter for Science magazine. Her book *Stolen World* was selected among the best books of the year by the New Yorker and the Washington Post.



Jennie Erin Smith



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. 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

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



CDHS is affiliated with:

The American Humanist Association (AHA)

Center for Inquiry (CSI)

Humanists International (HI)

The Secular Coalition for America (SCA)

On Sunday, January 11th, 2026, 12:30 PM (In Person) and 1:00 PM (Online)
The Capital District Humanist Society Presents:

Atomic Dreams

The inside story of how nuclear energy—long considered scary, controversial, and even apocalyptic—has become the hot topic of the climate debate, and perhaps a vital power source of the future.



Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow

On June 21, 2016, Pacific Gas & Electric Company announced a plan to shutter California's last nuclear power plant, Diablo Canyon, in 2025. The plan was hailed by environmental groups and politicians around the country. Then, suddenly, the state's Democratic establishment reversed the decision, and in 2024 the Biden-Harris administration awarded the plant \$1.1 billion in credits to extend its life. What happened in between?

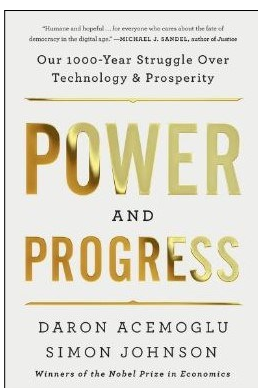
Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow is a journalist based in Southern California. Her writing has appeared in print or online in the New Yorker, the New York Review of Books, The Nation, the Washington Post, the Times Literary Supplement, and The Guardian, among other publications. She is the author of Personal Stereo, which was named one of Pitchfork's favorite music books of 2017, and *The G Ring*, a Kindle single.

Rebecca was previously a contributing writer for the Boston Globe's Ideas section and a contributing editor at Dissent. Her work has received support from the Robert B. Silvers Foundation, the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, and UC Irvine's Newkirk Center for Science and Society.

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Reminder: February Meeting — Sunday, February 8, 2026

CDHS Book Group is reading
*Power and Progress: Our
Thousand-Year Struggle Over
Technology and Prosperity* by
Daron Acemoglu and Simon
Johnson. 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	June Hendricks
Treasurer	Roland Tozer
Programs, Publicity	Fred Levine
Publications	Carol Quantock
Social Activities	Candace Fuller
Membership, Telephone	Heather Drinkwater
Meetup Coordinator	Fred Levine
Compliance	Vacant
Member at Large	Vacant

Appointed Positions

Hospitality	Sue Parry
Room Arrangements	Frank Robinson
Caring Network	Rosina Ansaldo

Just a Few More Weeks to Ask Governor Hochul to Sign the Medical Aid in Dying Act

(condensed and reprinted from last month's Humanist monthly)

The Medical Aid in Dying Act (A136/S138) is a direct reflection of our mission to defend the separation of church and state. The primary opposition to this bill comes from religious groups seeking to impose their beliefs on all citizens. By supporting the bill, we promote the secular values of personal autonomy and dignity.

ACT NOW: Urge Governor Hochul to Sign the Bill

A petition was recently presented to Governor Hochul's staff following an event outside her Albany office. FFRF has now officially switched all efforts to individual communications from supporters. This is your moment to make your voice heard.

Your Most Effective Actions

Here's how you can take action to urge Governor Hochul to sign the bill. Don't procrastinate—you can take these actions right now or make a plan to follow up this week.

1. Call her office: 1-518-474-8390. When you call, you will likely speak to a staff member or press 1 to leave a voicemail. It should take less than a minute.
2. Send an automated email, via Compassion & Choices with a personal note included, by using [<https://join.compassionandchoices.org/a/ny2025-emailalert-govsign>] or Email her directly from her website by going to [<https://www.governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form>] Select Topic: Legislation.
3. Encourage others to take action

Encourage friends, family, and colleagues to take action by sending them to the chapter website at: [<https://unyft.org/maid/>]

4. Mail a personalized letter

A handwritten or personalized letter (including personal information and perhaps a photograph of yourself and a loved one) is the most effective way to use your voice.

Mail to: The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York State, NYS State Capitol Building, Albany, NY 12224.

Share the Action (Social Media)

After taking action, please help us amplify this message by sharing the call to action with your network. Personal stories are the most powerful! Use this suggested post and image to make it fast!

Suggested Social Media Post Text (Copy/Paste):

I just contacted Governor Hochul to urge her to sign the Medical Aid in Dying Act (A136/S138). This is about protecting personal autonomy and end-of-life dignity in New York. We need your voice now! Click here to take action: [#NYMAIDAct](https://unyft.org/maid#NYMAIDAct) [#DeathWithDignity](https://unyft.org/maid#DeathWithDignity) [#PersonalAutonomy](https://unyft.org/maid#PersonalAutonomy) [#Hochul](https://unyft.org/maid#Hochul)

**PROTECT
PERSONAL
AUTONOMY**
ENSURE DIGNITY
SIGN THE MAID ACT
A136/S138
[UNYFT.ORG/MAID](https://unyft.org/maid)

Volunteer Opportunities On the CDHS Executive Committee

EC Positions still open: CDHS members, the need still exists for the following vacant positions: Compliance Officer and Member-at-Large. These positions require a minimal amount of work done on a monthly basis. Neither position is difficult, but necessary for records and reporting purposes. Contact Don Porterfield at CDHS.Albany@gmail.com.



“A nickel for your thoughts?”

Join the bunch for lunch! We're going to try a new location, the Gateway Diner, 899 Central Avenue, Albany 12206 (<https://www.gatewaydineralbany.com/>) on December 18th at 12:00 Noon. The date for the January Lunch Bunch get-together is January 15th. 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!

RECAP OF OUR NOVEMBER SPEAKER'S TALK

by Frank Robinson

Carol Quantock, a CDHS stalwart (she does these newsletters) spoke about Bird-Window Collisions: How Big a Deal Are They? (And what can be done to reduce them?)

For those who may not recall Carol's previous presentation, a bird is a warm-blooded creature (though descended from dinosaurs), with feathers and wings enabling them to fly (which humans cannot, without technology). Birds are good. Windows are those transparent rectangles on the outer walls of homes, also good. But when birds and windows collide, it's not good.

Carol said her talk was aimed at residential homeowners. She showed a slide depicting a typical backyard, a common bird habitat. Noting that only in the last 200 years or so has window glass become clear enough to endanger birds. Carol stated that with suburban sprawl, "it's impossible to calculate how much glass is out there." It's not that birds try to fly through it into homes; rather, the glass reflects an outdoor scene. And birds don't understand the concept of reflective glass windows.

She cited the work of Dr. Daniel Klem, Jr., who has studied this problem for nearly half a century. Windows are our biggest bird killers — they kill more birds than cats. Actually, windows kill practically no cats. But they kill almost twice as many birds as cats do. Around a billion annually, in the U.S. alone.

As for remedies, one obvious answer is education. However, Carol did not address this. Probably because it's very hard to educate birds on the dangers of window glass.

The chief alternative is to reduce the degree to which windows reflect an outdoor vista which birds will think they can fly through. Carol stressed the 2"x4" rule — breaking up the seeming window image into 2 by 4 inch rectangles, through which only very small birds could fit. This can be achieved mostly with stickers and decals; she mentioned a commercial product, "CollidEscape," which can be plastered onto the outside of a window, making a nice image that's actually transparent when seen from inside. "Bird tape" and "Feather Friendly" are cheaper options. Another remedy is window blinds. There are also modern window glass products that reduce reflectivity. A further piece of advice was to place bird feeders close to windows.

Carol finally spoke about why birds matter, calling them part of the "great circle of life," providing us with enjoyment. She did not mention Mao Zedong's 1950s campaign to exterminate swallows; billions were killed; turned out those birds ate a lot of insects, whose populations then exploded, with dire results for Chinese agriculture, and numerous human starvation deaths.

A recording of this presentation is available at: <https://youtu.be/X75OgdYoR3s>.

CDHS MEMBERS SUPPORT THE REGIONAL FOOD BANK OF NORTHEASTERN NY

(by Sue Parry)

A big thank you to CDHS members at our November meeting! Thanks to you, I was able to take 4 boxes of food and \$800 to the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern NY. I was blown away by your generosity — so much so, that I think we should do it again at our December meeting.

The Regional Food Bank serves 1000 agencies (food pantries, homeless shelters, childcare agencies, etc.) across 23 counties, and feeds 350,000 people every month. I urge you to visit their website (<https://regionalfoodbank.net/>) to see how extensive and creative their endeavors are.

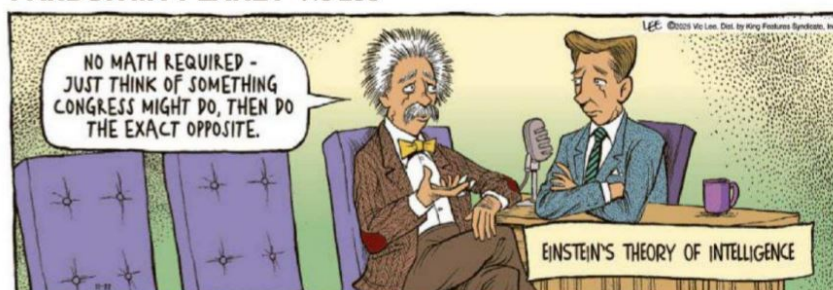
Food banks were already finding it hard to meet the demand for food, even before the federal government shutdown. Funds have begun to flow again to SNAP recipients, but the demand is still huge. (And SNAP benefits can only be used for food and not for things like soap, shampoo, toilet paper, or diapers, so donations of these items are welcome. Such donations help people stretch their food dollars further.)

I will bring boxes again to our December 14th meeting for donations of food and hygiene items. (By the way, the Regional Food Bank will accept items that are up to 4 months beyond their expiration date.)

While food donations are always welcome, what the Food Bank needs most is CASH — and every dollar helps. Because they can buy in bulk and can purchase food that is otherwise unsaleable, a dollar that they spend buys much more than a dollar we spend to donate canned goods. So, I will also put out a jar for cash and checks (made out to the Regional Food Bank of NENY). I'll take care of bringing donations to the Food Bank.



PARDON MY PLANET Vic Lee



A call to action

'We Ain't Buying It'

(from *The Contrarian*, by Jennifer Rubin, Substack, November 24, 2025)

The grassroots boycott launched against Disney/ABC in the wake of its cowardly decision to pull Jimmy Kimmel off the air underscored the strength of consumer power in the fight to preserve democracy. Now, resistance organizers are asking consumers for a brief boycott over the Thanksgiving holiday of three companies: Amazon, Home Depot, and Target. A small effort might elevate a very critical message against three companies organizers have identified as Trump regime enablers.

The We Ain't Buying It coalition explained that "pulling your dollars from companies that don't stand with us and redirecting them to businesses that do" is an essential part of defending democracy. "Being intentional about where you spend and who you support" can underscore the pro-democracy message and impress on businesses that what they do during this critical time can affect their bottom line.

The No Kings Alliance announced on Friday that it would "join forces with We Ain't Buying It to mobilize our collective power this Thanksgiving through Cyber Monday." The alliance declared:

"President Trump and his corporate allies continue to relentlessly attack our communities—from mass firings of federal workers to corporate pressure to dismantle DEI to ICE raids targeting our neighbors to a government shutdown that left 42 million people without needed food...."

Together we will hold accountable corporations like Target, Home Depot, and Amazon, that continue to enable and profit from this administration's relentless and cruel attacks on working people and our families."

The threat in an autocratic takeover (as we have seen from quisling universities, law firms, and tech/media companies) comes not just from the regime itself but from those in civil society who facilitate its aims to suppress civil liberties, assail the rule of law, and victimize vulnerable groups. LaTosha Brown, co-founder of Black Voters Matter, a principal mover behind the boycott, told me, "We're watching corporations bend over backwards to appease an administration and gain tax breaks, even when it hurts their own customers." She added: "They've forgotten something critical: tax breaks don't matter when sales collapse. And we control the sales." Picking a critical moment such as Thanksgiving weekend through Cyber Monday allows ordinary people to send their dollars "to the companies that have a real commitment to the people that work in their ranks and build their bottom line," she explained.

Even a brief boycott can be effective. In the case of Disney/ABC, "Data from research firm Antenna found that during September, the number of U.S. consumers who canceled their Disney+ subscriptions averaged 8%, which is double the 4% estimate for the prior two months," The Street reported. Also, Hulu's average cancellation rate was "twice the 5% rate for the previous two months." (Among all its streaming services, Disney reportedly lost 1.7 million subscribers.) In addition, Disney suffered a dip in market capitalization of \$4.2 billion at one point.

Randi Weingarten, president of the AFT, told me: "Just like Disney consumers showed their displeasure when Jimmy Kimmel was yanked off the air, the AFT joined Dr. Jamal Bryant and others across the country this fall to boycott Target for ditching their commitment to diversity and human dignity." This Thanksgiving, she said, Americans again can hit corporations "in the only language they seem to understand—our wallets." Weingarten added: "People are looking for a way to make their voice heard—and this weekend they're using their hip pocket to send a message."

While protestors have spent months applying pressure (and exacting real damage) to Target, Home Depot has more recently caught organizers' attention. In city after city, invading federal forces have conducted stakeouts and abusive arrests at Home Depot parking lots and stores. Home Depot denies it has cooperated with Immigration and Customs Enforcement but organizers confirm that "Home Depot is allowing ICE agents to illegally detain and kidnap laborers from their stores. The laborers in our communities are not able to look for work safely."

Meanwhile, Amazon has set "dangerous precedents—bankrolling inaugurations and pet projects that undermine democracy," Brown told me. "They won't do it at our expense anymore. They won't use our dollars to fund our own oppression." (Amazon is also infamous for union-busting, and its founder, Jeff Bezos, owns the Washington Post, which has thrown journalistic standards overboard and turned itself inside out to appease the regime.)

Consumer boycotts have a long and storied history in America. "Ever since the Boston Tea Party, Americans have used consumer tactics in social struggles and have understood purchasing goods (or, more frequently, eschewing them) not just as a significant economic act but as an enactment of practical ethics," Cornell University history professor Lawrence Glickman wrote. "For example, in antebellum America, members of the 'free produce' movement encouraged consumers to boycott goods made or produced by slaves, a tactic similar to consumer movements that remain popular to this day."

Contrary to critics' claim that boycotts are "token" gestures, boycotts have changed corporate conduct while publicizing the underlying grievances, giving ordinary people a sense of personal agency and incentivizing other companies to think twice before joining forces with the autocratic regime.

The 1956 Montgomery, Alabama, bus strike, for example, not only integrated that city's buses but helped launch the national civil rights movement. Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers Union called for consumers to show solidarity with fieldworkers who grew and harvested grapes. Huerta memorably said, "Sympathy alone just isn't going to make it." The farmworkers eventually broke the will of exploitive employers (with the help of truckers and longshoremen who refused to ship grapes that the Nixon administration purchased for troops overseas).

Americans can again register their anger against corporations that undermine democracy and their families' well-being. "If these corporations want to bankroll authoritarianism and gut DEI, they'll have to do it without our money," Leah Greenberg, co-founder of Indivisible, told me. "We've seen record-breaking numbers of people show up against authoritarianism this year—in the streets, at the polls, and now at the shops." She continued: "People across the country are signing up to reject corporate greed ahead of the busiest shopping weekend of the year. This action is another angle of pressure, and it sends a clear message: our values aren't for sale."

A little intentionality in your holiday gift-buying can go a long way. What would success look like? Nelini Stamp, one of the We Ain't Buying It leaders, told me, "Success looks like a dent in sales of Home Depot, Target, and Amazon, and folks understanding there is a dent because of [these companies'] enabling of the administration." In short, every dollar not spent sends a message.

We Ain't Buying It Target Companies

This action is taking direct aim at **Target**, for caving to this administration's biased attacks on DEI; **Home Depot**, for allowing and colluding with ICE to kidnap our neighbors on their properties; and **Amazon**, for funding this administration to secure their own corporate tax cuts.



Target

Target has rolled back their DEI initiatives, which included ending programs that help Black employees advance, cutting financial support for Black-Owned businesses, and removing LGBTQ+ products from their stores.



Amazon

Amazon holds a monopolistic position in the market, contributes to dangerous working conditions for its employees and drivers, and CEO Jeff Bezos has donated over \$1 million to this administration.



Home Depot

Home Depot is allowing ICE agents to illegally detain and kidnap laborers from their stores. The laborers in our communities are not able to look for work safely.

Texas Sues School District for Following the Law and Not Posting the Ten Commandments

Attorney General Ken Paxton's lawsuit against Galveston ISD shows how far Christian Nationalists will go to force their religion into public education

(from *The Friendly Atheist*, by Hemant Mehta, Substack, November 10, 2025)

The State of Texas is now suing a school district for not obeying its illegal Christian demands. The move puts the district in the awkward position of having to decide who they'd rather get sued by—the state or First Amendment experts—and sends a chilling message to every public school district in Texas that their only options are to waste time and money that should be going to educate students... or promote Christianity. All of this involves the state's unconstitutional Ten Commandments law.

A quick recap: Earlier this year, Texas passed a bill to post the Decalogue in public schools—King James' Version only. The law also included a provision requiring the attorney general of the state, Ken Paxton, to defend districts that get sued over this... which is a fancy way of saying taxpayers would be the ones screwed over if liberals tried to fight this in court.

One major lawsuit came anyway. More than a dozen families in 11 different districts challenged the law and they were represented by Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the ACLU of Texas, the ACLU (national), and the Freedom From Religion Foundation. (Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP assisted with the case for free.) Those were basically the same groups that filed similar lawsuits in both Louisiana and Arkansas.

In August, a federal judge sided with the church/state separation crowd, putting a temporary hold on the ridiculous law. The downside is that his ruling only applied to the 11 school districts connected to the plaintiffs in the case. At least until his final order came down.

Since then, the two sides have been fighting a war urging school districts to listen to their lawyers and not their opponent's.

When 14 other school districts not involved in the initial lawsuit put up the Ten Commandments anyway, the church/state crowd went directly to the judge to have the signs taken down—that amended lawsuit has yet to be resolved.

The whole situation has put these school districts in a horrible position.

The state is forcing them to put up these Christian displays. The law says those displays are blatantly illegal. But conservatives are trying to appeal these decisions every time a judge strikes them down, using dubious arguments about how the Decalogue is totally a part of American history, until an appellate court or the Supreme Court gives them the okay to promote Christianity in public schools. (At the moment, the ball is in the court of the notoriously conservative Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. The 17 active judges on that court will hear the Texas and Louisiana cases in January.)

But Attorney General Paxton doesn't want to wait for judges to rule on whether the Texas law is unconstitutional. He's actively pressuring school districts to obey his whims before judges can weigh in.

In September, Christian Nationalist State Sen. Mayes Middleton donated Ten Commandments displays to the Galveston Independent School District. Under the provisions in the Texas law, the district was required to "accept any offer of a privately donated poster or framed copy of the Ten Commandments." But a couple of weeks ago, the school board voted against doing that.

They didn't even argue it was a bad idea; they merely said they wanted to wait "until after the appeals of the constitutionality of SB10 are fully heard and decided upon." Basically, let the courts sort this out, and they'll do whatever the courts say. It's the responsible thing for a district to do.

It's worth saying that again: If Texas passes a bill that violates federal law, then the federal law is still in effect. That's why the district said it wouldn't put up the donated posters until after the courts had weighed in on the Texas bill.

That's why Paxton is now suing them, saying in a press release that the district was essentially denying the country's Christian heritage (which is a lie) and refusing to obey the law (which they're also not doing).

"America is a Christian nation, and it is imperative that we display the very values and timeless truths that have historically guided the success of our country," said Attorney General Paxton. "By refusing to follow the law, Galveston ISD chose to both blatantly ignore the Legislature and also ignore the legal and moral heritage of our nation."

Attorney General Paxton further stated that, *"There is no valid legal basis to prevent Texas schools from honoring a foundational framework of our laws, especially under the misconception that a 'separation of church and state' phrase appears in the Constitution. It does not."*

Paxton is deliberately lying about the law because he's a conservative Christian, so honesty doesn't play any role in his moral philosophy. (Just ask his wife.) As any legal scholar or middle schooler can tell you, while the exact phrase "separation of church and state" doesn't appear in the Constitution, that's what the Establishment Clause means. That's what court after court has affirmed for generations. Conservative Christians want to play a semantic game because they're well aware that the law isn't on their side. The only way they can spread their faith is through force, which tells you a lot about how little confidence they have in the persuasive power of the Bible itself.

In response to the argument that the school district is simply following federal law, Paxton says the court should step in and force the district to put up the posters anyway because it would be waaaaay worse for Texas if public school districts were seen as "openly flouting Texas law."

This also opens the door for Texas Republicans to punish any public school district they want. All they have to do is send copies of the Ten Commandments to any school district, triggering the Texas law, and if the district doesn't put them up, the state has a new reason to punish them.

It's just the latest way Texas Republicans are waging a war against public education. It's not enough that they whitewash history; they won't rest under they replace actual education with Sunday School.

Even if the courts rule against Paxton in this situation (which should be a no-brainer), all of this is a waste of time for the district, which now has to respond to the complaint and devote resources to fighting its own elected officials.

(Continued on Page 7)

It's clear Texas has decided the worst thing about its education system are all the damn students and teachers and administrators who make it operate. They're showing it by declaring war on schools for following the Constitution. Defying the First Amendment is a point of pride for Texas conservatives.

Galveston ISD's predicament exposes the cruel trap this Christian Nationalist agenda has created. The district has to choose between state law and the Constitution because those two things are in conflict. They have to choose between angering Ken Paxton or violating the Bill of Rights. It's a political minefield created by Republicans who don't give a damn about public education.

This isn't even about the Ten Commandments anymore. It's about control. Republicans want to turn Texas classrooms into pulpits, forcing teachers and students to publicly affirm a theology many of them don't share. That's how insecure these Republicans are. Unable to win people over with their ideas, they rig the maps and weaponize children's education to prop up their own crumbling moral authority.

It's telling that Paxton's version of Christian Nationalism involves coercion, threats, and lies. That's his faith. That's what it teaches him.

Every hour spent fending off Paxton's crusade is an hour stolen from Texas students. It's deeply ironic that these students are living under a right-wing government more interested in preaching the commandments than keeping them. (Again, just ask Paxton's wife.) Until Texas voters ever decide they've had enough of this theocratic theater, classrooms will continue to be battlegrounds and not places of learning.

Action Items/Get Involved

- ✓ Ongoing: Urge Governor Hochul to sign the Utility Advocate Bill: TS.6277 (Scarcella-Spanton)/A.2468 (Dinowitz) would ensure utility customers have a dedicated advocate with a seat at the regulatory table. Utilities, funded by their ratepayers, spend nearly \$20 million annually on legal teams, consultants, and extensive professional and administrative staff to raise rates, while residential consumer advocates have minimal resources, making it difficult to challenge utility proposals or influence outcomes in rate cases. The bill would level that playing field by creating the state Office of the Utility Consumer Advocate. For more information, visit <https://www.aarp.org/about-aarp/> or NYPIRG at <https://www.nypirg.org/>.
- ✓ Ongoing: Indivisible, Take Action Now: This website provides several current issues and contact information to take action. Indivisible is a grassroots movement of thousands of local Indivisible groups with a mission to elect progressive leaders, rebuild our democracy, and defeat the Trump agenda. (<https://indivisible.org/take-action-now?emci=b8f0ca40-1e97-f011-b484-6045bdeb7413&emdi=029c456a-f597-f011-b484-6045bdeb7413&ceid=2453808>)
- ✓ Ongoing: Support Indivisible; send a donation by going to: https://secure.actblue.com/donate/indivisible-action-1?refcode=facebook20250928directpost&source=facebook&fbclid=IwY2xjawNHYw5leHRuA2FlbQlxMABicmlkETFLVUxJRlInT1lBYWo1b29yAR6ecSkmE182Bbq1JusPO9rov9ki4lLhJEkaLW6Xwc7EGUeL-oMB7ph1_v0kRw_aem_gEdcb4AhGibo3ZbUEa8ftw.
- ✓ Ongoing: Card Campaign: The Card Campaign researches and then writes cards based on the information retrieved from verified sources. Sources can include articles from unbiased legacy media and independent media that are factual and impartial. Also, journalists who are producing work independently, and articles from independent writers who are following the administration's implementation of a dictatorial government. (<https://cc4democracy.com/>)

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.

Capital District Humanist Society, Inc. PO Box 11209, Loudonville, NY 12211-0209

(518) 533-2666 E-mail us at cdhs.albany@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at 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.

NEXT SOCIAL SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

Don't miss out on our fun filled December social. Come and unwind with an afternoon of giving, receiving, eating and laughing.

Pirates' Bounty, (aka Chinese auction) has become a popular December social. Many thanks to CDHS member Heather Drinkwater for hosting. We have scheduled the social for Saturday, December 20th at her home from 12-4ish.

This is the way it works:

- * Bring your favorite dish to share for a potluck lunch.
- * Bring a donation for Grassroot Givers. There is SO much need this year. For a list of items they can use, go to www.grassrootgivers.org for a list of items they can use.
- * For the Pirates' Bounty, use your imagination and bring a gently used item or spend no more than \$20 on a new item (maybe it will find a home at Grassroot Givers).

CDHS will provide the paper products and some beverages.

Let Dee Fuller know by 12/17/25 if you will be attending by emailing her at candacelf13@gmail.com. Dee will provide you with the address when you respond.

Happy Solstice—December 21, 2025



CDHS •• PO Box 11209, Loudonville, NY 12211-0209 •• (518) 533-2666

<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 ____/____/____

- | | | |
|---|---|-------|
| ☐ Individual Membership | \$ 50 | _____ |
| ☐ Family Membership | \$ 80 | _____ |
| ☐ Sustaining Member | \$100 | _____ |
| ☐ Patron | \$150 | _____ |
| ☐ Life Member | one-time contribution of \$1000 or more | _____ |
| ☐ Additional tax-deductible donation | \$ _____ | _____ |

Please make checks payable to CDHS

☐ Please send me additional information