

Rhode Island Governor Reignites War on Christmas

Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln Chafee has once again decided not to use *Christmas* to describe the evergreen tree decorated to celebrate Dec. 25.

“Governor, what do you call a green, pointed, prickly tree we decorate in December? Everyone except for the governor knows it’s a Christmas tree,” said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel.

Originally, the governor’s office canceled the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony after last year’s controversy, when he refused to acknowledge “Christmas” during the tree lighting ceremony. Just 24 hours later, the annual event was rescheduled.

“Renaming a Christmas tree to a ‘Holiday tree’ is political correctness run amok,” said Staver. “A Menorah is associated with Hanukkah. Its name should not be changed. Santa and his sleigh appear during December bearing Christmas gifts. His name and those of his reindeer entourage should not be changed. Everyone knows that an evergreen tree decorated with lights and ornaments in December is a Christmas tree. The only reason to change the name is due to crass bigotry and ignorance,” said Staver.

Spokeswoman Christine Hunsinger said the governor believes *holiday* is more inclusive. “For these inclusiveness advocates, Hanukkah is in, Kwanzaa is in, Santa Claus is in, but Christmas is out,” said Staver. “Lighting a ‘holiday’ tree is not inclusive, it is divisive and hypocritical.”

Liberty Counsel launched its 10th annual “Friend or Foe Christmas Campaign” earlier this month to educate and, if necessary, litigate to make sure religious viewpoints are not

censored during Christmas. Liberty Counsel provides information about Christmas and a “Naughty & Nice” list, which overviews retailers that acknowledge Christmas and those that do not.