

Ben Carson: Houston Mayor Using Alinsky Tactics

You don't have to be a constitutional scholar to recognize the blatant violation of constitutional principles that's involved in the Houston City Council's power grab to subpoena the sermons of five area ministers, as well as internal correspondence dealing with social issues.

The council and Mayor Annise Parker are sensitive to what pastors are telling their congregations about same-sex marriage and a new ordinance the council passed—in the face of strident public opposition—in the name of gender equality. So, they have subpoenaed the sermon texts and other materials to try to quell dissent.

But of course, it isn't working. The Houston pastors know they are on the right side of the law. And this raises an important question: Why is it that many of those on the Left who normally would be outraged by such an egregious trampling on free-speech rights are strangely silent when it comes to standing up for the Houston pastors? Has anyone heard from the American Civil Liberties Union?

"We as Americans must guard every aspect of our Constitution and recognize when it is being threatened. One of the great dangers in America today is extreme intolerance in the name of tolerance," eminent neurosurgeon and conservative activist Ben Carson writes in a new blog.

"For example, in this Houston case, it is presupposed that the pastors in question may have said something that was objectionable to the homosexual community. In order to prove that we are tolerant of the homosexual lifestyle, we as a society allow gays to be intolerant of anyone who disagrees with them in any way."

Carson continues, "Perhaps it is time for Americans to take an honest look at what it means to live peacefully in a diverse society composed of people with many different points of view. This requires true tolerance, which includes being capable of listening to people with views that might differ from yours. Many of us who are Christians have strong beliefs that inform our thinking on many issues, but in no way should those beliefs lead us to demonize or treat others unfairly. The same applies to Muslims, Jews, every other religious group and atheists. When our universities attempt to shield students from hearing the opinions of those with whom the administration disagrees, they are not only being intolerant, but are teaching the next generation those same destructive ideas that will eventually dissolve the cohesiveness of our society and lead to our downfall."

But Carson argues that liberals' silence on the trampling of constitutional rights of pastors is no accident. He recalls the advice of community organizer Saul Alinsky:

"[I]n his book *Rules for Radicals*, [Alinsky] stated that you should never have a conversation with your adversaries, because that humanizes them, and your job is to demonize them. When your agenda is to fundamentally change a society, it is a much easier task when you stifle conversation and debate."

So there you have it. Free-speech rights deserve protection only when it's liberal or secular speech that needs protecting.

"Our Founders were very concerned about free speech and religious freedom because they came from countries where these basic elements of American life were compromised," Carson concludes in his post. "The First Amendment to the Constitution was carefully crafted to preclude the imposition of laws and ordinances that trample on these rights. The Houston issue goes far beyond free speech and homosexual rights. It warns us of what can happen if we are not vigilant

in guarding our hard-fought freedoms. Fortunately, a firestorm of immediate protests appears to have at least temporarily rolled back this egregious assault on all Americans, whether they realize it or not.

“We can never allow civil authorities to censor or control the content of religious sermons, or we will eventually become a completely different country with far fewer rights than we currently enjoy. Freedom is not free, and those who do not zealously guard it will lose it.”