

Columbia Law School

## Scholarship Archive

---

Center for Gender & Sexuality Law

Research Centers & Programs

---

11-2019

### **New Report Surveys Extent of Religious Liberty Activism on the Left**

Law, Rights, and Religion Project

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/gender\\_sexuality\\_law](https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/gender_sexuality_law)



Part of the Religion Law Commons

---

# New Report Surveys Extent of Religious Liberty Activism on the Left

November 12, 2019

Contact: Lilia Hadjiivanova, [lh3024@columbia.edu](mailto:lh3024@columbia.edu), 212-854-0167

**New York, New York** — A report released today from the Law, Rights, and Religion Project at Columbia Law School offers a sweeping account of religious liberty activism undertaken by social justice and humanitarian movements while demonstrating how right-wing activists have fought for conservative Christian hegemony rather than religious liberty for all. It thus challenges the leading popular narrative of religious freedom.

The report, [\*Whose Faith Matters? The Fight for Religious Liberty Beyond the Christian Right\*](#) (pdf), offers a clear rebuttal to conservative efforts—including by Attorney General William Barr and others in the Trump administration—to claim religious liberty as a right exclusive to conservative Christians.

Religious liberty advocates discussed in the report include Scott Warren, who goes on trial today in a federal court in Arizona. Warren is arguing that his religious beliefs compelled him to feed and shelter two migrants he encountered in the desert last year—acts that the government argue violated federal immigration law.

Key points include:

- Religious liberty isn't a conservative value. People of faith have demanded the right to live out their beliefs by performing same-sex marriages, assisting immigrants, protesting capital punishment, fighting nuclear proliferation, offering services to drug users, protecting the environment, resisting religious profiling & more.
- Religious liberty activism outside the Christian Right typically gets ignored or described as political rather than religious. Too often, only right-wing beliefs are seen as truly religious.
- Laws that protect **only one** religious view of sex, sexuality, marriage, and the family erode rather than protect true religious freedom.
- We should reject a “religion vs. LGBTQ/reproductive rights” framing for religious liberty claims. For many, religious freedom does not conflict with reproductive justice and LGBTQ equality.

The report is available on the Law, Rights, and Religion Project's website at: [lawrightsreligion.law.columbia.edu/content/whosefaithmatters](http://lawrightsreligion.law.columbia.edu/content/whosefaithmatters).

Please also explore our [interactive map](#) on progressive religious liberty advocacy.

*The [Law, Rights and Religion Project](#) is a law and policy think tank based at Columbia Law School that promotes social justice, freedom of religion, and religious plurality. The Project develops strategic thought leadership on the complex ways in which religious liberty rights interact with other fundamental rights. Sign up for our mailing list at [lawrightsreligion.law.columbia.edu/content/mailling-list](http://lawrightsreligion.law.columbia.edu/content/mailling-list) and follow us on Twitter [@LawRtsReligion](#).*