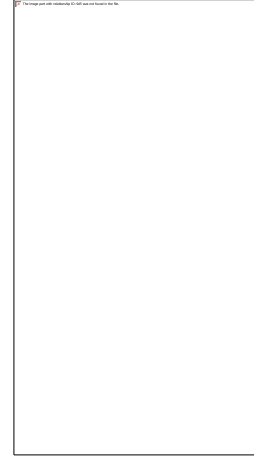


Progressive Atheists Inc.

Est. 10 Jan 2010 Reg: A0054119U Member of AAI

"Your participation is PA's future"

April 2016



... we seek to go beyond divisive racial, religious, tribal, and sectarian constructs, and instead, contribute to a universal humanity.

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Membership Renewal Term 2016: 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

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Term 2015: 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

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CONTACT PROGRESSIVE ATHEISTS INC.

President: president@progressiveatheists.org **Vice President –**

Andrew: 0438 043 050 **Secretary:**

secretary@progressiveatheists.org **Website:**

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Progressive Atheist Inc. | Headlines

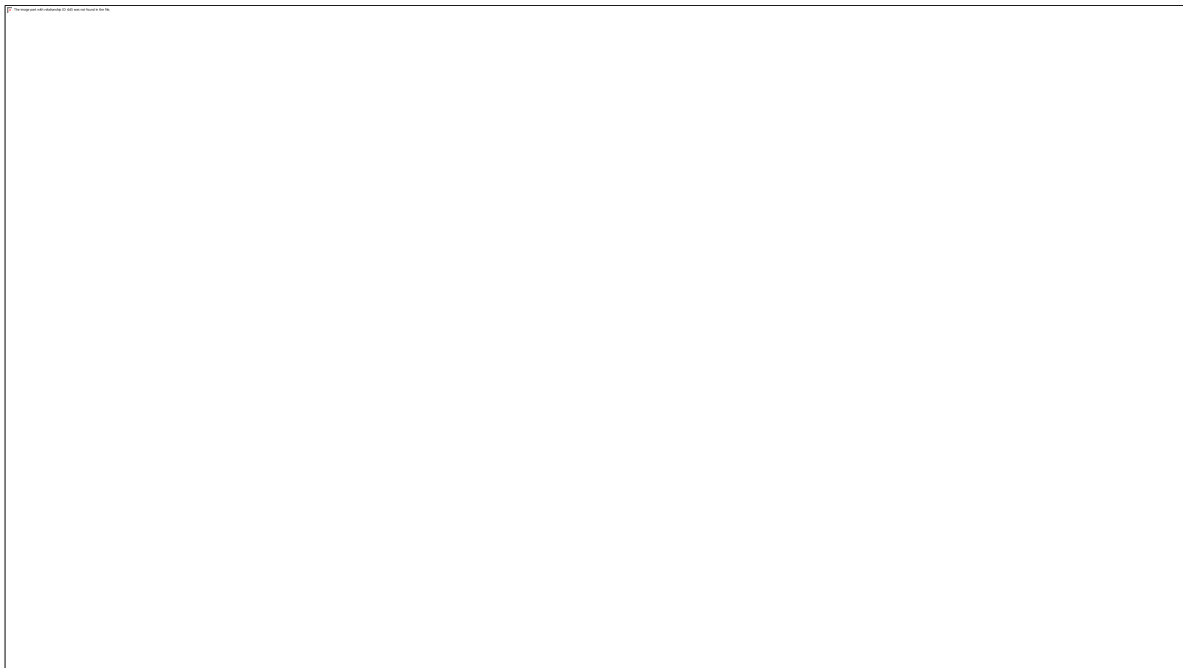
REPORT: Prejudice against atheist US school student

After Not Standing for the Pledge, Atheist Student Told He Should “Move to a Different Country”

I’ve heard of students being told they *had* to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance even though they legally don’t have to.

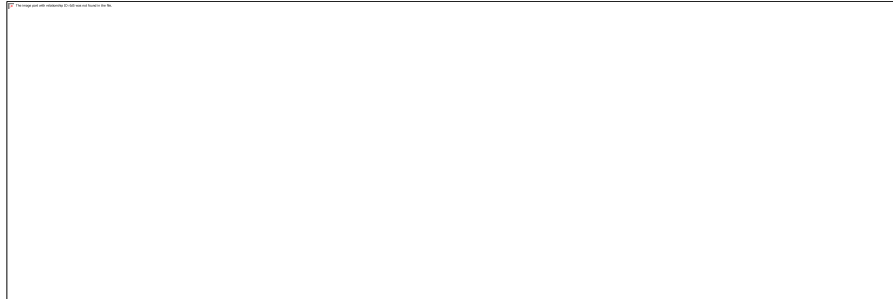
But I’ve rarely seen the adults at a school flip out over the issue as much as they did this week at Acadiana High School in Louisiana.

The American Humanist Association’s Appignani Humanist Legal Centre sent a letter to **Superintendent Donald Aguillard** detailing the unbelievable things junior **Raymond Smith** had to deal with.



READ MORE HERE: http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2016/04/17/after-not-standing-for-the-pledge-atheist-student-told-he-should-move-to-a-different-country/?utm_source=SilverpopMailing#st_refDomain=t.co&st_refQuery=/RGxyoYk4xO

SURVEY: Religiosity, spirituality, and volunteering motivations and behaviour



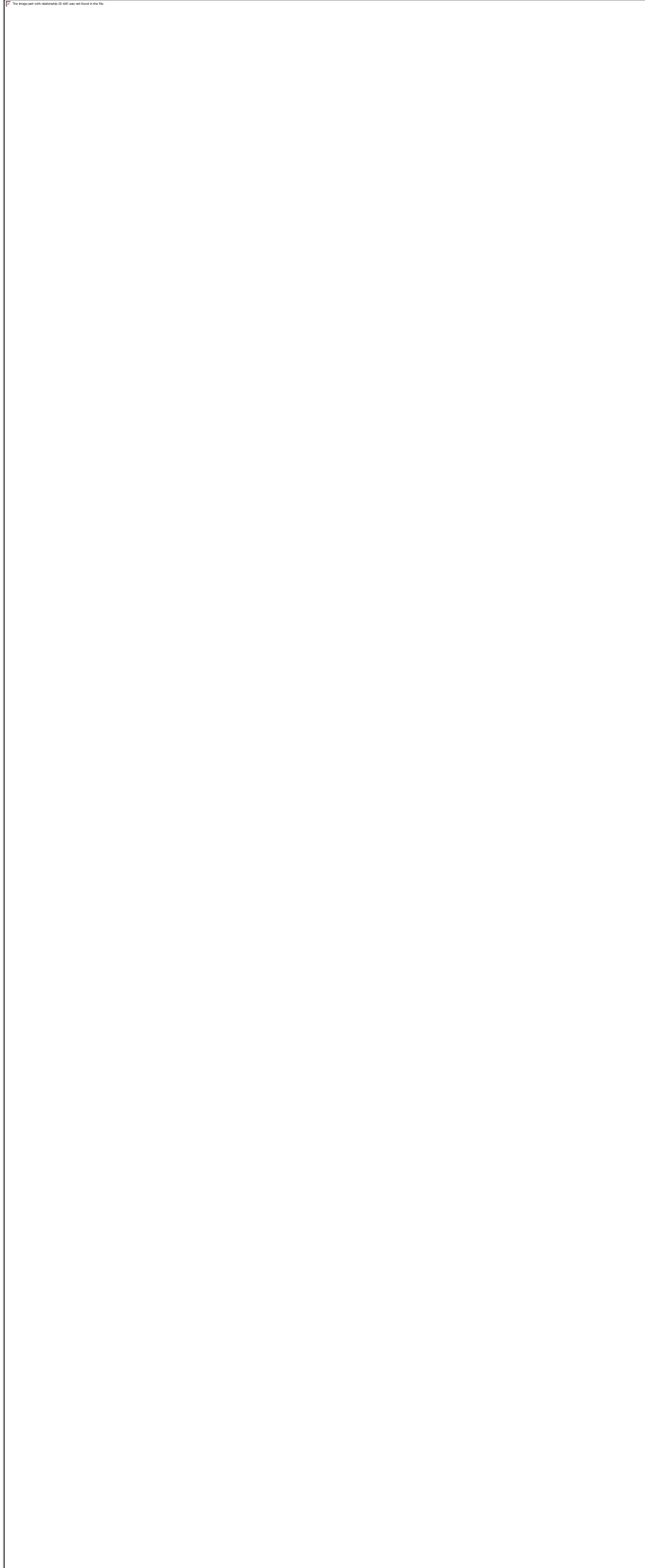
My name is Katja Petrovic and I am conducting a survey study towards a PhD at La Trobe University. The aim of my study is to gain a better understanding of what motivates people to volunteer, or prevents people from volunteering, with a specific focus on religiosity and spirituality.

This study is open to all individuals aged 18 years or over REGARDLESS of whether they consider themselves religious or spiritual, and regardless of whether or not they volunteer.

The project involves completing some questionnaires asking you about yourself including some demographic details, your history of volunteering (or lack thereof) and your religious/spiritual beliefs (or lack thereof). You will be able to do this at a time and place of your convenience in an online or hard copy format. This will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

VISIT TO PARTICIPATE:

https://latrobe.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9MFmUcaU5fVKCOx



REPORT: The Islamophobia card remains in play - Jerry Coyne

As I've said many times before, the word "Islamophobia" has been grossly misused to mean "hatred or fear of Muslims". But look—the word is "ISLAMophobia", not "MUSLIMophobia"! And there are many who do have that latter form of bigotry, including the front-runner for the Republican Presidential nomination, Donald Trump. Trump is a "Muslimophobe." The term "Islamophobia" is all too often used to characterize those not who dislike *Muslims*, but who dislike the *ideology* that drives many of them to perform either terrorist acts or oppressive behaviors, like the subjugation of women and the demonization of gays. While demonization of Muslims as a group is unjustified bigotry, criticism of Islam—whether you agree with it or not—is justifiable free speech, and a dialogue worth having.

FOR FURTHER EVIDENCE:

<https://whyevolutionistrue.wordpress.com/2016/04/17/the-islamophobia-card-is-still-in-play/>

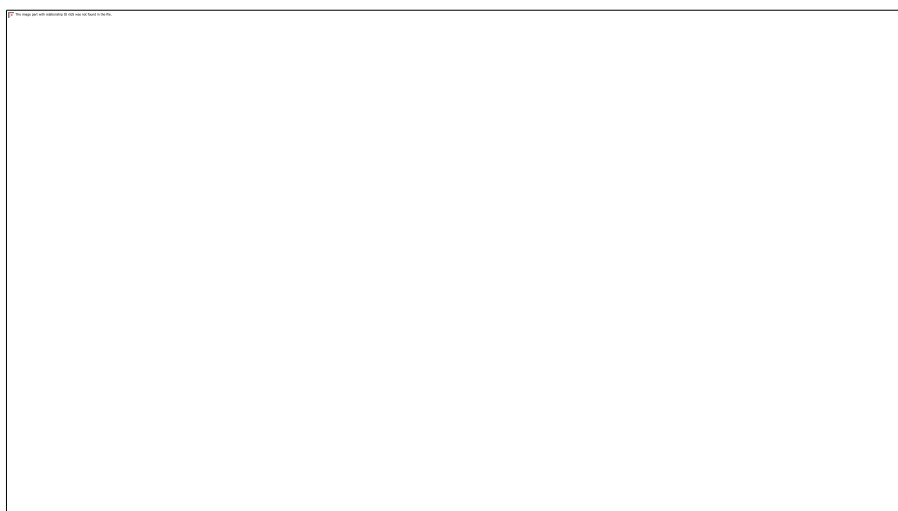
REPORT: In the battle for marriage equality, we must not forget to fight against religious exceptions - Alastair Lawrie

The long struggle for marriage equality does not involve waging just one battle. Instead, it includes a range of related, and sometimes overlapping, fights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) equality.

Obviously, there is what most would consider to be the ‘central’ fight – to amend the *Marriage Act 1961* to ensure all LGBTI couples who wish to can be married under secular Australian law. Victory on that particular issue is long overdue.

A closely-related fight is ensuring that the definition used to amend the *Marriage Act* is sex and gender neutral – referring to the union of two persons (replacing man and woman which is currently used in section 5) rather than referring to man/man, or woman/woman, unions. The latter would only be gay or same-sex marriage, instead of genuine marriage equality, and would continue to deny equal rights to some members of the LGBTI community.

Fortunately, most recent legislative attempts to amend marriage have used this more inclusive definition, although this is something that we will need to be vigilant about until equality is finally achieved in Australia (whenever that might eventually be).



Another related fight is removing the abhorrent ‘forced trans divorce’ provisions in respective state and territory laws. As I understand it, these provisions will not automatically be overridden by the passage of marriage equality legislation federally, meaning we will need to continue fighting until the last of these offensive laws is repealed.

And then there is the current procedural fight about *how* marriage equality should be implemented – with Malcolm Turnbull’s Liberal-National Government intent on holding an unnecessary, inappropriate, wasteful and divisive plebiscite.

READ MORE HERE: <https://alastairlawrie.net/2016/04/17/in-the-battle-for-marriage-equality-we-must-not-forget-to-fight-against-religious-exceptions/>

DEBATE: Islam & Reform

The debate over reforming Islam continues and conversation sparks. For some people, Islam is inherently incapable of reform while for others Islam is a religion that has its reformation and continues to reform.

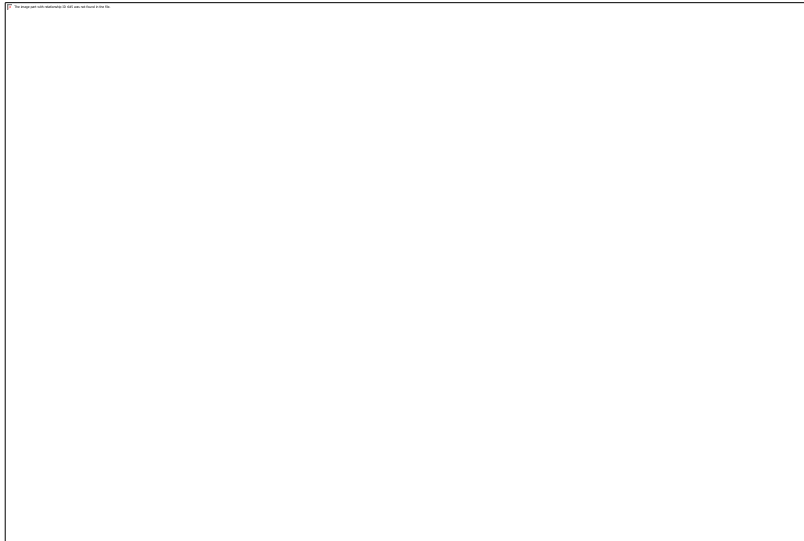
Time & Location

Join our discussion on 8 May 2016, 5:30 Pm at East Melbourne Library

Speakers

Dr. John L Perkins

Dr. Perkins is an economist, author, and the founding president of the Secular Party of Australia. It was mainly the events of September 11, 2001, that led him undertake research into comparative religions, their history, derivation, philosophy and their effects on society.



Matt Awad

Matt is an Australian Muslim, a member of Muslims for Progressive Values - Australia and the Quilliam Foundation.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/104784166589469/>

<http://www.wherevent.com/detail/Jasna-Muslimovic-Islam-Reformation>

REPORT: Royal Commission hosts criminal justice public roundtables

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is holding a series of public roundtables in April to discuss a range of criminal justice issues with invited participants.

The public roundtables follow March's public hearing into criminal justice issues.

Royal Commission Chief Executive Officer Philip Reed said the public roundtables will discuss adult sex offender treatment programs, Director of Public Prosecution's (DPP) oversight and complaint mechanisms and reporting offences.

"These roundtables will invite comment and discussion from a range of participants, including police, public prosecutors, criminal justice policy officials, academic and practitioner experts and others," Mr Reed said.

"Consultation through these public roundtables will help inform the Royal Commission's criminal justice policy work," Mr Reed said.

Venue: Hearing Room 2, Level 17, Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney.
When: Wednesday 20 April (reporting offences) 10am-4pm
Thursday 21 April (adult sex offender treatment programs) 10am-1pm
Friday 29 April (DPP complaints and oversight mechanisms) 10am-4pm
Time: Commencing 10am AEST

The public roundtables will be streamed live via:

<http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au>



Progressive Atheists Inc.

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Progressive Atheists Inc. Open Meeting

Our next Progressive Atheists Inc. Open Meeting will be held on Open Meeting at 12 pm, Saturday, **30th April 2016 Melbourne** Unitarian Hall, 110 Grey St, East Melbourne VIC 3002. All who support our purpose are welcome.

<http://www.meetup.com/Melbourne-Atheists/events/224846868/>

Reminder for May Open Meeting: **Saturday, 28th May 2016**

Progressive Atheists Purpose Statement:

<http://progressiveatheists.org/about-us/purpose-statement/>

Melbourne Atheists MeetUp Group | Event Calendar

Keep in touch with atheists around Melbourne via the Melbourne MeetUp:

<http://www.meetup.com/Melbourne-Atheists/events/calendar/>

Membership Term 2015 | 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

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membership@progressiveatheists.org

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