

An Open Letter to Rekha Basu

Dear Rehka,

Thanks for expressing your and the extreme Left's view in your open letter to Dick and Betty Odgaard of The Gortz Haus. Not surprisingly, we see the world and, specifically, the unfortunate circumstances surrounding The Gortz Haus in Grimes very differently.

Late last year, you recommended that we seek civil discussion with those whom we disagree. Let's discuss. ☐

Dick and Betty Odgaard, owners of the Gortz Haus, are like many Iowans who own a small business. They follow their passion, while utilizing their talents and gifts, offering distinct services and goods to the broader community. The days begin early and many end late. While Iowa is blessed with many large businesses, we should never forget that it is small business owners like the Odgaards who are the main backbone and economic engine of our communities, states, and country.

The key here is that The Gortz Haus is a private enterprise located on private property owned by the Odgaards. In no way should they have to abandon their faith and its principles when operating a business. And, they have every right to refuse service to anyone when they see a violation, either private or public of their faith. This is their "right" to conscience. We call this Religious Liberty guaranteed by our First Amendment. I believe there was a Supreme Court case last year of some notoriety involving Hobby Lobby that recently reaffirmed this concept.

Homosexuals can seek service at multiple locations in the metro. They targeted the Gortz Haus so they could make a point, act like martyrs, and scream discrimination.

The Gortz Haus also offers dinner theatres at their location.

Following your logic, if a theatric production laced with profanity and nudity desired to use their facility, they should be forced to remain quiet and surrender their beliefs to their venue's undesired use – otherwise, of course, get fined and be forced to end another revenue arm of their business.

To further illustrate this point, and to add to your “progressive and evolving” interpretation of “live and let live”, should the owners of a kosher meat locker be forced by state law to abandon their Jewish faith and commence the slaughtering and processing of non-kosher animals? The list of similar examples is endless, but I believe you get the point.

I believe the majority of Iowans, and all of the nation's Founders recognize(d) the absurdity of this logic. In addition to the Founders' deep commitment to religious liberty, I believe John Locke, one of the philosophers who most influenced the Framers, would add that this is an abuse of the Odgaard's private property rights. He frequently wrote about freedom being linked to private property and those rights being a critical pillar of human freedom. According to your/the extreme Left's philosophy, people's property rights should conform to your evolving terms, or be subject to severe penalty.

Anyone who has ever met the Odgaards or transacted business at The Gortz Haus, knows they are two of the most upstanding and servant-hearted people anyone will have the privilege of meeting. I believe most Iowans and Americans recognize what's truly going on here; targeted manipulation forcing those who disagree with, or remain silent towards, an extreme agenda to either conform or to cease.

You frequently advocate for the abandonment of basic morality and common sense values for the sake of “live and let live.” Yet when the Odgaards and thousands of other business owners in Iowa want to really live out what they believe, typically

adhering to moral and timeless values, you believe they should be punished. So, it's not about "live and let live"...your advocated new norm is, "embrace the Left's definition of morality and conform!"

Frankly, Rehka, I'd like to assume you're a better journalist than what your open letter to the Odgaards represents and I'd also like to assume the Left is better than this. Unfortunately, this public correspondence is a sad reality- a disturbing trend of government forcing all business owners and private individuals to abuse and bury our "freedoms," versus honoring and protecting our liberties.

I invite and look forward to further conversation on this issue...maybe, over coffee...

Blessings,

bob