The Supreme Court's holy war on inclusive pre-K

By MICHAEL MCGRAIL
Staff Writer

Families who send their kids to Catholic school in the city of Denver are outraged at Colorado's state government, believing it has infringed on the Constitution's First Amendment guarantee of the free exercise of religion. This outrage, of course, stems from an unyielding desire within Denver's Catholic community to prevent four-year-old children of gay and transgender parents from receiving an education.

In 2022, a statewide pre-K initiative was created in Colorado to provide all four-year-olds in the state with an early education. $6,300 was allocated by the state to every eligible child, the only stipulation being that every school in the program must comply with state law preventing discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality and other categories.

The Archdiocese of Denver, a Catholic organization which includes 113 parishes, 307 priests and an estimated 550,000 lay Catholics, has maintained that compliance with the anti-discrimination requirement is an attempt by Colorado's government to force them out of their religious beliefs. In the eyes of many of these Catholic citizens, public benefits, including the pre-K program, should first and foremost accommodate their preexisting policy of barring children with gay, trans or queer parents from their schools regardless of state law.

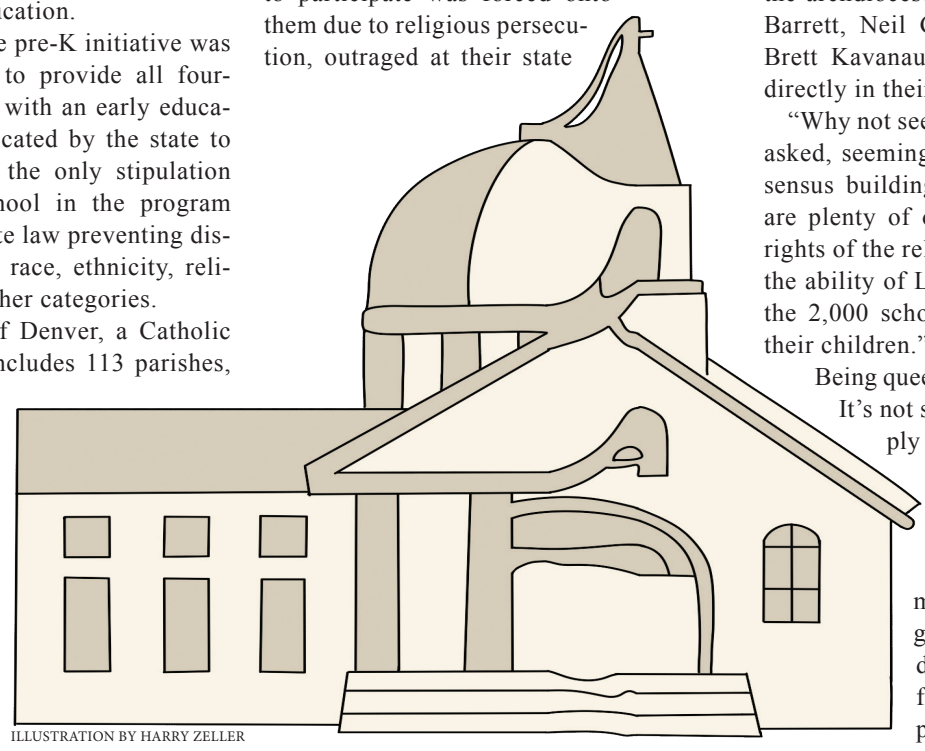

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY ZELLER

Come 2023, the archdiocese disallowed all Catholic schools under its jurisdiction from entering the program. Many in the organization believed that a state-mandated equal opportunity initiative ran directly counter to their reading of the Catholic faith, opting to stand by their denial of the validity of same-sex relationships and transgender status. Droves of Catholic parents across Colorado felt that their refusal to participate was forced onto them due to religious persecution, outraged at their state government's willingness to provide financial aid to queer people.

Catholic mother Lisa Sheley stands among the archdiocese's concerned masses, having been a leading figure in their fight against inclusive pre-K. In an interview with the press, Sheley griped, "(the pre-K program) is not universal because we're being discriminated against and not allowed to participate."

This disagreement between church and state has since escalated to a federal level, with the Archdiocese of Denver presenting its arguments to the Supreme Court Nov. 3. The Supreme Court's conservative majority appeared inclined to rule in favor of the archdiocese, with Justices Amy Coney Barrett, Neil Gorsuch, Samuel Alito and Brett Kavanaugh each making comments directly in their favor, according to NPR.

"Why not seek the win-win?" Kavanaugh asked, seemingly voicing the general consensus building in the courtroom. "There are plenty of opportunities to respect the rights of the religious believers and respect the ability of LGBT parents to find among the 2,000 schools (an) appropriate fit for their children."

Being queer is neither a fad nor a phase. It's not some cheap suit one can simply wear to work and then slip out of come quitting time. For countless people, it is a section of their identity, a fundamental part of what makes them human. A lot of good, queer parents exist who don't have the time or the funds to just "find an appropriate fit" in where to send their kids to school when the closest available option turns them away for nothing more than existing as themselves.

The arguments presented by the Archdiocese of Denver are fundamentally bigoted. There is no condition that makes the systematic segregation of any group or individual based on the circumstances of their birth justifiable, much less worthy of state-allocated funding. Denying four-year-old children the basic human right to education with no basis except for a homophobic hatred of their parents is as foolishly ignorant as it is evil, plain and simple.

Even putting aside the fact that an interpretation of religious doctrine should not justify discrimination nor exemption from state law, the archdiocese's understanding of its own faith is remarkably outdated. Passages in the New Testament which painted homosexuality as unnatural, i.e. Romans 1:26–27, 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, and 1 Timothy 1:10, are widely regarded as far more indicative of Greco-Roman patriarchal values than the actual core teachings of Catholicism. What's more, divine pedagogy, or the belief that God's words are meant to be reinterpreted across time, is a literal tenet of Catholicism.

No matter the state of world affairs, there will always be those who desire nothing more than an excuse to exercise hatred. Denver's Archdiocese doesn't really care about the teachings of their faith in this instance; they just want to reinforce the social stigma regarding LGBTQIA+ families by excluding them from publicly subsidized institutions.

They're not denying kids an education for any grand, divine purpose nor is the Supreme Court leaning in their favor out of any desire for an honest, fair ruling. Ultimately, all these people want is to normalize their discriminatory values, even if it means cutting children off from an education. They're cruel, sneering bigots who are driven not by faith or rationale, but by an inexhaustible supply of cruelty.

Bobcat Buzz

We need more shuttle stops around campus



ILLUSTRATION BY AVA STANGO AND LILIANA MIRABELLA

By LEXI VARNECKAS
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I don't know about you, but I think Quinnipiac needs to add more shuttle stops on the Mount Carmel Campus. As a sophomore who lives all the way in Mountainview, which is quite literally on the opposite end of campus from the one shuttle stop we have, it really is a pain having to plan my day around taking the shuttle whenever I need to get my car to go anywhere.

It's not even just about having to walk farther or wait an extra few minutes. It's about how much time it takes away from your day. College students already have busy schedules with classes, work, extracurriculars and other responsibilities. Having to plan out an extra 20-30 minutes just to get to your car can make an already busy day more stressful.

Sometimes I just want to run a quick errand or grab something to eat off campus, but simply getting to my car becomes a whole process in and of itself. It takes around 10-15 minutes, give or take, to walk from my dorm to the shuttle stop.

Then, once you're there, you have to wait for the shuttle if it's not already there. Then you get dropped off at York Hill Campus and then finally walk up the hill to find your car in the garage.

Let me tell you, that garage is easy to lose your bearings in. I can't tell you the number of times I've gotten lost and spent at least 15 minutes searching for my car. I know now I need to memorize what row I'm parked in going forward.

Another thing I need to point out is that once the shuttle drops you off at York Hill, it's not like your car's right there; you need to walk up a hill and take an elevator in the parking garage itself.

Adding another shuttle stop near the garage could also be so helpful. At the end of the day, Quinnipiac has a great shuttle system, and amazingly, they provide us with transportation. I just think adding in a few more convenient stops would make students' lives easier. Whether you're trying to get to your car, make it to class, or get around campus without walking everywhere, more shuttle stops would benefit many students.

I also think it's important to consider students who don't have cars on campus. For some students, the shuttle is their main way of getting around campus, whether they need to get to class, go to York Hill, or get somewhere off campus.

Having more convenient stops would make getting around easier for everyone, not just students who have cars parked in the garage. The shuttle system should be something students can depend on instead of something they have to work their schedules around.

Realistically, if you think about it, if there were one or two more shuttle stops — one near the College of Arts and Sciences and one on the opposite side of Mount Carmel Campus near the dorms and Hogan Road — it could save every single person time and the hassle of walking to the only shuttle stop on New Road.