

Washington Examiner

Conservative academics 'deluged' professor with anonymous messages saying they fear retribution for beliefs

Andrew Mark Miller

August 11, 2020

Princeton University professor Robert P. George posted a Twitter thread explaining that many of his online followers told him they must remain anonymous online in order to avoid being persecuted for their conservative politics.

“I asked folks who wished to continue following me on Twitter from anonymous accounts to identify themselves privately,” the conservative legal scholar tweeted. “I was deluged with messages explaining that anonymity is necessary because they have (some) conservative beliefs and fear being fired if their employers knew.”

George pointed out that many people who reached out to him in private expressing the need for online anonymity were in the academic field, and some were even tenured professors who feared that their tenure could be stripped from them if they were outed as conservatives.

“Is this the country we now live in?” George asked. “One in which many people feel they must hide their beliefs in order to keep their jobs or maintain their careers? One in which people live in fear of speaking their minds — worrying for their futures and their families' well-being if they do?”

As he was typing the thread, George said he was “deluged” with more messages, this time asking him what can be done to remedy the situation, to which he responded by calling on people to “stand up to the bullying.”

“Now I'm getting deluged with a new set of messages, most asking ‘What can we do?’ ‘What can be done?’” George said. “Well, since you asked: WE NEED COURAGEOUS PEOPLE TO STAND UP TO THE BULLYING. Risky? Sure. And there will be casualties. I don't pretend otherwise. But there is no other way.”

George continued, “And decent, honorable people need to stand in solidarity with those who defy the bullies and come under fire. An attack on one must be regarded as an attack on all — any such attack threatens principles that are essential to the functioning of universities and decent politics.”

Recent polling indicates that George's followers speak for a large percentage of people. A poll conducted by the Cato Institute showed that 62% of people are afraid to speak up about their political beliefs.