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Why Maggie's Wrong

Analysis: When Maggie Gallagher complains that gay marriage forces religion out of adoption, she shows she doesn't understand how adoption works

by Chris Geidner

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How can I write this so that Maggie Gallagher -- of National Organization for Marriage (NOM) infamy -- will understand?

A child loses his or her parents. That child is then an orphan. Still others are removed from their parent or parents' home for any of a number of reasons.

Where do such children go?

To the state (or, in one case, the District).

They do not go to the Catholics. They do not go to the Jews. They do not go to the gays, the Mormons, the ACLUers, the CPAC crew, the Washington Redskins or anyone else. Children without parents become the wards of the state. It is the state's responsibility -- in one way or another -- to care for these children.

We, as a country, have generally decided that finding these children a permanent, loving home -- to find them adoptive parents -- is best. We have decided that foster care is a lesser option. We also have institutional settings as a last resort.

It is only at this point, after the control is set and the policies are made, that outside organizations play a role.

Many people of good will, from Father Edward Flanagan on down the line to Catholic Charities, have espoused a religious-based desire to help orphaned children. Many people of faith have done so, as have many without a faith.

The government, as the policy-maker, sets the standards for any outside organizations or agencies that are permitted to assist the government in completing its job of caring for these children.

What is unclear, then, is how Gallagher can get to a point where she can be decrying the fact that an organization that wants to help the government in its role of caring for these children is simply told to follow the government's rules about how those children are to be cared for. Even Catholic Charities appears to understand this. Gallagher is out on her own here.

Yet, it is one of the arguments that Gallagher and NOM have brought out time and time again -- from California to Iowa to Maine to New York to New Jersey to D.C. and elsewhere -- and yet it is one built upon nothing but a sense of entitlement to distribute children without parents in the discriminatory manner that fits her moral beliefs.

Today, at the Cato Institute, for example, Gallagher talked about how, in Massachusetts, you can't run an adoption agency without a license and how they won't give you a license if you refuse to place children with same-sex couples. Well, the law in Massachusetts is that such placements are allowed. As an arm of the state when seeking to conduct the obligations of the state, adoption agencies are unsurprisingly required to adhere to the law.

That is all this is.

And, now, as Gallagher also mentioned today, word has come that Catholic Charities in Washington, D.C., discontinued its foster care program -- which, incidentally, involved 43 children -- on Feb. 1. *The Washington Post* reported that the National Center for Children and Families (NCCF) accepted the children into its program and noted that City Councilman Tommy Wells was unaware of any problems with the transfer.

Erik Salmi, the communications manager for Catholic Charities told *Metro Weekly* today that no children were displaced in the transfer because the foster families utilized by his organization also transferred to the NCCF program. Salmi also said that this is the only Catholic Charities program that is expected to be affected by the D.C. marriage law changes expected to go into effect on March 3.

Simply put, this is a false issue, built by and for Maggie Gallagher upon nothing more than her strange sense of entitlement to the morals our nation's orphaned children.