

Duquesne University

## Duquesne Scholarship Collection

---

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian  
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly  
Excellence and Professor of Law

---

6-8-2020

### June 8, 2020: James Bennet Resigns

Bruce Ledewitz

*Duquesne University*, ledewitz@duq.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

---

#### Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2020). June 8, 2020: James Bennet Resigns. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/1313>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly Excellence and Professor of Law at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hallowed Secularism by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact [beharyr@duq.edu](mailto:beharyr@duq.edu).

Title: James Bennet Resigns

Date: 2020-06-08T06:27:00.002-04:00

6/8/2020--It is a sad day. The New York Times allowed James Bennet to resign because he greenlighted an op-ed by Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas. The newspaper failed to support Bennet, the op-ed editor. If you go to the op-ed now, here is the statement by the paper. \*\*\*\*\* Editors' Note, June 5, 2020: After publication, this essay met strong criticism from many readers (and many Times colleagues), prompting editors to review the piece and the editing process. Based on that review, we have concluded that the essay fell short of our standards and should not have been published. The basic arguments advanced by Senator Cotton — however objectionable people may find them — represent a newsworthy part of the current debate. But given the life-and-death importance of the topic, the senator's influential position and the gravity of the steps he advocates, the essay should have undergone the highest level of scrutiny. Instead, the editing process was rushed and flawed, and senior editors were not sufficiently involved. While Senator Cotton and his staff cooperated fully in our editing process, the Op-Ed should have been subject to further substantial revisions — as is frequently the case with such essays — or rejected. For example, the published piece presents as facts assertions about the role of "cadres of left-wing radicals like antifa"; in fact, those allegations have not been substantiated and have been widely questioned. Editors should have sought further corroboration of those assertions, or removed them from the piece. The assertion that police officers "bore the brunt" of the violence is an overstatement that should have been challenged. The essay also includes a reference to a "constitutional duty" that was intended as a paraphrase; it should not have been rendered as a quotation. Beyond those factual questions, the tone of the essay in places is needlessly harsh and falls short of the thoughtful approach that advances useful debate. Editors should have offered suggestions to address those problems. The headline — which was written by The Times, not Senator Cotton — was incendiary and should not have been used. Finally, we failed to offer appropriate additional context — either in the text or the presentation — that could have helped readers place Senator Cotton's views within a larger framework of debate.

\*\*\*\*\* The statement is absurd. These details are always present. Op-eds often assert "facts" that are not established. That is why they are on the opinion page. Especially sad is the last part about context. It is an opinion. Readers are not stupid. The first part shows the newspaper's cowardice. If the argument is newsworthy, it belongs in the paper. If the point is that Cotton is a racist fascist for wanting to call in the troops against the American people, then the paper should have said so. And added we don't publish racism. That at least would be an