

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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November 12, 2012  
Dr. Michael Sweeney  
President  
Emmanuel Christian Seminary

Dear Dr. Sweeney,

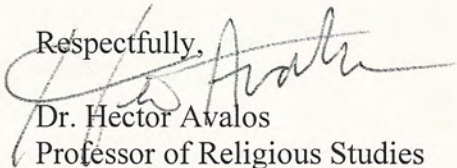
I write in support of Dr. Christopher Rollston, one of the most distinguished Hebrew epigraphists working today. As I understand it, his principal transgression was to state in an essay in *The Huffington Post* what is non-controversial among many biblical scholars.

I write also as a faculty member who also was once the target of a wealthy donor who threatened to withdraw a promised donation of over \$100,000 because he did not like the idea of a non-Christian teaching biblical studies in a public university. This donor wanted me fired from a tenured position because he thought I was a detriment to our university and our society.

The president of my university was wise enough to see that academic freedom means nothing if it does not mean the freedom to reach conclusions that may be the opposite of what your institution or the broader society holds. The president of my university not only refused to listen to the threats of this donor, but he later approved my promotion to full professor.

So, I hope you also have the wisdom and courage to repudiate any action against Dr. Rollston, and fulfill the obligations that institutions of higher learning have in protecting the academic freedom of their faculty members.

Respectfully,



Dr. Hector Avalos  
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