

As Pastor Faces Lifetime in Prison, Supporters Argue Persecution

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Pastor Kent Hovind (shown), a powerful advocate of biblical creationism who has already served almost 100 months in federal prison as part of what his supporters say amounts to a ruthless government campaign of religious persecution, is now potentially facing up to 100 years behind bars. As federal prosecutors prepare to make their case for keeping Dr. Hovind incarcerated for the rest of his natural life, however, a [growing grassroots campaign](#) across America is demanding that he be set free — and that those responsible for allegedly railroading him be held accountable, including potentially the judge, who has developed a reputation among those following the case as having a strong anti-Christian bias.

With the IRS now [embroiled in escalating scandal](#) surrounding politically motivated attacks against conservatives and Tea Party groups, analysts say Hovind's case is now especially important and ought to be probed by Congress. There are also a number of irregularities in every step of the process that resulted in the pastor landing behind bars, his supporters say. Meanwhile, a Justice Department attorney who helped secure Hovind's original conviction was arrested for attempting to rape a child shortly after he won the case against the pastor. Critics of the prosecution cite that, and other facts, as further evidence that Hovind was targeted for his beliefs and his effectiveness in challenging the evolution theory and other key elements of the secular faith, rather than for actual tax violations.

Dr. Hovind's original case, which resulted in the first 10-year prison sentence, had raised eyebrows nationwide long before the latest twist in the ordeal. After reportedly going through multiple grand juries to finally get to a trial, with a judge whom critics said displayed blatant hostility against Christians, Hovind was convicted of a number of "financial crimes." Taxation-focused analyst Peter Reilly, following the case in *Forbes*, suggested Hovind may have followed bad advice from a "tax protester." Hovind, though, has consistently maintained his innocence throughout the ordeal, and growing numbers of supporters across America agree with him. Even if he were in fact guilty of the charges, which Hovind and his supporters deny, critics of the prosecution and court case have been pointing out that the average jail time for those convicted of tax-related crimes in 2013 was 14 months. Many simply pay a fine.

Obama ally and race-monger Al Sharpton, for example, who still owes millions in back taxes, has visited the White House dozens of times in recent years. Timothy "TurboTax" Geithner, who failed to pay his taxes despite signing an agreement indicating that he needed to and understood that, was even selected to be Obama's Treasury Secretary. Democrat Representative Charlie Rangel, who for years served as the chairman of the congressional committee in charge of writing the federal tax code, came under major fire after failing to pay taxes on rental income from a villa he owned in the Dominican Republic. As of September 2013, over 318,000 federal employees owed some \$3.3 billion in back taxes. Not one of them is in prison for failure to pay.

However, Pastor Hovind, often referred to as "Dr. Dino" due to his passion for dinosaurs, has been behind bars in 20 different prisons for over eight years so far on seemingly far less serious charges — and could remain there until death if prosecutors and the judge get their way. The latest charges surround an effort Hovind made from prison to contest the liens that were allegedly improperly placed on his ministry's property by the federal government. He is being accused of "contempt of court" and alleged "mail fraud" for using the prison mail system to fight back against having the ministry's assets seized by filing what has been described as a notice that litigation on the property was ongoing. The upcoming case to determine Hovind's fate was supposed to take place next week, but has again been postponed by officials, this time until March, due to "family issues."

“We need bold Christians to make a statement,” said Rudy Davis, a friend of Pastor Hovind who speaks with him daily and is working to raise awareness of what he says is relentless government persecution against Dr. Dino. “Mainstream media is ignoring Dr. Kent's case.... We desperately need to speak up now.” According to Davis, who describes himself as a Bible-believing follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, the spiritual answer for why Hovind is being persecuted boils down to this: “Kent was exposing Satan's kingdom and Satan's deceptions.” Numerous Hovind supporters, including popular firebrand Reverend James David Manning and Southern Baptist leader Reverend Wiley Drake, have expressed similar sentiments, indicating that Hovind is indeed being persecuted.

“I along with so many others are deeply grieved in our hearts when we hear that they are trying to keep Kent Hovind in prison for the remainder of his life as people were looking forward to him being released in 2015,” Davis, one of Hovind’s most passionate supporters, told *The New American*. “I truly believe this is an innocent man in prison and a POW (Prisoner of War) in the spiritual warfare of Good vs Evil. God will get the glory in Kent's case no matter what. As you may know, Kent will not compromise with the devil and has maintained his innocence the entire 99 months that he has been incarcerated.... We are asking that you educate yourself and take whatever action God leads on behalf of our brother in the Lord, Kent Hovind.”

In an e-mail to *The New American* about why the federal government would persecute Hovind, Davis pointed to a [video](#) where the pastor explores some of the horrifying atrocities perpetrated under cover of the evolution theory. Hovind, a former science teacher, firmly rejects the theory as an attack on the Bible and the Christian faith. For years, he traveled the nation exposing flaws in school textbooks on the issue. In the introduction to the video, Pastor Hovind declares that the evolution theory is “not only dumb, it’s dangerous.” Prior to being thrown in prison, the pastor was among the nation’s leading advocates for creation science. His seminars and debates against evolutionists had been viewed countless times online by people around the world, and supporters say he was quickly changing hearts and minds.

Then, the federal government launched its campaign to lock him up on tax charges. The first 12 counts surrounded Hovind’s alleged failure to withhold taxes from employees of his Christian ministry. “First of all, we didn’t have any employees,” Hovind explained in a recorded interview posted on YouTube, adding that all the missionaries and volunteers were independent contractors responsible for their own tax filings. “Churches are not obligated to withhold anyway, and I showed all the laws in a 2005 affidavit.” He also said he asked the IRS what he should do. The agency never responded, until showing up to arrest him with a heavily armed SWAT team in what critics say was extreme overkill — to put it mildly, considering that his wife was dragged out of bed at gunpoint and not even allowed to get dressed. One video urging Hovind’s release cited [20 attacks on the pastor that “North Korea would welcome.”](#)

The second set of charges involved “structuring,” which, as Hovind put it in the online interview, “I had never heard of,” just like the overwhelming majority of Americans. Essentially, the controversial statute in question — written primarily for drug dealers and organized crime syndicates, not churches or pastors — makes it a crime to take out over \$10,000 per day from a bank account in multiple rounds, if the intent is to prevent the creation of federally mandated records used for spying on Americans’ financial activities in violation of the Fourth Amendment. Hovind says he did no such thing.

“After trial, the judge changed the jury instructions and told the jury ‘if you find out that the Hovinds took out less than \$10,000, you have to find them guilty,’ which is not what the law says,” Hovind explained from prison, suggesting that the judge misled the jury. “The law says over \$10,000. So the jury, of course, confused by all that, said, ‘yeah, they took out less than \$10,000, that’s obvious.’” Then, using drug statutes, [the Justice Department’s pedophile attorney](#) on the case demanded that the church’s money be forfeited, and so sought to seize the ministry’s property under [asset forfeiture schemes](#) also designed for drug dealers and crime bosses.

Shortly after attempting to seize all of the ministry’s property, one of the U.S. government lawyers involved in prosecuting Pastor Hovind was arrested by the FBI in a sting operation in Detroit for trying to have sex with a five-year-old child. Assistant U.S. Attorney John David “Roy” Atchison, after being charged with “enticement of a minor to engage in sexual activity using the Internet,” “aggravated sexual abuse,” and “traveling across state lines to have sex with someone under the age of 12,” ended up committing suicide by hanging himself in

jail. The other assistant U.S. attorney on Hovind's case, Michelle Heldmyer, was [in the news in the early 1990s](#) after her husband was reportedly found to be on the same mailing list for obscene pornography as a judge who killed himself after getting caught.

The final charge against Hovind, according to critics of the prosecution and the court, is also perhaps the most outlandish. According to prosecutors...

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