



The United States Department of Justice Religious Liberty Commission
Minutes of the March 16, 2026 Hearing
Religious Liberty in Health and Human Services

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Religious Liberty Commission (RLC) held a meeting on March 16, 2026, at the museum of the Bible in Washington, DC.

RLC Chairman, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, led the meeting in furtherance of and alignment with the RLC's charter and mission.¹

All Commission Members attended except Pastor Paula White-Cain, Dr. Phil McGraw, and ex-Officio Commission Members Secretary Scott Turner and Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi, who were unable to attend due to travel conflicts.

This synopsis includes key highlights from the meeting.

OPENING AND WELCOMING REMARKS

Mrs. Mary Margaret Bush, the Designated Federal Official (DFO), opened the meeting, as required by the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Chairman Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick began the meeting and introduced Admiral Brian Christine, Assistant Secretary for Health and Human Services.

Admiral Christine addressed the hearing and spoke of religious liberty as a "golden thread" that stitched the thirteen colonies together.

¹ Additional information regarding RLC can be found at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/05/establishment-of-the-religious-liberty-commission/>.

PRESENTATION TOPIC: Religious Freedom in Healthcare – Medical Professionals

- **Dr. Eithan Haim**
- **Kaley Chiles**
- **Abby Sinnett**
- **Valerie Kloosterman**

Dr. Eithan Haim described being targeted after his religious beliefs led him to report surgeries being performed on minors at Texas Children's Hospital in violation of guidance from the state attorney general. Ms. Chiles described being prevented from practicing therapy and counseling in accordance with her religious beliefs. Ms. Sinnett described being limited in her ability to fulfill her duty to offer life-saving care to unborn children in need due to Colorado law. Ms. Kloosterman described being terminated after years of service as a physician's assistance when she refused to denounce her religious beliefs regarding human sexuality.

Question and answer among the Commissioners and witnesses followed.

PRESENTATION TOPIC: Faith-Based Human & Social Services Providers

Chairman Patrick introduced the first afternoon panel:

- **Jean Marie Davis**
- **Sherrie Laurie**
- **Pastor Brian and Mrs. Kaitlyn Wuoti**
- **Archbishop Cordileone**

Ms. Jean Marie Davis opened the panel by describing her experience of faith transforming her and enabling her to escape the experience of being trafficked. She went on to become the leader of a faith-based center for women, which was targeted by the state of Vermont for its religious mission. Ms. Sherrie Laurie described her work as the Executive Director of the Downtown Hope Center in Anchorage, Alaska, which serves those experiencing homelessness and hardship. The Center was targeted after Ms. Laurie referred a biological man to a hospital, rather than housing him in the Center's women's shelter. Pastor Brian and Mrs. Kaitlyn Wuoti described their experience of being forced to choose between renouncing their religious beliefs or participating in the state foster care system as parents. Archbishop Cordileone testified to the humanitarian work led by religious groups in his Archdiocese and noted the need for protections so that faith groups can remain free to serve.

Question and answer among the Commissioners and witnesses followed.

PRESENTATION TOPIC: Parents and Students Impacted by the Vaccine

- **Nancy Costine**
- **Isabella Costine**

- **Karen Amigon**
- **Dr. Aaron Kheriaty**

Mrs. Nancy Costine described her experience as a mother whose children were barred from attendance at state public schools due to the family's religious beliefs about vaccination. Miss Isabella Constine described her perspective as a young student unable to participate in the public school system because of her beliefs. Ms. Karen Amigon echoed the experience, describing the unique challenges of being a single parent and not free to make faith-based medical decisions for her daughter. Dr. Aaron Kheriaty described his experience as a medical professional repeatedly challenged for his religious beliefs, culminating in his departure from UC Irvine after his nearly two decades of service and three awards for excellence in teaching.

Question and answer among the Commissioners and witnesses followed.

PRESENTATION TOPIC: Physician Training, Ethics, and Practices

Chairman Patrick introduced the first afternoon panel:

- **Dr. Kenneth Prager**
- **Dr. Leslee Cochrane**
- **Dr. Susan Bane**
- **Ismail Royer**

Dr. Kenneth Prager opened by providing an overview of his experiences as a Jewish physician and outlined how his religious beliefs inform his understanding of medical ethics. Dr. Leslee Cochrane followed, testifying to how his faith informs his approach to patient care and how his religious beliefs regarding the dignity of life put him in the crosshairs of a California law requiring doctors participate in assisted suicide. Mr. Ismail Royer followed, providing the perspectives of Muslim physicians and healthcare professionals and the ways in which Islam shapes and inspires their approach to the profession. He outlined several areas in which state mandates, especially those related to assist suicide, are in tension with Muslim beliefs regarding the dignity of life. Dr. Susan Bane, an obstetrician and gynecologist, closed by offering her testimony regarding grave religious liberty concerning arising in medical schools related to students being coerced to participate in abortions.

Question and answer among the Commissioners and witnesses followed.

Chairman's Closing Remarks

Chairman Patrick closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their time, attention, and patience.

Chairman Patrick adjourned the meeting – approx. 1:00 p.m., ET

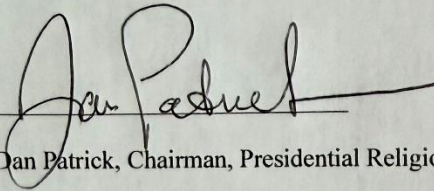
March Public Comment

Public comment submitted for the meeting includes submissions from:

1. Abigail Iovine
2. Aimee Yanek
3. Bill Hathaway
4. Candice Greaux
5. Charles A. Romig, PhD
6. Dena Sher
7. Diane Pagen
8. Dr. Michael Goldstein
9. Dr. Ryan M. Burkhart, EdD, LPC
10. Dr. Shannae Anderson
11. Elyse Young on behalf of Guiding the Impact
12. Eric N. Kniffin
13. Girien R. Salazar
14. Isabella Russian
15. Jeanneane Maxon
16. John Macari
17. Joy Buchman
18. Kara Uleman
19. Karl Benzio, MD
20. Louis Brown
21. Margherita DeBonis
22. Mark Mayfield Ph.D., LPC
23. Mary Holland
24. Matt Connor
25. Mercy Connors, Ph.D., LPC-S
26. Michael Kane
27. Monique Renick, RN, BSN, CMSRN
28. Nancy Frigaard
29. Nicole D. Hayes, MPA
30. Parks Bryant
31. Rachel N. Morrison
32. Rev. Jacob Dell
33. Tim Murphy, PhD
34. Victoria Jensen
35. Yeshua Jesu Christ

Certification of Minutes

As required by the Federal Advisory Commissions Act, Commission Chairman Dan Patrick certifies these minutes by his signature below.



Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, Chairman, Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

04/26/2026

Date