From: Terry Van Meter <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] COMMENTING ON THE DRAFT REPORT of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:39:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the dismantling of the separation of church and state.
Specifically, I do not support the funding of religious non-profit activities with public resources.
I object the repeal of the Johnson Amendment.
I request that the Johnson Amendment be fully restored.
The government should have complete neutrality in the government relationship with religion.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my views on this matter.

Sincerely,
Terry Van Meter

From: Gary Moyer <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:39:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft recommendations submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026.

I am writing as a private citizen who values the constitutional guarantee of religious liberty for all Americans, including the free exercise of religion and the prohibition on government establishment of religion.

I respectfully urge the Commission to ensure that any final recommendations:

1. Protect religious freedom for people of all faiths and none, without preferring one religion over another.

2. Uphold the Establishment Clause as understood by decades of Supreme Court precedent, which prevents government entanglement with religion and protects taxpayers from being forced to fund religious activities.

3. Consider the warnings of the Founding Fathers regarding the dangers of church-state union, and the lessons of history when government and religion become intertwined.

4. Ensure equal access and equal protection for minority faiths, nonreligious Americans, and faith-based organizations alike.

I appreciate the Commission's work and ask that you preserve the constitutional safeguards that have long protected the religious freedom and freedom of conscience of all Americans.

Sincerely,

Gary Moyer

From: Jennie Luh <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment- Separation of Church and State- Jennie Luh
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:40:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,
I would like to voice my agreement to the recommendations by Pillar of Freedom. Please continue to keep the wall between church and state as it protects the church more than constrains it.
Sincerely,
Jennie Luh
Newcastle, Ca
Sent from my iPhone

From: Louise Jett <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Freedom of Conscience and Church-State Separation – Louise Jett
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:40:06 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: ReligiousLibertyPublicComment.pdf

To the Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Commission's draft report.

I write as an Ethical Humanist and an American who deeply values religious liberty. Every person should be free to practice a religion, change their beliefs, question them, or embrace no religion at all without government coercion or discrimination.

That freedom depends upon the separation of church and state.

As constitutional attorney Andrew L. Seidel writes in *The Founding Myth: Why Christian Nationalism Is Un-American*, "There is no freedom of religion without a government that is free from religion." A secular government is not hostile to Christianity or any other faith. It is the means by which every person's freedom of conscience is protected equally.

I am deeply concerned that this report fails to protect religious liberty equally and instead advances a Christian nationalist vision of American public life.

Christian nationalism is not synonymous with Christianity. It is a political ideology that seeks to merge a particular expression of Christianity with governmental authority and national identity. That distinction matters because many Christians reject Christian nationalism and believe that the separation of church and state protects both their faith and the religious freedom of others. My concern is not with Christianity itself, but it is with the attempt to use government authority to elevate one religious tradition, weaken constitutional neutrality, and define American identity in religious terms.

Religious liberty protects Christianity. Christian nationalism privileges it. Those are not the same thing.

The United States was not founded as a Christian nation. Although Christianity influenced many people living at the time of the founding, our constitutional government was not established upon Christian doctrine. The Constitution contains no declaration of Christianity as the national religion. Article VI prohibits religious tests for public office, and the First Amendment prohibits the establishment of religion while protecting its free exercise.

These provisions created a government whose legitimacy rests upon the consent of the governed, not conformity to a shared theology.

The separation of church and state is therefore more than a metaphor or a historical slogan. It describes a vital constitutional safeguard: government must neither establish religion nor grant one religious tradition preferred access to public power. The Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses work together. One protects religious practice from government interference; the other protects the people from government-imposed religion.

This balance has allowed religious communities to flourish while also protecting Humanists, atheists, agnostics, members of minority faiths, and everyone whose beliefs fall outside the religious majority.

A vision of religious liberty is incomplete if it fails to fully include Americans whose deepest moral convictions arise outside religion. Freedom of conscience cannot be reserved for religious believers. A person's deeply held ethical commitments do not become less worthy of protection because they arise from reason, experience, empathy, or shared human values rather than theology.

I am also concerned by recommendations that would expand religious exemptions without sufficient regard for the people affected by them. Religious liberty is essential, but it does not exist in isolation from equal protection, public accommodation, bodily autonomy, access to healthcare, or the right to participate fully in civic life.

Freedom of conscience should protect people from coercion. It should not become a means of denying someone else equal treatment, opportunity, dignity, or access to public services.

Our country includes Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, members of Indigenous traditions, Humanists, atheists, agnostics, and people whose beliefs cannot be captured by a single label. Our government belongs equally to all of them.

Religious and philosophical diversity is not a problem for democracy to solve. It is a reality democracy must honor.

I respectfully urge the Commission to reject Christian nationalist assumptions about American identity and affirm the complete separation of church and state. Religious liberty is strongest when government remains neutral in matters of belief and protects the freedom of every person to live according to conscience.

I do not seek a government that favors my worldview any more than I would want it to favor someone else's religion. I seek a government in which everyone belongs.

Our differences are not obstacles to democracy; they are the very reason democracy demands constitutional neutrality. We protect one another's freedom not because we share the same beliefs, but because we share the same humanity.

A government that belongs equally to all of us must never ask its citizens to share the same beliefs. It asks only that we share a commitment to one another's equal dignity, equal liberty, and equal citizenship.

That is the constitutional promise I hope this Commission will uphold.

Respectfully,

Louise Jett

To the Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Commission's draft report.

I write as an Ethical Humanist and an American who deeply values religious liberty. Every person should be free to practice a religion, change their beliefs, question them, or embrace no religion at all without government coercion or discrimination.

That freedom depends upon the separation of church and state.

As constitutional attorney Andrew L. Seidel writes in *The Founding Myth: Why Christian Nationalism Is Un-American*, "There is no freedom of religion without a government that is free from religion." A secular government is not hostile to Christianity or any other faith. It is the means by which every person's freedom of conscience is protected equally.

I am deeply concerned that this report fails to protect religious liberty equally and instead advances a Christian nationalist vision of American public life.

Christian nationalism is not synonymous with Christianity. It is a political ideology that seeks to merge a particular expression of Christianity with governmental authority and national identity. That distinction matters because many Christians reject Christian nationalism and believe that the separation of church and state protects both their faith and the religious freedom of others. My concern is not with Christianity itself, but it is with the attempt to use government authority to elevate one religious tradition, weaken constitutional neutrality, and define American identity in religious terms.

Religious liberty protects Christianity. Christian nationalism privileges it. Those are not the same thing.

The United States was not founded as a Christian nation. Although Christianity influenced many people living at the time of the founding, our constitutional government was not established upon Christian doctrine. The Constitution contains no declaration of Christianity as the national religion.

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These provisions created a government whose legitimacy rests upon the consent of the governed, not conformity to a shared theology.

The separation of church and state is therefore more than a metaphor or a historical slogan. It describes a vital constitutional safeguard: government must neither establish religion nor grant one religious tradition preferred access to public power. The Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses work together. One protects religious practice from government interference; the other protects the people from government-imposed religion.

This balance has allowed religious communities to flourish while also protecting Humanists, atheists, agnostics, members of minority faiths, and everyone whose beliefs fall outside the religious majority.

A vision of religious liberty is incomplete if it fails to fully include Americans whose deepest moral convictions arise outside religion. Freedom of conscience cannot be reserved for religious believers. A person's deeply held ethical commitments do not become less worthy of protection because they arise from reason, experience, empathy, or shared human values rather than theology.

I am also concerned by recommendations that would expand religious exemptions without sufficient regard for the people affected by them. Religious liberty is essential, but it does not exist in isolation from equal protection, public accommodation, bodily autonomy, access to healthcare, or the right to participate fully in civic life.

Freedom of conscience should protect people from coercion. It should not become a means of denying someone else equal treatment, opportunity, dignity, or access to public services.

Our country includes Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, members of Indigenous traditions, Humanists, atheists, agnostics, and

people whose beliefs cannot be captured by a single label. Our government belongs equally to all of them.

Religious and philosophical diversity is not a problem for democracy to solve. It is a reality democracy must honor.

I respectfully urge the Commission to reject Christian nationalist assumptions about American identity and affirm the complete separation of church and state. Religious liberty is strongest when government remains neutral in matters of belief and protects the freedom of every person to live according to conscience.

I do not seek a government that favors my worldview any more than I would want it to favor someone else's religion. I seek a government in which everyone belongs.

Our differences are not obstacles to democracy; they are the very reason democracy demands constitutional neutrality. We protect one another's freedom not because we share the same beliefs, but because we share the same humanity.

A government that belongs equally to all of us must never ask its citizens to share the same beliefs. It asks only that we share a commitment to one another's equal dignity, equal liberty, and equal citizenship.

That is the constitutional promise I hope this Commission will uphold.

Respectfully,

Louise Jett

From: Richard Fasani <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Freedom of choice
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:41:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern, I believe it is critical to maintain a separation between church and state so that all peoples will have the ability to make their own choices to worship or not to worship without fear of persecution from our government.

If you abolish the separation between church and state and establish a Sunday law of worship… People who want to honor God's Sabbath on Saturday and do whatever they like on the first day of the week (Sunday), they will be in violation of the law and subjected to persecution.

This is clearly wrong and not what our founding fathers established in our constitution.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration. I pray that God's will be done instead of the Popes will.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Lola Gore <[redacted]>
To: [redacted] Contact <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:43:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

The government don't have the right to tell us when we can praise the Lord they don't have no business in it The church is all separate from the government why should they I have the right to tell us when we can worship what day to worship that is wrong they need to be content in running the government not the churche.

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Janet Harris <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:43:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

Please vote to keep separation of church and state.So we can keep our liberty of conscience according to our beliefs.

Thank you
Robert Harris
Georgia resident
7 12 2026

From: Ronald VanVoorhis <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - General Comment - Judy VanVoorhis
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:45:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

I totally support the two page summary presented by the Religious Liberty Commission.

From: Saundra Brogan <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Saundra Brogan
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:47:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Dr. Carson, and the members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment. When churches take government money or step into partisan politics, the corruption of politics comes in with it. Churches end up competing for funding and answering to politicians instead of to God.

Our religious freedom has been purchased at such a dear price. Separation isn't a secular idea; people of faith built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here. History records that religious persecution is the inevitable result of a union between church and state. Please keep church and state forever separate. That's how we keep both of them free.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Saundra Brogan

From: bob cat <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:50:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission,
In view of the invitation to the public to submit their concerns, I wanted to share some of my thoughts.
Throughout history, when ever a Religious Body gains political power, persecution in one form or another takes shape. The United States has been a haven for peoples from all over the world who have fled from Religious persecution. If our government begins to enforce Religious principles on the population, those who hold different religions views will suffer in some way. This land would no longer be the a haven of safety for the oppressed. The only safe measure would be to keep government and church separate from each other.
Thank you,
Erik Hunt from Idaho

Sent from my iPhone

From: Belinda Lam Yuen <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment- Presidential Religious Liberty Commission-Belinda Lam Yuen
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:50:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am a Christian, a follower of Jesus, and
I am writing to state that I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments and to please implement them.

Sincerely,

Belinda Lam Yuen

Sacramento, CA

From: JOSEPH HUTCHINSON <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I I
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:53:51 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sent from my iPhone

From: Margaret Power <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Act!
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:54:51 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hello,

The First Amendment clearly and unequivocally stt3es there should be a separation of church and state. Our Constitution guarantees religious liberty - to all religions. Imposing or assuming a Christian religion violates the language and spirit of our Constitution and Founding Fathers. To really protect Religious Liberty our government needs to respect the text of the Constitution and stop defining the United States as a Christian nation.

Thank you.

I await your reply.

Best,

Margaret M. Power
Professor of History Emeritus
Illinois Institute of Technology
***Solidarity Across the Americas: The Puerto Rican Nationalist Party and Anti-imperialism.* Winner of the Frank Bonilla Book Award, Honorable Mention, from the Puerto Rican Studies Association.**
https://www.uncpress.org/book/9781469674056/solidarity-across-the-americas/

From: Ann Lavenburg <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:57:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am very concerned with the idea of weakening the wall of separation of church and state with a "bridge." Our great county has been a bulwark against the infringement of religious freedom. We can and do express our faith freely, quote Bible Scriptures and post thoughts online without fear of reprisal. People in other countries such as the UK and Canada are being thrown into jail for quoting scripture or praying "in their head" outside an abortion clinic.

A "bridge" is a conduit for bringing that type of religious intolerance to our great county. We can have our own individual religious beliefs diametrically opposed to our neighbor and yet live free in this country.

If a church or parent wants to teach its children to read the Bible, they can have their own school. Public school is NOT the place to force any one religious belief on a child. The home and the church is the place for religious instruction not the public school. A moment of silence where a child can pray in his/her head is all that is needed, No public entity should be forcing a child to read or listen a Koran or a Bible, or the Book of Mormon etc. If morals were taught AT HOME, our society would be in much better shape.

As a retired public school librarian I taught students that any religious "bible" could be used as reference in a library. One child objected to the Bible on the shelf. I reasoned with that child. "No one is forcing you to read it." You choose what books you want to read. That is what needs to be present in any public space. CHOICE. There have obviously been targeted deliberate attempts to cause issues over moral perceptions to bring about this current state of affairs.

We are all witnessing what church/state religions are like in the respective Muslim countries where Christians are persecuted for their faith. Who decides what faith will cross the "bridge." When you create a bridge weakening the Wall of Separation between Church and State you invite religious intolerance.

If the Department of Justice would issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state that would be advantageous. The DOJ could also create a religious liberty task force to track and prioritize litigation protecting religious liberty.

In conclusion, there are several steps that government organizations could take to deal with religious intolerance that would not weaken the protections that our founding fathers put into place to protect us from religious persecution. Our ancestors fled European countries to escape that. And yet it followed them with the puritanical persecution of Rhode Island founder Roger Williams. True religious freedom also protects those who want no religious involvement.

A secular government, uninvolved in any type of collaboration with
ANY relgion, protects ALL rights.

Sincerely,
Ann Lavenburg
Walnutport, Pennsylvania

From: stacey hetland <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church State Separation
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:57:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While I am mindful of the Committee's labors, which resulted in the 12 recommendations released June 26, certain of which we agree with, I write to voice my concerns and objections to the Committee's first and ninth recommendations [1] and its obviously insufficient consideration of the warnings of the Founding Fathers of the dangers of a union of church and state or the many lessons of history regarding same.

The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice "issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state." [2] At the formal release of the Committee's recommendations on the same day, Committee Chair Dan Patrick publicly stated that "the separation of church and state is not in the constitution" and that the phrase "has no constitutional basis." [3]

As a Christians, I am alarmed lest the flawed and unconstitutional view of the Chair of the Committee of the so-called "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" prove influential or worse, instructive, to the Department of Justice. If the Committee's opinion of the so-called "proper understanding" of the Establishment Clause is the same as that of its Chair, it is apparent that its understanding is not proper, but rather improper.

Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history." According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain. Certainly, the Founding Fathers were all aware of the persecution of the Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

In Europe, the persecution of the martyrs is well documented. Today we take the Bible for granted but forget that William Tyndale was executed for translating the Bible into the English

language, not by atheists but by religious bigots. It was a union of church and state that suppressed speech and the freedom of the press in England. It was a union of church and state that prohibited the work of translation of the Bible, which changed the world. It was a union of church and state that necessitated his flight to Europe. It was a union of church and state that killed him.

I respectfully ask that the Department of Justice, in considering the issue of public guidance of the separation of church and state, consider the history of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania and early Founding Father, who was repeatedly jailed for his religious faith in England. The Pennsylvania Colony became a haven, not from atheist persecutors but from religious persecutors who did not believe in the separation of church and state. The same is true of Roger Williams, founder of the colony of Rhode Island, who was ordered arrested for declaring that the civil magistrate cannot enforce the first table of the Decalogue. We ask that the Committee take into account the brutal public whipping of President Abraham Lincoln's five-time great-grandfather, Obadiah Holmes, in the Massachusetts colony, for the "crime" of religious dissent. Obadiah Holmes was not whipped by atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. I respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

I am concerned that the Committee neglected to take into account the impact of the separation of church and state on the other rights codified in the First Amendment. Free speech and freedom of the press, for example, owe their flourishing in the modern world in large part to the separation of church and state in America. Prior to the protections in the First Amendment, the Roman Catholic Church for centuries maintained a list of banned books called the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The books were subject to confiscation, and the possession of them resulted in the punishment of the owner.

Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, David Hume and Edward Gibbon, and many others, all at the behest of the Roman Papacy, which is itself a union of church and state. Free speech in the Western world is the legacy of those who risked the wrath of a unified church and state, often at the cost of their lives. I would also ask that the Department of Justice consider the repeated modern calls from the papal power today for the censorship of the internet and the suppression of free speech, contrary to the First Amendment. [4] I have no doubt that the censorship of Galileo, Kepler, Milton, and others was prosecuted under the justification of the censorship of misinformation, also.

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings. Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. I am concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

Therefore, I respectfully ask, what proper guidance can the Department of Justice hope to give to the public on the "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" if it is directed in its object by a Committee and a Committee Chair, who has neglected to more fully analyze the reasons for the separation of church and state, or the reasons why the United States codified the disestablishment of church and state in the First Amendment in the first instance?

The reference to the wall of separation between church and state is not only mentioned by President Thomas Jefferson in the letter to the Danbury Baptists, which, of course, it is. [6] What is often left out of the narrative is that Jefferson said that he personally believed that the principle of the separation of church and state is codified in the Constitution. Therein, Jefferson wrote: "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State." [7]

James Madison wrote, "It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of Citizens and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution. The free men of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much soon to forget it." [8]

Lastly, I object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." [9] Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate in the American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

In his anonymous treatise published in the Boston Gazette, John Adams, later the second President of the United States, wrote that canon law was a tyrannical form of government, as was

feudal law, but that the worst of all forms of governments was a union of the two. [11] And it was Madison who stated that, "In the Papal System, Government and Religion are in a manner consolidated, & that is found to be the worst of Governments."

I respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee and that it adopt recommendation 1 of the Committee that it convene a public hearing, with written and oral submissions from the public, to more comprehensively study the question of the separation of church and state in history, and in American history in particular, a study which we would enthusiastically support.

We remain, Yours truly,

Stacey Hetland
PII
Sent from my iPhone

From: "[redacted]"i<[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT -- Separation of Church and State -- Brenda Hill
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:58:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

I have chosen to copy this comment because I could not say it better.

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, that is exactly backwards — and as a person of faith, I find the idea alarming.

That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the church free. A bridge doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money and political favors to march right in, until churches are competing for grants and answering to politicians instead of to God. History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands, and it isn't good for either one.

Please don't build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects the church far more than it constrains it.

Sincerely,
Brenda HILL
Athens, Alabama

From: "Tompkins, Gary" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom commission report comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:00:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear committee,

I have read the majority of the draft of this first report and though I think the committees intentions are admirable, I think some of the recommendations could ultimately have an adverse impact on those same freedoms.
I believe the separation of church and state is crucial to the American way of life. This goes both ways. The government should not involve themselves in the religions of the people nor sjould the religious groups interfere with the governing bodies.
Likewise I think it would be unwise for the government to be involved in any type of funding for religious groups. This will only lead to corruption and favoritism. Neither of which is desirable.
In short, freedom to make our own choices with religion was a basic founding principle and we should safeguard that above all other considerations. The government should be there to protect these freedoms but also to not interfere with them, good or bad. Please do not attempt to build this "bridge" as it goes nowhere.

From: Marci [redacted]
To: "RLC (OASG)" [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Marc Slagle
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:03:42 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I write as a person of deep faith, and I write with alarm. My church has stood for the separation of church and state since its founding, and history has taught us where tearing down that wall leads.

The wall of separation is not hostility to faith — it is faith's greatest earthly safeguard. It was built by believers: Roger Williams, the Baptists who pressed Madison for the First Amendment, and generations of Christians who knew that when the church takes the state's money, it soon takes the state's orders. "No man can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24, KJV). A church funded by Caesar will answer to Caesar.

Your recommendation to repeal the Johnson Amendment would turn pulpits into political machines. I sit in the pew on Sabbath to hear Christ preached — not candidates. Do not put that temptation before America's pastors, and do not put that burden on their congregations. "For the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). I fear for a country that allows the state to control or even dictate religion, and it can become a slippery slope indeed.

And consider your own recommendation to post the Ten Commandments in schools. Which version? The commandments of Exodus 20 command remembrance of the seventh day— the Sabbath I, and many other Christians keep. Will the state post that, or a version edited to suit the majority? The moment government must choose, it has become an arbiter of doctrine. That is precisely what the First Amendment forbids, and precisely what history warns against.

Religion in America has flourished *because* of separation, not despite it. Keep the wall. Please withdraw the recommendations for government funding of religious activity and the repeal of the Johnson Amendment, and instead recommend the Johnson Amendment's full enforcement!

Respectfully,

Marc Slagle
Eagle Point, Oregon

From: Margie Lane <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:07:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am opposed to this bill or suggestion of the change Church and Statement. Singling out one religion for all is unacceptable. Politics do not belong in church for political backing..

--

MargieLee

From: Damayanthie Eluwawalage <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENTi– Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report - Damayanthie Eluwawalage
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:07:51 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Public_Comment_-_DAMAYANTHIE_ELUWAWALAGE.pdf

Re: PUBLIC COMMENT – Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report - Damayanthie Eluwawalage

Dear Department of Justice,

I am respectfully submitting my comments on the above-mentioned Report, and have attached the document for your kind consideration.

Thank you and I am grateful for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely,
Damayanthie Eluwawalage

Damayanthie Eluwawalage, PhD, BA (Honours), MPHA
Researcher, Professional Historian, Research Scientist, Private Pilot,
Usability and Human Factors Engineer, Designer, Theorist, Professor
Website: http://www.exploro-historia.com

Public Comment on the Draft Report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

Submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice

Damayanthie Eluwawalage, PhD, MPHA
Professional Historian; Member, American Historical Association

I write as a professional historian and longtime educator to urge that any account of American religious history adopted as an official position of the United States government reflect the complexity, contestation, and regional diversity that the historical record actually documents.

I hold an interdisciplinary doctorate with a historical field of study, am a credentialed member of the Professional Historians Association, and have spent more than twenty years researching, teaching and publishing on American social and material culture, including the colonial and nineteenth-century Mid-Atlantic. That work has repeatedly confirmed a basic principle of responsible historical scholarship: the American past resists reduction to a single, unified narrative. This is as true of religious life as of any other dimension of early American society.

The draft report is correct that religion has profoundly shaped American history. However, the history of religious liberty in America is not a story of consensus. It is a story of sustained disagreement—among colonists, founders, and citizens—over the proper relationship between government and religious belief. Colonial America was religiously plural and often fractious: nine of the thirteen colonies authorized established churches—Congregational in New England, Anglican in the Middle and Southern colonies[1]—while Rhode Island and Pennsylvania stood as deliberate exceptions built on religious toleration.[2] Disestablishment itself proceeded far more unevenly, and far more slowly, than a narrative centered on the First Amendment's 1791 ratification suggests: Connecticut did not disestablish its Congregational church until 1818, New Hampshire until 1817, and Massachusetts, the last of the original states to do so, not until 1833, more than four decades after the Bill of Rights was ratified.[3] This was not a fixed or uniform understanding handed down intact; it was negotiated, piecemeal, and contested for generations after the founding.

The report's treatment of the Establishment Clause deserves particular scrutiny on these grounds. It is true, as the report notes, that the phrase “wall of separation” does not appear in the

[1]James Madison's Montpelier, “The Founders and the Freedom of Religion: An Introduction,” teaching resource, jamesmadison.gov (nine of thirteen colonies authorized established churches: Congregational in New England, Anglican in the Middle and Southern colonies); John Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianization of the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).
[2]James Madison's Montpelier, “The Founders and the Freedom of Religion: An Introduction” (nine of thirteen colonies authorized established churches); Rhode Island royal charter of 1663, discussed in Georgetown University Library, “Religious Diversity in Colonial America,” America 250 research guide.
[3]John Witte Jr. and Justin Latterell, “The Last American Establishment: Massachusetts, 1780–1833,” in *Religious Dissent and Disestablishment: Church-State Relations in the New American States, 1776–1833*, ed. Carl H. Esbeck and Jonathan Den Hartog (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2019), 399–424; John R. Vile, “Established Churches in Early America,” *The First Amendment Encyclopedia* (Connecticut disestablished 1818; New Hampshire 1817), citing Colin Kidd, “Civil Theology and Church Establishments in Revolutionary America,” *Historical Journal* 42 (1999): 1007–1026.

DOJ-RLC Comment-010930

constitutional text[4]; that phrase originates in Jefferson's 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptist Association, not the First Amendment itself.[5] But the report goes further, attributing the phrase's constitutional significance to a mid-twentieth-century importation of secularist philosophy, invoking Justice Hugo Black's 1947 opinion in Everson v. Board of Education and Black's earlier membership in the Ku Klux Klan to suggest the doctrine was smuggled into American law by ideologically motivated jurists. This account is not supported by the historical record. The Supreme Court had already treated Jefferson's letter as authoritative on the scope of the Establishment Clause nearly seventy years earlier, in its 1878 decision in Reynolds v. United States, when Chief Justice Morrison Waite cited the "wall of separation" language to explain the First Amendment's meaning—decades before Black's appointment to the Court and before the Continental philosophers the report blames had any presence in American constitutional discourse.[6] Whatever weight Reynolds carried as precedent, its use of Jefferson's language shows the concept was already part of the Court's interpretive vocabulary well before the mid-twentieth century—undercutting the report's claim about the doctrine's origin, whatever one thinks of its later development in Everson. Tellingly, the report itself concedes that Jefferson's original metaphor described "the respectful and mutually appreciative boundary Jefferson had envisioned"; it is the report's own characterization of later Supreme Court decisions—which it likens to a "Berlin wall" of separation—that supplies the harsher image the report then attributes to secularist ideology rather than to reasoned legal development.[7] A narrative that locates the doctrine's origin in twentieth-century secularism and a single justice's biography cannot account for its nineteenth-century pedigree, and substituting a claim about a judge's motives for engagement with his reasoning is not historical analysis. The absence of the phrase from the constitutional text also does not, on its own, settle what the Framers understood the Establishment Clause to accomplish: the historical record shows the Framers deliberately withheld religious authority from the new federal government—prohibiting religious tests for office in Article VI[8] and declining to assign the state any religious function—because they had inherited, and sought to avoid, the fractious entanglement of church and government that had characterized the colonial and early state period.[9] Treating the absence of a later interpretive phrase as proof that the underlying constitutional principle is illegitimate substitutes textual literalism for historical understanding, and risks presenting one contested reading of the Establishment Clause as though it were the only one supported by the founding record.

[4]Presidential Religious Liberty Commission, Draft Report (2026), Executive Summary at 21 and ch. 2, "Building Walls of Separation between Church and State," at 42 (asserting that the phrase "wall of separation" appears in neither the First Amendment nor the Constitution).

[5]Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist Association, January 1, 1802, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; reprinted in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Albert E. Bergh (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, 1904), vol. 16, pp. 281–282.

[6]Reynolds v. United States, 98 U.S. 145, 164 (1878) (quoting Jefferson's letter and treating it as authoritative on the scope and effect of the First Amendment).

[7]Presidential Religious Liberty Commission, Draft Report (2026), ch. 2, "Religious Liberty and the Law," at 42 (describing Jefferson's metaphor as "the respectful and mutually appreciative boundary Jefferson had envisioned" and characterizing subsequent Establishment Clause jurisprudence as having built "much more like a 'Berlin wall' of separation").

[8]U.S. Constitution, art. VI, cl. 3 ("no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States").

[9]John Witte Jr. and Joel A. Nichols, *Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 26–27.

The report's proposed alternative to a “wall” of separation—describing religious liberty instead as a “bridge” between church and state—sits uneasily with the report's own authorities. Alexis de Tocqueville, whom the report cites approvingly elsewhere for religion's civic benefits, also observed that the American clergy of his era deliberately kept aloof from political parties and public affairs, and warned that a church which allies itself with political power gains influence over some only by losing the hope of retaining influence over all.[10] On Tocqueville's own account, American religion flourished because of its distance from government, not its proximity to it; the report cannot invoke his admiration for that vitality while discarding the separation he identified as one of its causes.

This is not merely an academic dispute. The report recommends that the Department of Justice back strategic litigation to support state laws requiring the display of the Ten Commandments in public schools.[11] In Stone v. Graham, the Supreme Court held that a similar Kentucky statute violated the Establishment Clause precisely because such displays serve no secular legislative purpose and are plainly religious in nature.[12] Using a contested historical narrative to support litigation aimed at reversing that precedent compounds the report's methodological problem: the report is not simply offering one interpretation among several for scholarly consideration, but marshaling that interpretation to justify a specific and consequential change in the law governing public education.

My concern is therefore methodological, and it is one I share with the American Historical Association. When historical claims are selected to support a predetermined conclusion, and when contrary evidence and genuine scholarly debate are omitted, the result is not history but advocacy dressed in historical language. A report that presents a contested interpretation as settled historical fact—and then proposes to make that interpretation the official position of the federal government—risks distorting both the historical record and the public's understanding of it.

As an educator, I am also troubled by recommendations that would create mechanisms to investigate and sanction teachers and institutions. History education depends on the freedom to teach the past in its full complexity, including the parts that are uncomfortable or contested. Measures that chill that freedom would impoverish students' understanding of exactly the traditions the report claims to honor.

I respectfully urge the Commission and the Department to revise the report so that its historical claims reflect the evidentiary complexity and scholarly contestation that define this subject, and to consult broadly with historians of American religion and the early republic before advancing

[10]Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Eduardo Nolla ed., James T. Schleifer trans., Liberty Fund 2010) (1835), vol. 1, bk. I, ch. 17 (observing that the American clergy “kept aloof from parties and from public affairs,” and that a church allying itself with political power “increases its authority over some but loses the hope of reigning over all”).

[11]Presidential Religious Liberty Commission, Draft Report (2026), ch. 4, “Students Don't Check their Rights at the Schoolhouse Gate,” Recommendations, at 80 (recommending that the Department of Justice support strategic litigation to defend state laws requiring the display of the Ten Commandments in public schools).

[12]Stone v. Graham, 449 U.S. 39, 41 (1980) (per curiam) (holding that a Kentucky statute requiring the posting of the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms violated the Establishment Clause).

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any interpretation as authoritative. Sound policy cannot rest on an incomplete or selective reading of the past.

> *The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right.*
> — Judge Learned Hand[13]

Thank you and I am grateful for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully submitted,

Damayanthie Eluwawalage, PhD, MPHA

[13] Learned Hand, "The Spirit of Liberty," address at the "I Am an American Day" ceremony, Central Park, New York, May 21, 1944, in *The Spirit of Liberty: Papers and Addresses of Learned Hand*, ed. Irving Dilliard, 3rd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 190.

From: Oneida Arosarena <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Draft Report of Religious Liberty Commission - Oneida Arosarena
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:08:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Sirs and Madams,

I am respectfully opposing the Draft Report of the Religious Liberty Commission and its recommendations.

The God-given right of religious liberty is best exercised when church and state are separate. Attempts to unite church and state are harmful to each, subversive of human rights and history has demonstrated that uniting church and state results in persecution of religious minorities.

The Johnson Amendment protects houses of worship from partisanship and ensures fair play in elections. It should not be repealed.

Public funds should go to public schools, not private schools. Private schools are not required to adhere to laws protecting the rights of students with disabilities as are public schools, and funding private schools with public money would create an uneven playing field. Depriving public schools of funds needed to teach students with disabilities is essentially an unfunded mandate.

Finally, institutions receiving tax payer dollars should not be allowed to discriminate. This is a form of taxation without fair representation, which our Founding Fathers fought against.

Sincerely,
Oneida Arosarena

From: JackMarti <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment re: Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:08:40 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Comission,

I wish to comment on the rhetoric I've been hearing lately concerning religious liberty as it relates to the concept of the separation of church and state.

I am a firm advocate of upholding our nation's leaders in prayer as it relates to the well-being of our nation, and I am also aware that our form of government will not work unless we are governed by a moral people. However, our forefathers came to this land to escape the persecution of both Catholic and Protestant nations with whom they differed doctrinally concerning the way they practiced their faith. The purpose of the establishment clause of the first ammendment was meant to prevent the state from imposing religious restrictions or mandates as it relates to how we worship God. These are matters of conscience and cannot be dictated by the authority of the state without violating the consciences of those who differ with the state. Our forefathers wanted no king, nor pope, because they saw what that did in the nations from which they and their forefathers fled. So, as it relates to the first four commandments of the decalogue (man's relationship with God), we were not to make an establishment of religion, not prohibit the free exercise thereof. That is, essentially, the metephorical wall of separation between church and state to which Thomas Jefferson referred.

I, however, am not one who would say you can't legislate morality as it relates to how we treat each other as citizens. Insofar as that is concerned, their can be no better standard than the second table of the decalogue. So, legislation, based on those precepts, in my opinion is fair game, and would not violate anyone's conscience, though it may be seen to restrict their freedom to do what is morally wrong. Law is meant to define what is allowed and what is not or what is right and what is wrong, but again, as it relates to worship, that's another ball of wax.

If we remove the wall of separation between church and state, at the very least, the question of Sabbath observance will become a huge issue for those of us who observe the Biblical seventh-day Sabbath as opposed to Sunday observance which is purely a man-made tradition with absolutely no Bibical support whatsoever.

Even if, initially, exceptions are made to accomodate seventh-day Sabbath observance, history has shown this never works, and arguments for "the greater good" tend to prevail.

I, therefore, submit to the RLC that to break down the wall of separation between church and state would be a grave mistake and cause persecution, the likes of which this country has seen glimpses in the past on the State level, but nothing like it will be on the Federal level should Jefferson's metaphorical wall be torn down.

Sincerely,

Jack Marti

Sent from Proton Mail for Android.

From: Dana West RD <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment RE: religious liberty commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:12:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While we are mindful of the Committee's labors, which resulted in the 12 recommendations released June 26, certain of which we agree with, we write to voice our concerns and objections to the Committee's first and ninth recommendations [1] and its obviously insufficient consideration of the warnings of the Founding Fathers of the dangers of a union of church and state or the many lessons of history regarding same.

The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice "issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state." [2] At the formal release of the Committee's recommendations on the same day, Committee Chair Dan Patrick publicly stated that "the separation of church and state is not in the constitution" and that the phrase "has no constitutional basis." [3]

As citizens and students of history, and as Christians, we are alarmed lest the flawed and unconstitutional view of the Chair of the Committee of the so-called "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" prove influential or worse, instructive, to the Department of Justice. If the Committee's opinion of the so-called "proper understanding" of the Establishment Clause is the same as that of its Chair, it is apparent that its understanding is not proper, but rather improper.

Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history." According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain.
Certainly, the Founding Fathers were all aware of the persecution of the Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

In Europe, the persecution of the martyrs is well documented. Today we take the Bible for granted but forget that William Tyndale was executed for translating the Bible into the English language, not by atheists but by religious bigots. It was a union of church and state that suppressed speech and the freedom of the press in England. It was a union of church and state that prohibited the work of

translation of the Bible, which changed the world. It was a union of church and state that necessitated his flight to Europe. It was a union of church and state that killed him.

We respectfully ask that the Department of Justice, in considering the issue of public guidance of the separation of church and state, consider the history of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania and early Founding Father, who was repeatedly jailed for his religious faith in England. The Pennsylvania Colony became a haven, not from atheist persecutors but from religious persecutors who did not believe in the separation of church and state. The same is true of Roger Williams, founder of the colony of Rhode Island, who was ordered arrested for declaring that the civil magistrate cannot enforce the first table of the Decalogue. We ask that the Committee take into account the brutal public whipping of President Abraham Lincoln's five-time great-grandfather, Obadiah Holmes, in the Massachusetts colony, for the "crime" of religious dissent. Obadiah Holmes was not whipped by atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

We are concerned that the Committee neglected to take into account the impact of the separation of church and state on the other rights codified in the First Amendment. Free speech and freedom of the press, for example, owe their flourishing in the modern world in large part to the separation of church and state in America. Prior to the protections in the First Amendment, the Roman Catholic Church for centuries maintained a list of banned books called the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The books were subject to confiscation, and the possession of them resulted in the punishment of the owner.

Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, David Hume and Edward Gibbon, and many others, all at the behest of the Roman Papacy, which is itself a union of church and state. Free speech in the Western world is the legacy of those who risked the wrath of a unified church and state, often at the cost of their lives. We would also ask that the Department of Justice consider the repeated modern calls from the papal power today for the censorship of the internet and the suppression of free speech, contrary to the First Amendment. [4] We have no doubt that the censorship of Galileo, Kepler, Milton, and others was prosecuted under the justification of the censorship of misinformation, also.

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings. Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. We are concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

Therefore, we respectfully ask, what proper guidance can the Department of Justice hope to give to the public on the "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" if it is directed in its object by a Committee and a Committee Chair, who has neglected to more fully analyze the reasons for the separation of church and state, or the reasons why the United States codified the disestablishment of church and state in the First Amendment in the first instance?

The reference to the wall of separation between church and state is not only mentioned by President Thomas Jefferson in the letter to the Danbury Baptists, which, of course, it is. [6] What is often left out of the narrative is that Jefferson said that he personally believed that the principle of the separation of church and state is codified in the Constitution. Therein, Jefferson wrote: "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for

his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State." [7]

James Madison wrote, "It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of Citizens and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution. The free men of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much soon to forget it." [8]

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." [9] Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate in the American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

In his anonymous treatise published in the Boston Gazette, John Adams, later the second President of the United States, wrote that canon law was a tyrannical form of government, as was feudal law, but that the worst of all forms of governments was a union of the two. [11] And it was Madison who stated that, "In the Papal System, Government and Religion are in a manner consolidated, & that is found to be the worst of Governments."

We respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee and that it adopt recommendation 1 of the Committee that it convene a public hearing, with written and oral submissions from the public, to more comprehensively study the question of the separation of church and state in history, and in American history in particular, a study which we would enthusiastically support.

We remain, Yours truly,

Marty and Dana West

[1] https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/president-trumps-religious-liberty-commission-delivers-historic-report-draft
[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].
[3] https://www.chron.com/politics/article/dan-patrick-church-state-constitution-viral-22323383.php
[4] https://reclaimthenet.org/pope-francis-calls-on-social-media-platforms-to-censor-more-misinformation;

[5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAUkMwlWYB8; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPlfx-UA
[6] https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html
[7] https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html – Jefferson here is clearly referring to Congress. That Congress is prohibited by the Constitution from making a union of church and state.
[8] James Madison, Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments
[9] Matthew 22:21
[10] James Madison, Letter to Robert Walsh, March 2, 1819.
[11] John Adams, Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law, 1765.
https://www.masshist.org/publications/adams-papers/index.php/view/PJA01dg2

From: Pamela Little <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:15:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

To those in charge of the Commission. The United States of America, the home of the FREE, has as one of its founding principles, the separation of church and state. This is meant for ALL people, ALL religions. We are to have the freedom of choice as to how we believe, what we believe, and if we choose to believe in God or not. ANY proposals, legislation, etc. that provides the least opportunity to limit or discriminate against anyone or any church is NOT to be allowed in this country!

Religious freedom for ALL! Do NOT support any framework or proposal that disallows this! As a citizen of this country all my life, I STRONGLY oppose any act that infringes on my or any other person's God-given right to choose how I choose to worship. This is NOT an area for government interference.

Pamela Little
US Citizen speaking up for religious liberty for ALL!!!!!

From: Stella Kwon <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:17:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sent from my iPhone
I agree with pillar of freedom comments. Please implement them.

Thank you

From: Rhylma Villegas <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:18:25 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I believe that the United States of America established separation of church and state because of Christian believers wanting to keep their freedom. With all due respect, using government funding for religious activities and repealing the Johnson amendment is something I ask that you reconsider as a United States Citizen. As a person of faith I find it alarming that our nation wants to "bridge" church and state. This idea of coming together is completely the opposite of what was established decades ago, in order to keep the church free. History shows that when church and state join hands, it isn't good for either one. Please keep the wall of separation up. It protects much more than does constrain it.
I agree with Pillars of Freedom comments. Please implement them!
Thank you for your time; and I pray for you as our nation's leaders as you make decisions that will impact the future of all.

Sincerely,
Rhylma Villegas

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Susan Carleton <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Susan K Carleton
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:18:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I'm writing as a US Citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of Church and State. What is especially concerning and egregious is the use of government money to fund religious activities and repealing of the Johnson Amendment.

When churches take government money, the corruption of politics comes in with it. Churches would compete for funding and they would be inclined to answer to politicians instead of answering to God.
That is bad for both churches and Country alike.

Separation of Church and State isn't a secular idea. People of Faith built it to protect faith. It's the reason religion has remained strong here in America. Please KEEP CHURCH AND STATE SEPARATE!

As US Citizens, we value our freedom to worship according to our beliefs. Let's keep it that way.

Sincerely,

Susan K Carleton
Washington, Utah

From: jackie crawford <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:19:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom it may concern,

I stand firmly against the merge of church and state, and going against the Constitution in regards to church and state.
Please reconsider doing this.

Thank you
Jackie Crawford

From: Lita Amos <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:20:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sent from my iPhone
To the Religious Liberty Commission:

I believe that Church and State should be totally separated. The United States was founded on freedom of religion. Yes, they believed in God and wanted to worship Him and study the Bible without restrictions as they had in Europe. We are a free nation because of that reason. Because of that freedom, there are many Americans that don't believe in God or believe in other things. I do believe in God, and His son, Jesus Christ, but I can't force my beliefs on anyone. And, that's the way God created us. To have free will. To believe in Him or not. He didn't create robots. His law was made to keep us happy and safe. When we don't keep it, we feel the consequences. I do pray and wish all people would come to know Jesus and God. He loves us all and wants us all to be saved. Some, however, don't want that and it's their choice. Even the smallest connection between church and state takes away total religious freedom. I definitely don't like things people do that is against Gods plan for us. I can pray for them and live like Jesus by following His example. I can't change them, but if they open their hearts and minds to Him, Jesus can change them. In the end, It's their choice and no government should dictate what a person believes. I love our country and I love the people and most of all I love God. I will follow God's laws and I have that freedom in the USA. I will also follow our country's laws, unless they go against God's laws. And that is my belief that God is sovereign over all.
Sincerely,

Lita Amos

From: [redacted] PII [redacted] >
To: "RLC (OASG)" < [redacted] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:22:02 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom it may concern

I am stating that I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments!
Please implement them!

Sincerely,
Concerned Citizens

From: "terence p. ware"i<[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]"i<[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Danielle Ware
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:22:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Dr. Carson, and the members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of religious liberty in this country, I'm writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment. When churches take government money or step into partisan politics, the corruption of politics comes in with it. Churches end up competing for funding and answering to politicians instead of to God — and that's bad for the church and the country alike. Separation isn't a secular idea; people of faith built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here. Please keep church and state separate. That's how we keep both of them free.

Sincerely,

Danielle Ware

From: Theodore “Ted” Hansen <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Theodore Hansen’s letter to the Religious Liberty Commission Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:23:27 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Theodore_Hansen’s_letter_to_the_Religious_Liberty_Commission_Report.pdf

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July 12, 2026

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

My name is Theodore Hansen and I live in Moorhead, Minnesota. I am a member of the Fargo Seventh Day Adventist Church in Fargo, North Dakota where I serve as the Religious Liberty Leader. I am also a U.S. Army veteran that realizes the importance of our Constitution, our freedom, and Religious Liberty. I would like to take a few moments to respond to my concerns with the Religious Liberty Commission Report.

My main concern happens to be the call for no more separation of church and state and an effort to rewrite history by stating that the founding fathers never intended America to have a separation of church and state. They claim it is not in the Constitution but only in a letter from Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist Association. I would say that they are merely looking for a word for word parallel to fit their narrative and not looking for the truths and principles of Religious Liberty stated in a different way or with different words. So, let's look at what Thomas Jefferson actually stated in his letter in 1802 to see what this founding father and former President actually said and believed.

To messers. Nehemiah Dodge, Ephraim Robbins, & Stephen S. Nelson, a committee of the Danbury Baptist association in the state of Connecticut.

Gentlemen

The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me, on behalf of the Danbury Baptist association, give me the highest satisfaction. my duties dictate a faithful

and zealous pursuit of the interests of my constituents, & in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more and more pleasing.

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church & State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection & blessing of the common father and creator of man, and tender you for yourselves & your religious association, assurances of my high respect & esteem.

Th Jefferson
Jan. 1. 1802.

I agree fully with what Jefferson stated. “Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church & State.” If

> religion is a matter which lies solely between a man and his God, what part if any should the government play in that relationship? Is it up to the government to tell a man who, how, where, or when a man can worship God?

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise there of"

This is stated in the first part of the first amendment to the Constitution when it became law after being ratified by the required 9 states on June 21, 1788. If this one line in this one amendment was not to keep a separation between church and state then why did Jefferson use it to reaffirm the position that church and state are to be separated by the Constitution in his letter to the Danbury Baptist's?

That one sentence is what ensures our religious liberty and is a large reason why I enlisted in the U.S. Army. I took an oath to the Constitution of the United States of America to protect the rights of religious liberty for all faiths and all Americans. I wanted to ensure that tyranny does not dictate one's conscience or religious beliefs because I do not want a government telling me who, how, where, or when I can worship, that is my Religious Liberty and that is between me and God alone, just like Jefferson stated. If there was no longer a wall between church and state would religious liberty truly exist? Would those that enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces truly be fighting for the protection and defense of Religious Liberty? Would the oath that they take to support and defend the U.S. Constitution really be to an oath that provides freedom and religious liberty to all?

As a Seventh Day Adventist Christian I believe we should follow Jesus Christ and the Law of God out of our love for Him. Not because it is dictated by the government in the country to which you live, that is not

Religious Liberty. But sadly in America over the past few years there has been a raise of Christian Nationalism. Christian Nationalism has sought to legislate God's Law and God's Kingdom here in America by trying to make America a "Christian Nation" according to how they interpret the Bible and Christianity. Following God, the Bible or God's Law is an individual choice and decision that God gives us the free will to choose and decide for ourselves not by others or those in government. Any and all Bible verses listed or enclosed in this letter are quoted from the King James Version (KJV).

John 14 : 15
If ye love me, keep my commandments.

God gives us His law in Exodus 20. The first table of the law deals directly with our relationship with God and is commandments 1 - 4. The second table of the law deals directly with our relationship with our neighbor and is commandments 5 - 10.

The first table and of relationship with God :

Exodus 20 : 3 - 11
3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. 7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the

LORD thy God:in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Matthew 22 : 37 - 38
37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment.

The second table and our relationship with our neighbor :

Exodus 20 : 12 - 17
12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 13 Thou shalt not kill. 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15 Thou shalt not steal. 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Matthew 22 : 39
39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

When you combine the first and the second table of the law you have a perfect relationship between how you treat God and how you treat your neighbor.

Matthew 22 : 40
40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The apostle Paul went on to write in Romans 13 how we should obey and get along with government authority. But notice how Paul only mentions the laws listed on the 2nd table that deals with our relationship with our neighbor. He never mentions any laws from the first table because our relationship with God is between Him and us alone, not the government or any other worldly authority.

Romans 13 : 1 - 14
1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. 8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. 11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,

and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

In both the Old and New Testament God told us of a new covenant that would come, for those that wanted to follow Him.

Jeremiah 31 : 31 - 34
31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Hebrews 8 : 10 - 12
10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

In following and believing in Jesus, He will write His law on your heart and He will help you to keep His law. He will be the reason that your life will change and He will be the reason for keeping the law and the good works that you do. It is not up to the government to legislate the keeping of the law of God and how to follow Him. The government can not legislate morality or a relationship between Jesus and an individual. Accepting Christ and following Him and His law is solely between you and Christ, the government or Christian Nationalist's can not change that no matter how many laws they get Congress to pass. Congress can not legislate God's Kingdom or law to America nor should they attempt to.

John 18 : 36
36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

It is the will and the want of Jesus to give freedom and Religious Liberty to all. As Christians and followers of Christ we should want that to, a free and loving relationship between God and His people. Not a relationship that is mandated and legislated by government authorities by force.

Luke 4 : 17 - 19
17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

When you read your Bible you can find accounts of church and state systems that were detrimental to one's individual religious liberty and

beliefs and ability to practice their faith and worship God. America should not be patterning its future to look like the past.

Daniel 3 : 1 - 30
1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. 3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, 5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: 6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. 8 Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. 9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. 10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image: 11 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach,

and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. 13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? 15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? 16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. 17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. 19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20 And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king,

True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.
26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come Thither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. 28 Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon.

King Nebuchadnezzar tried to legislate from the 1st table of God's law by making everyone worship an image which goes against the 2nd commandment. The 3 Jewish men had no religious liberty and were persecuted by the government because of it. We should learn from this Biblical lesson of Religious Liberty today and ensure that our government doesn't repeat these mistakes.

Daniel 6 : 1 - 28
1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; 2 And over these three

presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. 3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. 4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God. 6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. 7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree. 10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. 11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. 13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. 14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on

Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. 16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. 17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel. 18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him. 19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? 21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. 22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. 23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God. 24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. 25 Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. 26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. 27 He delivereth and rescueth, and

he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. 28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

King Darius tried to legislate from the 1st table of God's law by making everyone worship only him and pray to his name which goes against the 1st and 3rd commandments. Daniel had no religious liberty and was persecuted by the government because of it. We should learn from this Biblical lesson of Religious Liberty today and ensure that our government doesn't repeat these mistakes.

As Christians we are called to be part of the body of Christ and to be part of God's church. It is the job of the church to share the gospel and the love of Jesus with others by using the methods that Jesus used while He was here on earth. It is not the role of the church or the government to ensure and legislate that the church goes out to disciple others or make it lawful for those that believe differently than Christianity to attend a Christian church against their will and beliefs. God wants us to teach his law and commandments not to legislate and enforce them on everyone. The role of the government can not and should not take the role of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28 : 18 - 20
18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

As America celebrates 250 years of being a country let us remember what has helped make America great. Religious Liberty and the separation of church and state, ensured to us by our Constitution. Our ability to believe

and say whatever we want and express it however we would like to. Our freedom to pray and worship who, where, what, how and when we like and not be persecuted for it. We have plenty of history to turn to and see persecution that has taken place by worldly and religious authorities when religious liberty is not granted to those that wish they had it. We can not and should not let Christian Nationalism take control of America. America should be a place of Religious Liberty for all people and all religions.

I have read the response from Pillar of Freedom and I fully support and endorse their response and conviction on the issues they presented as well. I pray that Religious Liberty and a separation of church and state will continue to prevail in the United States of America and will continue to be protected and defended by freedom loving Americans everywhere no matter their authority or position or their religious beliefs or affiliations.

Sincerely,

Theodore Hansen
Religious Liberty Leader
Fargo Seventh Day Adventist Church

From: Lowell Jenks <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church & State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:25:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

Good afternoon,
I just want to go on record as agreeing STRONGLY with the Pillars of Freedom stance on religious freedom and the definite need for separation between church and state. Thank you!
Sincerely,

Lowell Jenks
Amity, AR

From: Fred Adams <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Building “Bridges” Between Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:26:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission.

I write to you not as a politician or a lobbyist, but as an American citizen, a Christian, an educator, and someone who loves this country enough to speak when I believe one of its greatest freedoms is at risk.

I respectfully ask the Commission to reject any recommendation from any person, organization, or religious body that would blur the line between church and state.

America has never been great because the government favored one religion over another. America has been great because every citizen has been free to worship God according to the dictates of conscience—or not worship at all—without fear that the government would take sides.

I respectfully ask you to choose liberty over coercion, conscience over compulsion, and the Constitution over religious preference.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration.

Respectfully,
Fred Adams

From: Debbie <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty and the separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:26:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom it may Concern…

I am writing in response to the Religious Liberty Commission's recommendation to bridge the gap between Church and State. I understand that this is being recommended with good intentions, but the results could be detrimental to religious liberty! I am a Christian and value high moral standards, but some standards should never be legislated.

When it comes to our civil duties between humans, there should be laws against killing, stealing, lying under oath, etc., but when it comes to our relationship with the God that we choose to serve, the government needs to stay out of that in every way!

For instance, I have heard a lot of discussion about bringing back blue laws, which creates the establishment of a holy day on Sunday. This is not right to do because not everybody keeps the same holy day. I know that from studying Bible prophecy, eventually there will be legislation regarding keeping Sunday, the first day of the week as a holy day, even when the Bible specifically and clearly states that the seventh day is the Sabbath.

Even though I know this will happen in the future, I will do what I can to fight it in order to spread the truth and help people to realize how important it is to obey God rather than men! If you would take the time to research the history of how Sunday became a day of worship, you would find that the day was changed by the Roman Catholic Church and now it has become a tradition for many Christians.

Please do not adopt the recommendation to bridge the gap between the separation of Church and State! Doing so will only cause division and persecution as it always has in the past!

Thank you for your consideration
Deborah Christensen

From: Thomas Saethre <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Seperation of Church and State- Thomas Saethre
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:27:23 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Response_to_Commission.pdf

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

Due to the history of persecution from the results of union of church & state notably as seen during the Dark Ages in which the Roman Catholic Church killed more than 50 million people, I strongly oppose what the Commission stands for. Please keep the wall between church & state. The other main concern is religious bodies receiving government funds over the expense of others - in other words favoritism & governments control over that religious body.

Attached is a copy of the “Pillars of Freedom” comment on the subject and I am in full support of the document.

Respectfully,

Thomas Saethre
Yellville,Arkansas
Sent from my iPhone

PILLAR OF FREEDOM

Religious Liberty • Freedom of Conscience • Separation of Church and State

July 6, 2026

Via Electronic Mail to [redacted]

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 5706
Washington, DC 20530

Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

Dear Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Dr. Carson, and the members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

The separation of church and state is among America's greatest achievements, grounded in the Constitution and central to our freedom. The Religious Liberty Commission's report undermines this principle by proposing to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a bridge. The wall of separation was not a secular invention imposed upon religion — it was built by people of faith, to protect faith. Breaching that wall will set the churches against one another in competition for government money and favor, and set the church against the state as each seeks power over the other — eroding the very freedom the Commission claims to defend. The Commission has recommended increasing government funding of religious activities and recommended repealing the Johnson Amendment. Both of

DOJ-RLC Comment-010969

these recommendations, if followed, will bring the corruption of the political process into the churches. In making its recommendations the Commission has relied upon a faulty retelling of our history.

The American Development of Separation of Church and State

The establishment of a wall of separation between the church and the state first appeared in the modern world in 1636 when Roger Williams founded the colony of Rhode Island. The success of Roger Williams' experiment would later inspire the colonies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, and to a lesser extent other colonies to roll back their religious legislation long before the Revolution of 1776. By 1790, all but three of the original 13 had disestablished their churches, and by 1833, the final state, Massachusetts, had disestablished its church as well. No state would ever enter the Union with an established church. The United States had learned from the colonies that liberty prospered better where church and state were separate. While the states themselves would take some time to extricate themselves from religious entanglements, the drafters and signers of the Constitution recognized the value of religious liberty.

Alexis de Tocqueville, the French statesman who toured the United States from 1831 to 1832, observed this about the cause of religion's power in America and how religion indirectly influenced the nation.

> In order to learn more about [the separation of church and state], I questioned the faithful of all communions. ..i To each of them I expressed my astonishment and revealed my doubts, and I discovered that they differed among themselves only on matters of detail: to a man, they assigned primary credit for the peaceful ascendancy of religion in their country to the complete separation of church and state. I state without hesitation that during my stay in America I met no one — not a single clergyman or layman — who did not agree with this statement.[1]

[1]Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Library of America, 2004, p. 341.

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> The [clergy] are careful to remain aloof from public affairs and do not involve themselves in the machinations of the parties. Therefore, one cannot say that religion in the United States influences the laws or the specifics of political opinion, but it does shape mores, and it is by regulating the family that religion endeavors to regulate the state.[2]

The Commission itself recognizes "that religious liberty remains one of the greatest sources of American strength," and that "preserving it will require vigilance, education, and renewed commitment from institutions and citizens alike." Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report at 13. The report then goes on to highlight a list of areas where religion and religious people are under attack. These areas of attack are fairly portrayed, and all people of faith should be concerned about the attack. America is in a culture war, and much of the battle is over values that are informed by religion. While the report does not go so far as to explicitly state that atheistic secularism is a religion, it certainly functions as one, and when the state supports secularism in its worst forms, the state is taking sides in the culture war against religion. This needs to stop.

The Commission's Revisionist History of the American Experience

First, the Commission tells a false history of religious liberty in the colonies and in the early history of the nation. It completely ignores that the idea of building a wall of separation between the church and the state is a very old idea, which was fully enunciated in 1644 by Roger Williams. Report at 37. Next, they ignore the fact that Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware followed Rhode Island's example by keeping a wall of separation between the church and the state. They also ignore that other colonies, seeing the freedom and success of the states which preserved the separation of church and state, repealed laws which supported their established churches in order to attract more immigrants. By 1776, the founding fathers concluded that separation of church and state had been a success, and while not using the phrase "separation of church and state," drafted the concept into the Constitution. The inclu-

[2]Ibid. p. 336.

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sion of separation of church and state, impressed upon James Madison by members of the Baptist church, united the Baptists and the members of other denominations to support the Constitution and ensure its adoption. Baptist support was contingent upon the addition of the First Amendment, which was speedily adopted after the adoption of the Constitution. Thus without separation of church and state, the Constitution would never have been adopted. Nevertheless, the Commission would have us believe that religious liberty did not exist in the states prior to the adoption of the Constitution, Report at 37, and that the concept of a wall of separation was the invention of Thomas Jefferson, and not central to the freedoms of our nation. They state that the idea of a wall of separation comes from a single letter, forgotten until the Supreme Court in *Everson v. Board of Education,* 1947, completely omitting the rich history of both the phrase and the idea. Report at 42.

The metaphor of creating a wall of separation between the church and the state was first written by Roger Williams in a reply to John Cotton in 1644, and then reproduced and expanded upon in his *magnum opus, The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience,* published in London in the same year.[3] Parliament banned the book. The metaphor was well known to the founding fathers, probably through the works of James Burgh, raised a Scottish Presbyterian who later became a devout Protestant dissenter. Thomas Jefferson's letter was not first quoted by the Supreme Court in 1947, but rather 68 years earlier in 1879 in the case of *Reynolds v. United States*. The Commission ignores a long line of Presidents who felt compelled to explicitly support the concept of a wall of separation. Besides Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, one of the primary drafters of the Constitution, said that there should be a "separation between religion and government,"[4] and that religion flourished better without government patronage.[5] George Washington's diplomats negotiated, and John Adams signed the Treaty

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[3]Roger Williams, *Mr. Cotton's Letter Lately Printed, Examined and Answered* (1644), in *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams,* vol. 1, p. 108; the metaphor is reproduced and developed throughout *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience*, ed. Edward Bean Underhill (London: Hanserd Knollys Society, 1848), see, e.g., p. 435.

[4] James Madison, "Detached Memoranda" (c. 1817), in Elizabeth Fleet, "Madison's 'Detached Memoranda,'" William and Mary Quarterly 3 (1946): 534–568.

[5] Madison's Letter to Edward Livingston, July 10, 1822.

of Tripoli, which stated that "the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion."[6] President Fillmore said that "Church and state should be separate, not only in form, but fact. Religion and politics should not be mingled."[7] President Grant said, "Keep the church and the state forever separate."[8] President Garfield said that it would be dangerous to use public funds for religious schools and that "The separation of the Church and the State in everything relating to taxation should be absolute."[9] President Theodore Roosevelt said there must be "complete severance of Church and State."[10]

In attacking the Supreme Court decisions of the 1940s, the Commission resorts to two tactics that cannot survive scrutiny: a personal attack on Justice Hugo Black, and claims of philosophical influence that the timeline of history makes impossible. The Commission states "Even a few Supreme Court decisions seemed to track with this train of thought [defined earlier in the report as that of Nietzsche, Foucault, Sartre, and the belief that 'God is dead'], culminating in a 1947 opinion [*Everson*], in which Justice Hugo Black, a former Ku Klux Klan member, repurposed a metaphor coined by Thomas Jefferson in an attempt to legitimize the new critical philosophy by placing it in the constitutional tradition. Specifically, the Supreme Court ruled on a series of decisions in which it used the 'wall' metaphor to regulate a child's access to religious education and later to ban school prayer and public displays of religion (like the Ten Commandments)." Report at 41-42. Without any support for the notion that Justice Black wrote opinions in accordance with the anti-Catholic philosophies of the Klan, the Commission attempts to persuade the public that Justice Black was racist and that his opinions should be disregard-

[6] Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the United States and the Bey and Subjects of Tripoli of Barbary, art. 11, signed Nov. 4, 1796; ratified by the U.S. Senate June 7, 1797; proclaimed by President John Adams June 10, 1797 (Barlow translation).

[7] *The Ovation to Mr. Fillmore: Speeches of Mr. Fillmore,* 1856.

[8] Ulysses S. Grant, Address to the Society of the Army of the Tennessee, Des Moines, Iowa, Sept. 29, 1875.

[9] James A. Garfield, Letter Accepting the Republican Presidential Nomination (to Hon. George F. Hoar), July 12, 1880.

[10] Theodore Roosevelt, *Fear God and Take Your Own Part* (New York: George H. Doran, 1916), 361; the statement originated in T. Roosevelt's 1915 public letter opposing public funding of sectarian schools in New York.

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ed. This is an *ad hominem* attack commonly used in the highly charged political debates of today, but counterproductive to finding truth and establishing unity. It is only useful in persuading the uninformed. The suggestion that *Everson* "tracked" with Nietzsche, Foucault, Sartre, or later critical theory is historically implausible. Foucault's major works postdated *Everson*, Sartre was never a source of American Establishment Clause doctrine, and the Court grounded its reasoning in American sources: Madison, Jefferson, disestablishment, and the First Amendment tradition. To attempt to smear the Supreme Court with Justice Black's much earlier Klan membership and with Nietzsche, Foucault, and Sartre is disingenuous. While Justice Black held that the Constitution established a wall of separation between the church and the state, in the same decision, the decision attacked by the Commission, Justice Black held that government reimbursement for transportation to Catholic schools was constitutional. How ironic! The Commission faults Justice Black for anti-Catholic bias from his Klan past, yet the very decision it attacks is one in which he upheld government support benefiting Catholic schoolchildren. And it faults him for following philosophies that no serious legal historian would argue influenced the Court's reasoning.

The Commission correctly states that much of the hostility towards religion in America today is based upon a "broader cultural assumption that religious belief should remain invisible while secular ideologies enjoy full freedom to influence public institutions." Report at 21. The Commission is correct to say, "People of faith should not be required to leave their religious convictions behind when entering the workplace, engaging in commerce, serving their communities, or participating in public debate," and that "institutions should foster environments in which citizens with divergent convictions can work together while maintaining fidelity to conscience." Report at 21. Nevertheless, the Report goes on to continually overstate the case by saying that the "wall of separation" ideology creates a wall between personal faith and public life. While this may be true when the idea of a wall of separation is misconstrued and weaponized by secular atheists, it is not true that the wall of separation erected by the Constitution and so often referred to by generations of leaders who have gone before us is a wall between personal faith and public life. The true wall of separation is between the state and the church. It is

there so that a person can freely exercise their personal faith and freely engage in the public sphere, without prejudice or persecution. To deny that there is complete separation of church and state in the Constitution, aka "the wall," and to deny that the wall can serve a useful purpose in protecting individual freedom is un-American and counter to both our experience and the knowledge and intent of our forefathers. The wall of separation is not a wall between religious people and public life; it is a wall between ecclesiastical power and civil power, protecting both religion and civil freedom.

The Commission's Objectionable Recommendations

Based upon the above arguments, the Commission recommends that the United States adopt its recommendation to post in the workplace, to teach our students, and to teach as many citizens as possible that the Constitution neither creates nor requires the separation of church and state, and that there should be no wall of separation between church and state. If this false ideology is embraced by the people, it will allow for many different "reforms," and eventually be used to justify any oppressive religious legislation so long as it is for the good of the people or represents the will of the majority. This is a radical teaching that has the potential, over time, to roll back the freedoms we enjoy in this nation, and return us to the political conflicts and tyranny our forefathers came to America to escape. This is the underlying philosophical foundation of additional, objectionable recommendations that the Commission makes.

The Commission recommends that the United States support religious philanthropic organizations. It bases its argument on the idea that in times of need, to separate the physical help from spiritual help is to deny the full scope of the help that the person in need requires. This may be true in some circumstances. Nevertheless, this is an argument to the church that wishes to provide those services to fund them internally, and not rely upon the state. For religion to rely upon state funding is for religion to take the role of an imposter, pretending to provide aid, when in fact it is the state that is making the aid possible. It also allows the religion that is relying upon government funding to use that funding as an

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aid in indoctrination and evangelism, thus the government is not remaining neutral. The Commission argues that church members today must leave their religious beliefs at home to engage in humanitarian work. That should never be true for work that they do without the aid of the state, and should only be true to the extent the state is providing them assistance. This is for the protection of religion as much as it is for the state and its citizens. Anytime government money is available, a religion will modify its beliefs to adhere to the values of the government so that it can obtain funds. Public money always brings public control. Furthermore, different religions may claim fairness requires equal funding, even though they do not provide equal services. This certainly will devolve into a quagmire that the state would do well to avoid.

The Commission recommends that the United States support religious education. All the reasons against supporting religious philanthropy apply here, as well as additional reasons. The Commission argues correctly that the state benefits from a religious people. But the Commission errs in thinking the state can be involved in making people religious. In education, it is important what is taught. By supporting religious education, the state will be making decisions about what doctrines can be taught. This most commonly takes the form of accreditation. Many sectarian schools are not accredited for this reason. But it can go further. Will the state support a school whose religion teaches interracial marriage is a sin, or that women should not receive higher education? Will the state support a school that teaches polygamy? What about a school that doesn't teach many things, like the Amish? This puts the state into the business of determining what values are worth supporting and what values are not. Don't think that the decisions will only be required for that which may seem obvious to us today. Today the Commission is recommending that the Ten Commandments be posted in schools and courthouses. Which Ten Commandments? The Ten Commandments of Exodus or Deuteronomy? One is more Jewish focused, one more focused on creation, both requiring the keeping of the seventh day, not the first day? Or maybe the Ten Commandments of a Roman Catholic catechism, which a Protestant will tell you dispenses with the law against graven images and a Catholic priest will tell you merely divides the commandments differently. Or maybe the state can just abbreviate the Ten Commandments, number

them like a Protestant, and hope everybody is happy. That is the solution in Texas. Texas is getting into the business of doctrine. A government that refuses to fund religious doctrine is not thereby endorsing secularism, rather, it is refusing to decide religious questions. That restraint is not hostility to religion; it is the condition under which religious communities remain free and prosperous.

The Commission has one more recommendation that has the potential to expand the breach in the wall of separation. The Commission recommends repealing the Johnson Amendment. The Johnson Amendment prohibits churches from engaging in partisan politics, specifically supporting a candidate for election. It does not prohibit the church from speaking on the issues of the day, or even telling its members how to vote regarding issues, such as abortion and the right to life. What would repealing the Amendment do? Churches would become fabulous non-profit vehicles to engage in political activities. Pastors are known to exhibit tremendous sway over their congregations. It is not hard to imagine the intense pressure that a pastor could feel to deliver his congregation's votes for money. It is not hard to imagine that wealthy and powerful interests might attempt to influence political causes through the churches. Combine that with a patronage system whereby the congregations could receive government grants based upon the Commission's other recommendations, and there is a recipe for disaster. What failing congregation won't make a little compromise for a little financial gain? As scripture says, "the love of money is the root of all evil." 1 Timothy 6:10 KJV. As financial interests invade the churches, invariably the public will be able to smell hypocrisy, and any gains either the church or the state thinks may be had by their union will be lost. Only a dead, lifeless church on government life support will remain.

Today, the Johnson Amendment is already being dismantled by non-enforcement. In *National Religious Broadcasters v. Bessent*, the IRS and several religious plaintiffs proposed a settlement that would have substantially narrowed enforcement of the Johnson Amendment as applied to churches. This settlement was opposed by the Baptist Joint Committee and Americans United, two reputable religious liberty advocacy organizations, not secular humanists. A federal district court found that it lacked juris-

diction on March 31, 2026. The effort to remove the barrier between tax-exempt churches and partisan campaign activity is expected to continue. The Commission should reverse its recommendation for repealing the Johnson Amendment, and instead, recommend its enforcement.

The Commission Correctly Identifies a Peril, but Not the Solution

Commissioner Bishop Robert Barron made an important observation about secularism. He said, "[T]here's a philosophical issue which is secularism proposing itself as some kind of neutral ground, but it's not neutral ground. Secularism as an ideology is a totalizing system. It wants to dominate the whole of life and therefore to exclude religion [from the public square]." Report at 181. Commissioner Kelly Shackelford makes a particularly insightful comment that "the one thing a totalitarian regime will never allow is citizens who hold an allegiance to one higher than the government. So, whenever that type of power of coalescing comes together, the first flashpoint is always going to be religious freedom. And if you lose there, you will lose everything else. So, what we're really dealing with here is the precipice of all our freedoms." Report at 29. This should be particularly sobering when combined with the Commission's observation that "contemporary progressive opposition to religious liberty … seek[s] freedom for its own views but coercion of religious groups whose traditional beliefs conflict with current trends such as transgenderism." Report at 35-36. The Commission is correct in urging the courts to view atheism and atheistic determinism as ideologically and functionally similar to religion. Just as secularism as an ideology is a totalizing system, religion, when granted power, tends toward the same result. Combining church and state together, financially or otherwise, will result in one or the other demanding power and control over the other. History has shown us that the stronger the bond between church and state, the more oppressed the society. The union of church and state is the recipe for the kind of totalitarian regime warned about by Commissioner Shackelford. This is not a new discovery. In a letter to Thomas Jefferson, John Adams wrote, "Checks and Ballances, Jefferson, however you and your Party may have ridiculed them, are our only Security, for the progress of Mind, as well as the Security of Body.—Every Species of these Christians would persecute Deists, as Soon as either

Sect would persecute another, if it had unchecked and unballanced Power. Nay, the Deists would persecute Christians, and Atheists would persecute Deists, with as unrelenting Cruelty, as any Christians would persecute them or one another. Know thyself, human Nature!"[11] The church and state should remain forever apart, neutral towards each other, and neutral towards secularism.

Finally, the country as a whole should not be swayed by arguments made for religion in the military. It is true, the military should be very careful not to support or oppose any religion, but it is also true that the military must be able to provide religious services to its members. The reason they must provide those services is that in the military, especially when deployed, there are no alternative means to obtain religious services. A service member deployed in a foreign land may not be able to go to the local Baptist, Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, or Mormon church, or synagogue or mosque, because they may not exist in the area, nor would it necessarily be safe to go off base to attend one.

Conclusion

Just before and after the Revolution, the disestablishment of the state churches was an important project of our founding fathers. It was not without controversy. The experience of it should not be lost upon us.

Reverend Lyman Beecher was a Congregationalist minister, one of the most influential evangelical preachers of the early 1800s, and a leader in the movement to maintain the established church of Connecticut. Before 1818, he argued for the need of an established church. He said, "So the democracy, as it rose, included nearly all the minor sects, besides the Sabbath-breakers, rum-selling tippling folk, infidels, and ruff-scuff generally, and made a dead set at us of the standing order." He believed that an es-

[11] John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 25 June 1813, Founders Online, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-06-02-0202. [Original source: The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Retirement Series, vol. 6, 11 March to 27 November 1813, ed. J. Jefferson Looney. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, pp. 226–229.]

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tablished church was the only way to counteract these evil influences. In 1818, Connecticut voted to disestablish its church. Beecher described the experience. "For several days I suffered what no tongue can tell for the best thing that ever happened to the state of Connecticut. It cut the churches loose from dependence on state support. It threw them wholly on their own resources and on God." He went on to observe, "They say ministers have lost their influence; the fact is, they have gained. By voluntary efforts, societies, missions, and revivals, they exert a deeper influence than ever they could by queues, and shoe buckles, and cocked hats, and golden-headed canes."[12]

Tocqueville observed on his trip to America, "When I arrived in the United States, it was the country's religious aspect that first captured my attention."[13] By speaking to Americans, he learned religion flourished *because* of the complete separation of church and state, not in spite of it. That is precisely the lesson the Commission would have the nation unlearn, or rather, learn again the hard way.

The Commission is wrong to treat separation of church and state as a modern innovation. In America, the separation of church and state formed the foundation of our dearest freedoms, supported by Baptists, dissenters, and citizens of every faith, vindicated by disestablishment, and praised by foreign observers as religion and freedom thrived together.

As Roger Williams warned, freedom of conscience must be defended: "Having bought truth dear, we must not sell it cheap, nor the least grain of it for the whole world, no not for the saving of souls, though our own most precious…"[14]

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[12] *Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D.D.*, ed. Charles Beecher (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865), 1:344–345.

[13] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Library of America, 2004, p. 340.

[14] Roger Williams, *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience*, ed. Richard Groves (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001), p. 9.

For all of the foregoing reasons, I respectfully ask that the Commission revise its account of American history and withdraw or substantially modify its recommendations. America will do best to forever maintain a complete separation of church and state.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Zirkle, JD
President

From: Kevin Lant <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission - Draft report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:27:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

To: Department of Justice – United states of America
RE: Public Comment on the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission - Draft report
(Report dated 6-26-2026)
Email: [redacted]
Date: July 11, 2026

OVRALL CONCLUSION and COMMENT:

The president's Religious Liberty Commission and its 247-page written draft report is a veiled attempt to make the United States a solely Christian Country, *"one nation under God"*. However, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states: *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"* ['The Establishment Clause'] and is in conjunction with the 'Free Exercise Clause', which protects the right to practice one's religion without government interference. This president, and this government, is attempting undue influence on the nature of religion in the United States. The recommendations submitted by the Department of Justice - Religious Liberty Commission in its 247 report greatly oversteps boundaries set forth in the United States Constitution.
In addition. and unfortunately, the Commission's draft report does not present a balanced or historically accurate assessment of religious liberty in the United States. Instead, it advances a predetermined ideological agenda that repeatedly mischaracterizes the Establishment Clause, minimizes the rights of religious minorities and nonreligious Americans, and recommends sweeping changes that would erode one of the Constitution's most important protections for individual freedom. The entire report is a blatant attempt to support a specific political agenda that targets aiding the far-right religious movement to make America a 'Christian Country'.

The entire report and its recommendations should be rejected!

Why the Commission's Report Was Undertaken

President Donald J. Trump directed the Religious Liberty Commission to *"produce a comprehensive report on the foundations of religious liberty in America, the impact of religious liberty on American society, current threats to domestic religious liberty, strategies to preserve and enhance religious liberty protections for future generations, and programs to increase awareness of and celebrate America's peaceful religious pluralism." "We're bringing back religion in our country, and we're bringing it back quickly and strongly— because for America to be a great nation, we must always be one nation under God.*i" – quote by President Donald J. Trump

Summarized Conclusions of Commissions Report

The Commission's report basically summarized that historians say the founders actually thought of religious liberty — and how secularism evolved to welcome and protect more religious diversity, not just Protestant Christians. Yet this Religious Liberty Commission draft report presents a competing vision of America's tradition of religious liberty. The Commission report argues that the founders wanted as much religion as possible - and makes the case that our understanding of religious freedom has been corrupted by 20th-century European secularists and radical progressives aiming to eliminate religion from public life.

The Commission report outlines numerous legal and policy changes rooted in an alternative history that government should be welcoming religion into daily public life, not concerned with limiting or restricting it, even if it's in the name of religious pluralism. To deny this is to attack religious liberty.

Comments Regarding the Commission's Report

The commission's report states that the constitutional separation between religion and government is somehow both wrong and a hostile act to religion. When in fact, quite the opposite is true. **The Establishment Clause protects religious liberty by ensuring that the government neither favors nor disfavors religion**. This principle has been a safeguard to both believers and nonbelievers throughout our nation's history and has HELPED TO RESULT in one of the most religiously diverse societies in the world.

NOTE: The Establishment Clause is part of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which states: *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" It* works alongside the Free Exercise Clause, which protects the right to practice one's religion without government interference.

In addition, the Commission's report repeatedly dismisses the longstanding understanding of the Establishment Clause while failing to acknowledge the overwhelming historical evidence that the Framers intentionally supported a broad separation between religion and the government. James Madison warned that government involvement in religion corrupts both institutions. Thomas Jefferson described the First Amendment as building a "wall of separation between church and state." The constitutional commitment to government neutrality toward religion is firmly rooted in our nation's founding principles.

The United States WAS NOT FOUNDED as a Christian Nation.

The U.S. Constitution does not mention religion, and the First Amendment prohibits establishment of religion. Also in the 1797 'Treaty of Tripoli - article 11' it definitively stipulates that the United States is not founded or is principally a Christian Nation.
"As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion, as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religious or tranquility of Mussulmen, and as the said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mehemetan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries"
It is recognized that the "not a Christian nation" argument in Article 11 of the Treaty of Tripoli, is a 1797 diplomatic statement, and is not a constitutional or legal definition of the U.S. government's religious character.

Regarding Report Testimonials

The Commission also heard numerous testimonials from individuals that alluded to recent threats to religious beliefs and believers. The Commission's report stipulates that it examined through numerous hearings activities and events where religious liberty has been under threat in recent years. No one should be "abused" for what they believe. However, it appears that information was collected from only one, narrowly focused group
The report relies heavily on testimony from witnesses representing just one side of deeply contested constitutional questions while giving comparatively little attention to scholars, historians, civil rights advocates, religious minorities, or organizations dedicated to preserving governmental neutrality toward religion. As a result, the report **cannot claim to be an objective examination of religious liberty** but only an advocacy document supporting a specific political and theological movement. Unfortunately, the Commission's draft report does not present a balanced or historically accurate assessment of religious liberty in the United States.

In addition, the commission's makeup—featuring prominent right-wing figures, evangelicals, and some Catholic leaders is definitely bias in one particular direction. The commission is ideologically **skewed toward Christian nationalism** and that its recommendations outline in the 247-page report undermines pluralism and other civil rights in the United States.

From: Ben Cheever <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom and separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:29:25 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,

I respectfully submit this public comment out of deep concern for the future of religious liberty in the United States. I urge the Commission to reject any recommendation directed at the Department of Justice or any other branch of government that would weaken the historic constitutional principle of keeping religion and government institutionally separate, as well as any proposal that encourages greater unity between the two.

America's greatest contribution to the cause of religious liberty has not been the state's endorsement of religion, but the protection of every person's God-given right to worship according to conscience without government interference. This principle has allowed religious communities of every tradition to flourish in freedom while preserving civil peace.

As a Bible-believing seventh-day Sabbath keeper, I write from the perspective of a religious minority whose spiritual ancestors experienced firsthand the dangers that arise when government aligns itself with the religious majority. During America's colonial period, Baptists, Quakers, Jews, seventh-day Sabbath keepers, and many other religious minorities endured discrimination, imprisonment, fines, and civil persecution because certain established churches enjoyed the support of the state. These injustices were among the very reasons the Founders rejected religious establishments and adopted the First Amendment.

The experience of Seventh-day Adventists provides another historical warning. During the late nineteenth century, Adventists who faithfully observed God's seventh-day Sabbath were prosecuted under Sunday laws that were imposed, once again, by the religious Christian majority. Some of our fellow believers were fined, imprisoned, and even forced into chain gangs because they chose to honor Saturday as the biblical Sabbath rather than conform to popular Blue Law Sunday observances. Their only offense was obeying the dictates of conscience and remaining faithful to their religious convictions. Their experience stands as a warning that whenever civil authority is used to enforce religious beliefs or practices, freedom of conscience is inevitably endangered, and religious minorities are often the first to endure discrimination and persecution.

The medieval Inquisition demonstrated how religious institutions armed with civil authority suppressed dissent through torture, punishment, and even death. Various forms of religious extremism, including movements that have justified violence in the name of Islam, have shown how state-backed religious ideology can deny liberty of conscience. Likewise, communist regimes that officially embraced atheism illustrate the opposite side of the same error: when government suppresses religion altogether, believers are again persecuted. Though these different oppressive systems differed in ideology, they shared one common characteristic—the concentration of civil power over matters of conscience.

The strength of the American constitutional system is that it avoids these extremes. Government was never commissioned to direct the spiritual lives of the people. The mission of the state is to preserve order, protect individual rights, and secure equal treatment under the law. The mission of the church is altogether different: to preach the gospel, emphasize truth and love through persuasion, not coercion, and call people to a voluntary faith, as Jesus did. These two institutions are strongest and remain uncorrupted when each remains within its proper sphere.

Our nation has become home to a diverse group of churches, synagogues, mosques, and religious communities because government has generally refrained from controlling or establishing religion. This constitutional heritage has protected both the majority and the minority alike. I therefore respectfully urge the Commission to recommend policies that reinforce—not diminish—the constitutional barriers separating ecclesiastical authority from civil government. Religious liberty is best preserved when government neither advances nor inhibits religion but instead protects the equal rights of all people to follow their own conscience.

The United States must remain a nation where every church is free to proclaim its beliefs without governmental control and where every citizen is free to worship—or not to worship—without governmental pressure. History has already taught us the consequences of abandoning this principle. We should not repeat mistakes that countless generations have paid dearly to overcome. For if we do, we would once again be fanning the flames of intolerance, religious bigotry, and injustice.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Cheever, PT, DPT

From: Kathy Sabelino <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Against Church joined with State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:29:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hello,

America is a free nation and we are told that we have freedom of speech, therefore, I state that I am TOTALLY against putting church and state together! I am for the separation of them.

I strongly believe that joining these two things will be catastrophic!

Sincerely yours,
Kathleen Sabelino

[redacted]

Sent from my iPad

From: "P. Hammond" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Utmost importance of separating church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:30:02 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing because our nation continues to disregard and even nullify rights we have had and fought for since the inception of the country . I am writing specifically to voice my GREAT concern over the voices that are coming forth to make their voice heard over every one else . In every country now and over all time , when certain people believe they have the right to tell others what to believe and then force the issue , persecution ALWAYS follows.
It is happening now all over the world ; Africa, India, Indonesia, all over the Muslim and radical Hindu countries.
I am hoping my voice is heard and the absolute separation of a religious (or not) belief system is completely separated from government . Please ensure our freedom to worship when / how or not worship continues to be of the gravest protection in these times of dissoving rights .
Sincerely
Pennie Hammond
[redacted]

From: renee dean <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:32:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments.

Please implement them.

Renee White

From: Margaret Lloyd <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:34:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

To President Religious Liberty Commission:
I oppose the Commission'es Report.I am deeply concerned that you are forgetting our founders did not want religious teaching of any type in our public schools. Public instruction should remain neutral and inclusive. Your suggestions are contrary to what I learned in school. Religious should be taught by the family and church and not public institutions.
Respectfully submitted
Margaret Lloyd
Sent from my iPad

From: Abells Wife <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:37:15 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Religious_Liberty_Letter.pdf

To whom it may concern:
Please see attached letter in response to the Religious Liberty Draft Report. Thank you.

See Jesus, not me,
Sarah

Sent from my iPhone

July 12, 2026

Via Electronic Mail to [redacted]

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 5706
Washington, DC 20530

Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

To the Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Dr. Carson, and the members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am an American citizen, who values the freedoms of America. My husband has served in the Armed Forces to defend these freedoms and our children have experienced the sacrifices a military family makes to ensure the freedoms Americans hold dear.

I value our unalienable rights given by God and expressed in our founding documents. I have diligently taught our children the importance of what the founders of America fought for and how precious these freedoms are. My husband and I searched for a history curriculum which would accurately reflect our nation's history and values. The pages of history tell of the oppression of the past, of a time when the Bible was not in the language of the common man nor could the common man possess a copy. John Wycliffe's work was condemned by the Roman church and William Tyndale was put to death by the Roman Catholic church.[1] Queen Elizabeth I increased religious freedom for the Church of England, but those who were labeled dissenters

[1] Michael R. Lowman, *United States History: Heritage of Freedom*, 4th ed. (Pensacola, FL: Pensacola Christian College, Inc., 2020), 16.

were often persecuted. The two largest dissenters were Catholics and Puritans, with some Puritans labeled Separatists. King James I and King Charles I claimed a divine right of kings, "the theory that kings have the right to rule absolutely and without criticism because they are chosen by God."[2] James I allowed severe persecution of the Separatists. A group of Separatists fled to Holland which allowed people toiworship freely. The Separatists stayed eleven years and were respected by the Dutch; yet the Separatists felt theineed for space to be Englishmen and to spread the Gospel.[3] These desires are remembered every November, as Americans continue the tradition of thanksgiving begun by the Pilgrims in the 1600's. Thomas Hooker, a pioneer of Connecticut, and Roger Williams continued to lead the colonies toward freedom. RogeriWilliams and Anne Hutchinson were banished from Massachusetts for disagreement over religion. "Williams insisted that civil government should not interfere in religious affairs and that churches should never use civil force to promote religion."[4] Rhode Island was a refuge for those who experienced religious oppression. Rhode Island has proved, through the test of time, Biblical Christianity can thrive without government assistance. Many settlers who came to America were strongly motivated by freedom: religious, political, and economic; desirous of escape from oppression by either the church or government (state) fostering unity through diversity.[5] Much more could be recounted as to the history which has shaped the freedoms

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[2] Ibid., 17.

[3] William Bradford, *Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation: 1606-1646*, ed. William T. Davis (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908).

[4] Michael R. Lowman, *United States History: Heritage of Freedom*, 4th ed. (Pensacola, FL: Pensacola Christian College, Inc., 2020), 29.

[5] Ibid., 15-36.

Americans hold dear; but for brevity's sake, does God's Holy Word support the separation of church and state?

The Word of God supports the ideology of separation of church and state. When God established the Israelite nation, He chose the tribe of Levi to serve as priests in the tabernacle.[6] Many years later, when Israel desires to be like the nations around them and have a king, God establishes the line of kings from the tribes of Benjamin and then Judah.[7] This signals a separation between the religious leaders and the leadership of the king. The Word of God also supports freedom of conscience and freedom to choose.[8]

My request is for this committee to hold fast to the freedoms our Founding Fathers and those who risked everything to travel to America in search of freedom have fought for: freedom from oppression, freedom of church and state, freedom to exercise humanity's unalienable rights. Please do not remove the wall and build a bridge. History portrays in grim details where the bridge will lead.

Sincerely,

Sarah Abell

Sarah Abell, BSN

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[6] Exo. 28:1; Num. 3:5-13, 8:5-22, King James Version.

[7] 1 Sam. 8:19-20; 9:1; 2 Sam. 5:2, 12.

[8] Phil. 2:12, Gen. 2:16-17, 1 Sam. 8:6-10, Josh. 24:14-15, Isa. 1:18.

From: Jasmine156i<[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberties
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:38:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

To: U. S. Department of Justice

Reference: Religious Liberty Commission

I believe strongly that our Forefathers knew that the future would hold such religious persecution, and that they were such Godly men, preserving our religious freedoms. Our Constitution of the United States, and our Bill of Rights, were based on religion! The Words of God, our creator, spoke through these great men, so that we may live in a great country, with freedom of expression, freedom to worship the Lord, no matter what religion We The People choose! This country needs to have the Bible given to each student and taught by the ways of the Lord. They need to learn what God graced this country. I personally feel that Pastors and Priests need to be involved in any interference from our government, that involve limiting religious freedoms!

Jasmine Rigas

Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS

From: Tina Santore <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Tina Santore
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:39:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was deeply concerned to learn that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, that gets the history exactly backwards — and as a person of faith, I find the proposal profoundly troubling.

That wall wasn't erected by secularists trying to weaken religion. It was built by people of faith who understood that the church must be protected from government influence. A bridge doesn't safeguard the church; it invites government money, political pressure, and partisan expectations to flow straight in. Before long, churches end up competing for grants, courting political favor, and answering to elected officials instead of to God.

History shows clearly what happens when church and state intertwine, and the results are harmful to both.

Please do not build that bridge. Preserve the wall. It protects the church far more than it restrains it.

Sincerely,
Tina Santore
McDonald, TN

From: V <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I agree with Pillar of Faith.
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:39:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

Please keep SEPARATION of CHURCH and STATE! We don't need the government telling us when we can go to CHURCH. Thank you, Veronica R.

Sent from Proton Mail for Android.

From: Timothy Carleton <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Timothy L Carleton
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:39:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing as a US Citizen and a person of Faith, to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would be detrimental to the separation of Church and State.

The use of Government money should not be used for religious activities. When churches take government money, corruption is likely to occur. In addition, churches would need to compete for funding and would likely be required to answer to politicians instead of answering to God.

Separation of church and state is a constitutional requirement and people of faith built it to protect their faith. The reason religion has remained strong in America is the direct result of the freedoms that come with keeping this separation. Please keep it that way!

Sincerely,

Timothy L Carleton
Washington, Utah

From: Daniel Hill <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Report by the Religious Liberty Commission - a concerned citizen
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:40:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear friends at the RLC and the DOJ,

As a lawful and law-abiding citizen and conservative of the United States of America I have some serious concerns about the comments made by Committee Chair Dan Patrick regarding separation of church and state as detailed in the letter below. If these comments represent the views of the committee as a whole then I find this to be a grave oversight of the numerous violations of the religious liberty of many people by unions of church and state through the last two centuries as detailed in the letter below.

In regards to Dan Patrick's comment that separation of church and state was weaponized by the left against those exercising their religious beliefs, I would like to make the following observation: ***Atheism and non-belief is also a religious status regarded by the constitution, and as such atheism and liberalism also have no place to force their beliefs on anyone with the power of the state. This should be regarded as religious oppression by the religion of non-believers wielding the power of the state, and separation of church and state protects against oppression of this nature just as surely as it also protects against oppression by any religion of believers.*** The Establishment Clause also applies to atheism and non-belief and I believe this is where things went wrong in the cases of those citing separation of church and state as the cause of their persecution.

The First Amendment to our Bill of Rights says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." This amendment clearly makes a separation between church and state and has been upheld by the US Supreme Court to date. ***This amendment includes the religion of atheism.***

It is my firm belief that the principle of separation of church and state is what has made America so great since 1776. I believe that God placed his hand over this country since its inception precisely because this country respected the religious beliefs and rights of its citizens and refused to trample on the same. I believe you will see the letter below clearly outlines how union between church and state has led to religious persecution over the centuries. To believe that this would be different today would be irresponsible and unreasonable and an affront to the immense labor and sacrifices of our Founding Fathers to protect our God given rights.

I add my name to others submitting the letter below in genuine concern for the future of our great country.

Yours truly,

Daniel Hill

Dear Friends at the Religious Liberty Commission (RLC) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ):

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While we are mindful of the Committee's labors, which resulted in the 12 recommendations released June 26, certain of which we agree with, we write to voice our concerns and objections to the Committee's first and ninth recommendations [1] and its obviously insufficient consideration of the warnings of the Founding Fathers of the dangers of a union of church and state or the many lessons of history regarding same.

The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice "issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state." [2] At the formal release of the Committee's recommendations on the same day, Committee Chair Dan Patrick publicly stated that "the separation of church and state is not in the constitution" and that the phrase "has no constitutional basis." [3]

As citizens and students of history, and as Christians, we are alarmed lest the flawed and unconstitutional view of the Chair of the Committee of the so-called "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" prove influential or worse, instructive, to the Department of Justice. If the Committee's opinion of the so-called "proper understanding" of the Establishment Clause is the same as that of its Chair, it is apparent that its understanding is not proper, but rather improper.

Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history." According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain.
Certainly, the Founding Fathers were all aware of the persecution of the Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

In Europe, the persecution of the martyrs is well documented. Today we take the Bible for granted but forget that William Tyndale was executed for translating the Bible into the English language, not by atheists but by religious bigots. It was a union of church and state that suppressed speech and the freedom of the press in England. It was a union of church and state that prohibited the work of translation of the Bible, which changed the world. It was a union of church and state that necessitated his flight to Europe. It was a union of church and state that killed him.

We respectfully ask that the Department of Justice, in considering the issue of public guidance of the separation of church and state, consider the history of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania and early Founding Father, who was repeatedly jailed for his religious faith in England. The Pennsylvania Colony became a haven, not from atheist persecutors but from religious persecutors who did not believe in the separation of church and state. The same is true of Roger Williams, founder of the colony of Rhode

Island, who was ordered arrested for declaring that the civil magistrate cannot enforce the first table of the Decalogue. We ask that the Committee take into account the brutal public whipping of President Abraham Lincoln's five-time great-grandfather, Obadiah Holmes, in the Massachusetts colony, for the "crime" of religious dissent. Obadiah Holmes was not whipped by atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

We are concerned that the Committee neglected to take into account the impact of the separation of church and state on the other rights codified in the First Amendment. Free speech and freedom of the press, for example, owe their flourishing in the modern world in large part to the separation of church and state in America. Prior to the protections in the First Amendment, the Roman Catholic Church for centuries maintained a list of banned books called the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The books were subject to confiscation, and the possession of them resulted in the punishment of the owner.

Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, David Hume and Edward Gibbon, and many others, all at the behest of the Roman Papacy, which is itself a union of church and state. Free speech in the Western world is the legacy of those who risked the wrath of a unified church and state, often at the cost of their lives. We would also ask that the Department of Justice consider the repeated modern calls from the papal power today for the censorship of the internet and the suppression of free speech, contrary to the First Amendment. [4] We have no doubt that the censorship of Galileo, Kepler, Milton, and others was prosecuted under the justification of the censorship of misinformation, also.

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings. Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. We are concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

Therefore, we respectfully ask, what proper guidance can the Department of Justice hope to give to the public on the "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" if it is directed in its object by a Committee and a Committee Chair, who has neglected to more fully analyze the reasons for the separation of church and state, or the reasons why the United States codified the disestablishment of church and state in the First Amendment in the first instance?

The reference to the wall of separation between church and state is not only mentioned by President Thomas Jefferson in the letter to the Danbury Baptists, which, of course, it is. [6] What is often left out of the narrative is that Jefferson said that he personally believed that the principle of the separation of church and state is codified in the Constitution. Therein, Jefferson wrote: "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State." [7]

James Madison wrote, "It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of Citizens and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution. The free men of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much soon to forget it." [8]

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." [9] Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate in the American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

In his anonymous treatise published in the Boston Gazette, John Adams, later the second President of the United States, wrote that canon law was a tyrannical form of government, as was feudal law, but that the worst of all forms of governments was a union of the two. [11] And it was Madison who stated that, "In the Papal System, Government and Religion are in a manner consolidated, & that is found to be the worst of Governments."

We respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee and that it adopt recommendation 1 of the Committee that it convene a public hearing, with written and oral submissions from the public, to more comprehensively study the question of the separation of church and state in history, and in American history in particular, a study which we would enthusiastically support.

I remain, Yours truly,

Daniel Hill

[1] https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/president-trumps-religious-liberty-commission-delivers-historic-report-draft
[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].
[3] https://www.chron.com/politics/article/dan-patrick-church-state-constitution-viral-22323383.php
[4] https://reclaimthenet.org/pope-francis-calls-on-social-media-platforms-to-censor-more-misinformation;
[5] https://www.youtube.com/watch?vepAUkMwlWYB8; https://www.youtube.com/watch?veCMBiPIfx-

UA

[6] https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html

[7] https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html – Jefferson here is clearly referring to Congress. That Congress is prohibited by the Constitution from making a union of church and state.

[8] James Madison, Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments

[9] Matthew 22:21

[10] James Madison, Letter to Robert Walsh, March 2, 1819.

[11] John Adams, Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law, 1765.

https://www.masshist.org/publications/adams-papers/index.php/view/PJA01dg2

From: kd7akvi[redacted]
To: "RLC (OASG)" [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:40:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty

U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 5706
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing as an American citizen and a Christian who values religious liberty very highly.

I appreciate the Commission's desire to protect the free exercise of religion. However, I am deeply concerned by recommendations that appear to weaken the historic separation of church and state. Throughout history, whenever government becomes involved in promoting or favoring religion, both government and religion ultimately suffer.

My faith teaches me that genuine worship must always be a matter of conscience and free choice. Religious belief cannot be produced by government support, political influence, or legal preference. It must come from conviction.

The freedom that protects my faith today is the same freedom that protects my neighbor's right to believe differently tomorrow. America's commitment to protecting the rights of all people—including those with different religious beliefs or no religious beliefs—has been one of our nation's greatest strengths. I respectfully ask the Commission to preserve that principle and to avoid recommendations that would blur the line between church and state or give special governmental preference to any particular religious viewpoint.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Respectfully,

Dale A. Cox

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From: Connie Norton <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Connie Norton
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:40:51 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.

When churches take government money or step into partisan politics, the corruption of politics comes in with it. Churches end up competing for funding and answering to politicians instead of to God — and that's bad for the church and the country alike. Separation isn't a secular idea; people of faith built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here. Please keep church and state separate. That's how we keep both of them free.

Sincerely,
Connie Norton
Bedford, Iowa

From: Richard Williams <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – The Public Square and The Private Sector
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:41:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

The "free association" guarantee and “ministerial exception" that are grounded in the First Amendment should be distinguished from civil law in the Commission's Report. I.e., the U.S. Supreme Court has distinguished areas in the exercise of religion that are recognized as being maintained by a religion while stating there are areas where the government's jurisdiction is exclusive.

My comment is that, giving examples as guidance, religious establishment laws such as canon law and sharia law, should be specifically distinguished from civil and criminal laws in the clarification of the extent of faith-based instituitons' freedom to operate in accordance with their religious beliefs.

Also, I may have missed this, but is there a definition in the Report of what qualifies under the First Amendment as "legitimate religion." When the First Amendment was written, there was a consensus on the meaning of religion, albeit not on the separate churches. I would submit that not one of the country's founders, including none who adopted the First Amendment, would have considered atheism. satinism, or communism to be "religion" under the amendment.

From: VINCENT HUNTER <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:41:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with pillar of freedom comments. Please implement them and keep religion and government separate. Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: DelWayne Greenlaw <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] The separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:42:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them. Thank you!

Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS

From: Pat Jonesi <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission 🗽 Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:42:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am a Christian. I am thankful for the United States following the counsel of Christ in separating church and state when Jesus said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Matthew 22:21.
Separation of Church and State, Freedom of Individual Conscience, is truly what has made America great!!
The Religious Liberty Commission itself was off to a wrong start from the beginning. Was there not anyone who understood what Religios Liberty means on the panel that chose the delegates? It means freedom for all religions. You had Catholics on the panel who are members of a church/state system!--already totally biased. Other than one Jewish man, you had no representatives from other religions. The leader of the panel, Mr. Patrick, was already a known Christian Nationalist in Texas who got the shortened Ten Commandments to be posted in the schools, while outlawing the full biblical version to be posted.
The DOJ should get an F for setting up this Commission and should start over and do it right.
I am against the voucher system, because most of the money will go to the Roman Catholic Church Schools, that represent a foreign church/state system, whose Constitution is opposed to the U.S Constitution.
I would like Johnson ammendment to be fully restored and enforced, which will keep the worship services of the churches from being desecrated and turned into political rallies.
Government money should not go to any religious health or educational system.
The US was the first country in the history of the modern world to separate religion from the state. Why? Because they learned from history how millions were persecuted during the "Dark Ages" when the Roman church controlled the state.
During the American colonial period, Protestant state governments followed the same pattern and thousands more were persecuted. Praise God for Roger Williams and the first truly free state of Rhode Island!! Thank God for Thomas Jefferson and James Madison who won the same battle--separation of the state from all religions, including Christianity.
A truly Christian church should be married to Christ as her husband, for support and protection. When a Christian Church looses the power of Jesus Christ and the gospel, it turns to the power of the state to enforce its doctrines. This connection destroys the church morally and is called spiritual fornication in the Bible.
Please learn from history so that you won't repeat it.
Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,
Patrick Jones
Elyria, Ohio.

Sent from my Galaxy

From: Suzy Meyer <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:47:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

After reading your report, I have a few concerns, but appreciate the work that has gone into it and I think with good intentions and some things I believe protect our religious freedoms, but others seem problematic to me. Freedom of religion without state interference is paramount, as we know from history that when some religions come into power over others (i.e, the majority of Supreme Court are now all Catholics) they can easily use the state to enforce restrictions on others. I do believe the state has a roll of "protecting" religious freedoms, especially the minorities and even individuals freedoms of conscience. This "protecting" roll" of guarding these precious constitutional freedoms "is the wall" that separates church from state.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Jacob Wayd <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:47:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the work you have done in the commission. I appreciate your understanding of the unwarranted favor given to secular athiesm over those of faith.

However, as a strong conservative Christian I am very concerned with the efforts to bridge to wall between church and state.

Above all countries, the United States of America has prospered under the current protections afforded by the establishment clause in the constitution and the first amendment.

These protections were inspired by men of faith who understood that anytime government became involved in religion, religious persecution followed.

Just last week a group of us were at the state fair in the mall giving out religious literature when the capitol police told us we had to leave because we followed "a different Jesus."

Also, we have seen the influence the previous administration's party had over the vast majority of the media. If the Johnson Amendment is reversed it would give license to manipulate churches to support a political party at a level not seen before.

Please reconsider your recommendations and keep the state out of religion.

Sincerely,

James Wayd

From: Darrell Shulli<[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bridge between church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:48:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I am concerned with this bridging church and state and am opposed to it as the wall was set up to prevent what happened in Europe, the reason Christians came to America in the first place. So that the government had no control over the church.
Please keep the wall up and don't build a bridge. The church needs the protection of the wall.

Sincerely,
Darrell G Shull

Auburn, WA

From: Wesley Smith <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation between Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:50:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

(1Kings 18:21, AV)

"21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word. {opinions: or, thoughts}"

We must remember,
One Nation
UNDER GOD!

Sent from my iPhone

From: Marcol Greenlaw <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Seperation of Church & State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:52:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

Greetings DOJ,

RE: Disagree with Commission Report

After I have done some research on what the Trump administration is recommending in its recent commission report, it will weaken and dismantle the separation of church and state.
I find it necessary to speak out against it in principle.
I do agree with Pillar of Freedoms comments on the matter of separation of church and state and suggest that they be implemented.
Liberty of conscience is essential to religious freedom in America.
The Johnson Amendment should not be repealed.
I object to funding of religious non-profit activities.
I object to government funding for religious education, religious clubs on public campuses.
I object to special treatment given to Jewish people and the state of Israel.
The US government must maintain neutrality in relationship to Christian religion.

I have experienced religious persecution in America at various times from the state of CA and in private businesses for religious reasons / beliefs. When a person lives a life according to Biblical teachings he should be free of persecution from the state of CA and the US government. God's rules superseed governmental laws.
Many of man's laws are in harmony with Biblical teachings, but those that are not; should not be enforced upon any christian person.

Thanks for your consideration.
The USA is a great country of which I am pleased to be a citizen of.

Regards,
Marcol Greenlaw

From: Laurie Timmer <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-Draft Report of the Religious Liberty Commission-Laurie Timmer
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:54:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing in opposition to the idea of building bridges between government and religions put forth by this commission. First of all, I believe that it violates long-established conventions and court- tested interpretations of the Establishment Clause.
Additionally, as a hospice chaplain, I deeply respect and honor the wide spectrum of views that are considered religious and not-religious. I do not believe the government should begin to pick and choose which ones or how to connect itself with any of them. Bridges are infrastructure. The state/government has no business establishing infrastructure with faith or religion.
As a person who has studied plenty of religious history and history in general, as well as current world situations, it is rife with horrific atrocities and civil rights denial that develop when government and religion join forces. We also see in history and current world situations, that even between different factions of broad religious systems, how the quest for power and domination can lead to oppression or persons being killed for their religious or non-religious views.
It is my firm belief that the power of government needs to stay "unbridgede" in the United States to protect the freedom and the liberty of its citizens and guests in our country.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Douglas Garciai[redacted]
To: "RLC (OASG)" [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Douglas Garcia
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:55:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a private citizen to ask you to PLEASE reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state. Especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.
Historically things wrong when churches take government money or step into politics. We already have so much corruption in politics we don't need to mix religion into it!

Separation isn't a secular idea; people of faith built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here. I urgently ask, please keep church and state separate. That's how we keep both of them free.

Sincerely,

Douglas Garcia
Ooltewah, TN

From: justin palmer <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Justin Montel Palmer
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:56:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

Mark 12:17 KJV And **Jesus** answering said unto them, **Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.**

I am writing to express my strong support for the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state. Although the constitution does not directly use the wording "separation of church and state", it is clear that the pinciple is still there. This principle is not hostile to religion; rather, it is one of the greatest protections ever established for both religion and civil government. It safeguards every person's freedom of conscience by preventing government from controlling religion and preventing religion from controlling government.
The First Amendment begins by declaring that "**Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."** These two protections work together. **The government must neither establish nor favor religion, while at the same time protecting every individual's right to worship—or not worship—according to conscience.**

The Fourteenth Amendment extends these constitutional protections by requiring states to respect the liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and to provide equal protection under the law. **As a result, no citizen or religious group should receive special privileges or suffer disadvantages because of their religious beliefs or lack of belief**. The government should remain impartial and nuetral toward all religions and toward those who profess no religion.
This understanding was powerfully defended by Alonzo T. Jones during his opposition to the Blair Sunday Rest Bill in the late nineteenth century. Jones argued that civil government has authority only over civil matters, while matters of religion belong solely to the individual conscience and to God. He warned that **even well-intentioned religious legislation ultimately threatens liberty because once government is given authority over religious matters, it inevitably decides which religious practices deserve recognition or support, thus undermining someone elses religious beliefs**. We must put ourselves in other peoples shoes and treat others how we would want to be treated.

Here are some quotes from Alonzo T. Jones when fighting against the Blair Bill that I also take as my own sentiments on the acceptance and support of the principle of the seperation of church and state :

"The state has no right to be a religious partisan. It has no right to say that this religion is better than that, or that religion is better than none. **The state is civil, not moral; and its duties pertain solely to civil things**."

"We are Seventh-day Adventists; but if this bill were in favor of enforcing the observance of the seventh day as the Lord's day, we would oppose it just as much as we oppose it as it is now, **for the reason that civil government has nothing to do with what we owe to God, or whether we owe anything or not, or whether we pay it or not**."

"**No man can allow any legislation in behalf of the religion, or the religious observances, in which he himself believes, without forfeiting his own religious freedom**."

History repeatedly demonstrates that when church and state unite, freedom of conscience is weakened for a wide range of individuals.
For these reasons, **I respectfully object to the use of taxpayer funds to support religious nonprofit activities**. **Citizens of many different faiths—and those of no faith—should not be compelled to finance religious work with which they may disagree**. Religious organizations should remain free to carry out their missions through the voluntary support of their members rather than through government funding.
I also object to **public funding** or **special governmental support for religious education and religious clubs on public school and university campuses beyond what is equally available to all organizations**. **Public educational institutions should remain neutral, ensuring that no religion receives preferential treatment through the use of public resources**.
I further oppose any effort to repeal the Johnson Amendment. Churches and religious organizations should remain free to teach moral principles and address public issues, but they should not become instruments of partisan political campaigns. Repealing this protection would blur the line between religion and politics, invite political influence into houses of worship, and ultimately weaken both religious liberty and public confidence in religious institutions.
Likewise, I encourage the full and impartial enforcement of the Johnson Amendment. If the law exists to preserve the independence of religious organizations from partisan political activity, it should be applied consistently and fairly to all organizations without favoritism or selective enforcement.

Finally, I respectfully ask that our government maintain complete neutrality in its relationship with every religion, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and every other faith, as well as toward those with no religious affiliation. This principle also extends to the government's treatment of the State of Israel and every other nation. Foreign policy should be based upon constitutional principles, justice, national interests, and equal treatment under the law—not upon religious preference or theological considerations. **Government neutrality protects both religious liberty and equal citizenship**.
The separation of church and state is not a barrier against religion; it is a safeguard for religion. **It preserves voluntary faith, protects minority beliefs, prevents governmental interference in matters of conscience, and ensures that no religious body gains civil power over another.** It is one of the greatest blessings secured by our Constitution and should be carefully preserved for future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to leave my comment upon this subject matter I hope you will continue to uphold these constitutional principles and advocate for a government that neither establishes religion nor interferes with its free exercise, but instead protects the equal rights and liberties of every citizen.
Respectfully,

[Justin Montel Palmer]

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:56:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to express my strong support for the principle of separation between church and state. While the U.S. Constitution does not use those exact words, the First Amendment's Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause clearly imply this important protection.

I believe deeply that when church and state become united, it has historically led to persecution of those who hold differing beliefs. True religious liberty thrives when government remains neutral and does not favor or establish any religion. This separation protects the freedom of conscience for all Americans—believers and non-believers alike—and has been a cornerstone of our nation's success.

I urge the Commission to uphold and defend this foundational American principle as you carry out your important work on religious liberty.
Thank you for your time and service. I appreciate your consideration of this perspective.

Sincerely,
M. L. Sloat

Sent from my iPhone

From: Kelly Robinson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:57:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

I echo the words of Alex Bowen, of Heritage and Hope Ministries:

The genius of the American experiment is that it protects the conscience of every person equally.

The preservation of religious liberty depends upon maintaining the proper boundaries between civil authority and matters of conscience.

I urge you to embrace these truths, in your decision making.

From: Rachel Clifford <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – [Separation of Church and State] – [R. Clifford]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:57:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
As a private/religious school educator, I have never been in favor of using government monies to sustain our institutions or utilized to fund religious clubs in public institutions.

Faith and religion is a personal choice and the government should take a neutral stance to protect the freedoms outlined in the first amendment of our constitution.

Historically we see how the uniting of church and state leads to oppression.
Faith in God or a choice of not to believe are two separate "faiths" of choice.

Please, keep church and state completely separate and respect one of the greatest aspects of our nation.
FREEDOM of religious beliefs.

For those God fearing, Bible discerning men in leadership, please heed the pleas coming in from the people. God DOES NOT force. His greatest gifts were granting us "freedom" to choose, providing a redemptive sacrifice as a sinless lamb, and granting us the power to overcome our selfish controlling natures to become servants to mankind.

Sincerely,

Rachel
Maryville, TN

From: Marilee Fijalka-Carr <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION - MARILEE FIJALKA-CARR
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:02:29 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: To_the_Religious_Liberty_Commission.docx

Please refer to the attachment below.

July 12th, 2026

Via Electronic Mail to [redacted]

Religious Liberty Commission
U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Associate Attorney General
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Room 5706
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Carson, and members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments on the actions and draft report of the Religious Liberty Commission. I have several concerns.

I start with the primary venue chosen for the hearings, which was the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC. Of the seven hearings, six were held in this location. The Bible is the Christian Holy Book. There are other sacred texts, such as the Torah and the Quoron, among others. To me, this choice alone is not a neutral one and indicates a bias towards Christianity. The fifth hearing's title was Anti-Semitism and Religious Liberty; Religious Liberty in the Private Sector. Even this one was held at the Museum of the Bible, which in my opinion was tone deaf and disrespectful to Judaism. Surely venue space could have been found at a university such as Yeshiva University, or ones with a substantial Jewish student body, such as Brandeis or Tulane. The fourth hearing was the lone one to be held elsewhere, at Old Parkland in Dallas, Texas. Old Parkland is owned by Crow Holdings and bases its headquarters there. Harlan Crow, a well-known supporter of conservative causes, is the former CEO and now chairman of the board for Crow Holdings. Again, hardly a neutral venue.

Next I move to the commission membership. There was no advertised process for selection of the members. They were directly appointed by President Trump. Christianity is heavily represented by the commission and advisory board members, and Judeo-Christian viewpoints entirely. Of 15 commission members, all are Christians except for one rabbi. Of the specific Advisory Board of Religious Leaders, four of the eleven members are rabbis and the other seven are Christians. There were no leaders of any other major faith tradition such as Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism on this advisory board.

Religious affiliation of the members of the Advisory Board of Legal Experts is not readily apparent, other than Alyza Lewin (identified as the former president of the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists) and Kristen Waggoner (identified as CEO, president and general counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom). Of the Advisory Board of Lay Leaders, six of the seven members are identified as Christian. One member is identified as adhering to Islam. This person is the lone representative any other faith than Christianity or Judaism throughout the commission and advisory boards.

The commission chair, Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, has openly stated, "There is no separation of church and state. It was not in the Constitution." This is misleading at best and factually false. The only way this statement applies would be as the Constitution existed prior to the Bill of Rights. The First Amendment leads the Bill of Rights, which were all amendments to the Constitution. Once an amendment is formally approved, it becomes a permanent part of that law.

The commission director, Mary Margaret Bush, is identified as having "previously served as the Vice President and Executive Director of a national religious liberty nonprofit organization". This organization is easily identified as the Napa Legal Institute, which shows multiple references to the Catholic faith.

This is far from an unbiased or diverse group of commission members, advisory boards and director.

I now reference the "12 Opportunities to Strengthen Religious Liberty for All Americans"

1. Instruct the Department of Justice to issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state.

> From www.justice.gov: "The mission of the Department of Justice is to uphold the rule of law, to keep our country safe, and to protect civil rights." Furthermore, the first stated value is "Independence and Impartiality. We work each day to earn the public's trust by following the facts and the law wherever they may lead, without prejudice or improper influence."
>
> Declarative "guidance" statements as to the "proper understanding of Establishment Clause" is not a job of the DOJ. Interpretation of the law is the job of the courts and judges. In this case of the Constitution itself, it is ultimately for the Supreme Court to decide. It is also well-nigh onto impossible to construe this "opportunity" as being "without prejudice or improper influence", given the make-up of this commission.

2. The Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services, and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall issue "Know Your Rights" Posters for students, parents, public school teachers and administrators, religious leaders, religious institutions, healthcare workers, and military servicemembers.

> If the "Know Your Rights" FAQ is the draft for this poster it is first of all far too verbose. Several paragraphs are devoted just to refuting the phrase "wall of separation" from Thomas Jefferson. Some of the stated rights are only tentative, such as "it is likely constitutional for schools to display the Ten Commandments". And the given examples are heavily taken from Christian orthodoxy. Other faiths are referenced only generally or as an aggregate. This is yet another indication of bias to Christianity.

3. Any public official who alleges a person under their supervision has improperly engaged in religious expression must provide a written explanation of the alleged violation to the person accused within 30 days of any action and explain that charge based upon a specific constitutional provision or provision of law.

This lays responsibility for interpreting laws up to the individual public official and/or their legal counsel. It could create vulnerability to lawsuits and therefore decreased likelihood of attempting to curtail "improper engagement in religious expression". That phrase itself is ambiguous and would be prone to wide interpretation.

4. Instruct the Department of Justice, Department of Health and Human Services, and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, to create religious liberty violation reporting hotlines/online portals for students, parents, teachers, healthcare workers, and others to obtain support in the face of religious liberty violations and promote public awareness of existing reporting channels.

This could create a storm of reports with highly varying degrees of validity. Staffing would need to be increased to service these hotlines and follow up on the reports. Three different agencies would be assessing the validity and therefore likely be prone to poor consistency, again setting up a scenario for lawsuits. It would be both impractical and ill advised.

5. Nominate and confirm federal judges with the courage to decide religious liberty cases on the merits where warranted, rather than engage in improper judicial avoidance.

"…to decide religious liberty cases on the merits where warranted" is a vague description subject to too wide of interpretation. There is no indication as to by whom or how "improper judicial avoidance" is identified or assessed. It also smacks of an effort to stack the courts which is not prohibited, but is certainly not unbiased.

6. Ask the Department of Justice to create a religious liberty task force to track and prioritize litigation protecting religious liberty.

This would increase the DOJ workload, perhaps redundantly so. In terms of prioritization, does this mean ahead of all other DOJ cases? And what assurance is there that this would apply to all expressions of faith?

7. Combat anti-Semitism through enforcement of civil rights laws, litigation of credible allegations of anti-Semitic discrimination and violence, and civic education.

This "opportunity" specifies credible allegations. That presents some difficulties, as Israel as a state is often conflated with Judaism as a religion. While Judaism is deeply embedded in Israeli culture, Israel does not have a state religion. Protests against the actions of the state of Israel

and marches and demonstrations declaring that Jewish people do not belong in America are different from each other.

8. Protect religious Americans from government-led litigation targeting their free exercise.

Does this mean free exercise in all circumstances, all times and places? Does this mean with no restraints? Does this apply to all faiths? Who or what specifically is the agent of protection?

9. Repeal the Johnson Amendment.

When I make a donation to a political action organization, I am always informed that my donation cannot be declared as a tax deduction. In contrast, repealing the Johnson Amendment would allow churches and faith-based organizations to achieve a privileged status as being able to participate in political action while maintaining their non-profit status and therefore exemption from many taxes. This would be preferential treatment from the federal government and a case of "having their cake and eating it, too". It could also then be argued that political action organizations should be able to register as non-profits. Or perhaps that's the next step.

10. Order the Department of War to streamline and improve the religious accommodation process.

This has already begun. In June 2026, the Department of Defense dramatically reduced its list of officially recognized religious affiliations from over 200 to 31. Of those 31, 21 were specifically designated as Christian. While Christianity is the majority religious affiliation, it is not the only one. In the name of efficiency, religious pluralism is being disregarded if not actually ignored. It is yet another indication of religious bias.

11. Continue efforts to restore the retirement or re-enlistment eligibility for service members who lost employment, health insurance, pensions, and other benefits because of their religious beliefs about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Similar to the decision allowing Hobby Lobby to limit reproductive choice to their employees, the military has always had multiple mandates on its members. Maintaining the health of its troops is absolutely in the interest of military readiness. And just as Hobby Lobby employees may choose to work elsewhere to preserve their reproductive care choices, military members may choose to re-enter the private sector to preserve their choice to not be vaccinated. In another similar situation, it was recently announced that the U.S. Navy is reviewing religious waivers to grow facial hair that doesn't adhere to grooming standards.

12. Honor the courage of religious liberty heroes through creating a Presidential Medal of Religious Liberty and First Freedom Hero Awards to recognize Americans who stand up for religious freedom and play an indispensable role in protecting citizens' Constitutional rights.

> Enough with the awards and medals already. I have little doubt who the likely candidates would be for these awards: probably not those of minority faiths, much less those who eschew from professing to any faith.

From First Amendment and Religion on the United States Courts website:

> The Establishment clause prohibits the government from "establishing" a religion. The precise definition of "establishment" is unclear. Historically, it meant prohibiting state-sponsored churches, such as the Church of England.
>
> Today, what constitutes an "establishment of religion" is often governed under the three-part test set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court in Lemon v. Kurtzman, 403 U.S. 602 (1971). Under the "Lemon" test, government can assist religion only if (1) the primary purpose of the assistance is secular, (2) the assistance must neither promote nor inhibit religion, and (3) there is no excessive entanglement between church and state.

The representation and documents of this commission would appear to violate the "Lemon Test". Many of the references in the documents are to Christian orthodoxy. This creates doubt as to whether the purpose of the assistance is primarily secular. The twelve opportunities would appear to primarily promote Christianity, possibly to the exclusion of others. Christianity is almost exclusively represented in the membership, leading to questions of excessive entanglement. Much of what may be suspected as to the actual intent of this commission is being cloaked in the use of the general and ambiguous term "religious liberty'. Common use of this term appears to be synonymous with Judeo-Christianity.

It is my firmly held belief that true religious liberty must apply to <u>all</u> religions and belief systems. I would argue that a religion is becoming established when the government favors it above any others. It is the government's responsibility to protect <u>all</u> citizens, to continue to trace a narrow but necessary path between state and religion, and not favor one religious tradition or belief system over any other.

Respectfully,

Marilee Fijalka-Carr

From: Carol Sowers <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bridge between Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:04:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing to let you know that I oppose the idea of building a bridge between Church and State. They are two separate entities and should remain separate. History shows that when Church and State unite - persecution and control of conscience generally ensues. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and render to God the things that are God's". When the Government forces religion it is no longer liberty of conscience at play. Once government funding comes into the Church the government will be the controlling force - not God. Our pioneers came here to escape religious persecution so let's keep it a country of religious freedom. Thank you.

Concerned citizen,

Carol Sowers

From: Lisa Michelle Kelly <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] USA
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:04:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

Proverbs 29:2, which states: "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn" (KJV).
Our Country is in trouble and it is because we kicked God out of everything and allowed radicalized evil to replace it. Our founding fathers clearly did not intend where it's all headed. We need the 10 commandments. We need a moral compass. What one generation tolerates the next generation normalizes and that's where we're at. We need our foundational moral principles. In God we trust. One one nation under God with liberty and justice for all
Thank you , Lisa Michelle Kelly
Sent from my iPhone

From: Annie Puckett <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Uniting Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:05:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission:

Greetings in the name of Jesus. Thank you for the opportunity to write this statement concerning establishing a union of church and state. On the surface it seems like a wonderful idea that church and state should be closely connected but as we consider history we recognize that when church and state has been united it always leads to persecution of those of unlike faith and belief systems. The Creator God has given us liberty of conscience that we may choose to serve any being or object we recognize as having supreme power in our lives. We are also at liberty not to recognize any being or object as a supreme power in our lives.

The United States' constitution has upheld this God given right, even though the words are not directly written in the constitution. The principle of separation of church and state are implied and the principle has been followed; this is why we have enjoyed the liberties we have. It is true that we as a people and as a nation should return to God, this is something we must pray for and we ourselves must be a living example to others. Jesus said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's," Matthew 22:21. It will be impossible to obey this charge if church and state are united. Let us return to God by first obeying his principle of church and state separation as set forth in his word. Thank you for considering all the statements concerning the relationship between church and state.

Respectfully, Annie Puckett

From: Mariel Gonzalez <[redacted]>
To: [redacted], Mariel Gonzalez <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:05:57 -0400
Importance: Normal

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. I write to voice my concerns and objections to the Committee's first and ninth recommendations [1] and its obviously insufficient consideration of the warnings of the Founding Fathers of the dangers of a union of church and state or the many lessons of history regarding same.

The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice "issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state." At the formal release of the Committee's recommendations on the same day, Committee Chair Dan Patrick publicly stated that "the separation of church and state is not in the constitution" and that the phrase "has no constitutional basis."

As citizens and student of history, and as a Christian, I'm alarmed at the flawed and unconstitutional view of the Chair of the Committee of the so-called "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" prove influential or worse, instructive, to the Department of Justice.

Certainly, the Founding Fathers were all aware of the persecution of the Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

It was a union of church and state that prohibited the work of translation of the Bible, which changed the world. It was a union of church and state that necessitated his flight to Europe.

We are concerned that the Committee neglected to take into account the impact of the separation of church and state on the other rights codified in the First Amendment. Free speech and freedom of the press, for example, owe their flourishing in the modern world in large part to the separation of church and state in America. Prior to the protections in the First Amendment.

Therefore, we respectfully ask, what proper guidance can the Department of Justice hope to give to the public on the "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" if it is directed in its object by a Committee and a Committee Chair, who has

neglected to more fully analyze the reasons for the separation of church and state, or the reasons why the United States codified the disestablishment of church and state in the First Amendment in the first instance?

The reference to the wall of separation between church and state is not only mentioned by President Thomas Jefferson in the letter to the Danbury Baptists, which, of course, it is. What is often left out of the narrative is that Jefferson said that he personally believed that the principle of the separation of church and state is codified in the Constitution. Therein, Jefferson wrote: "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State."

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate in the American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

We respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee and that it adopt recommendation 1 of the Committee that it convene a public hearing, with written and oral submissions from the public, to more comprehensively study the question of the separation of church and state in history, and in American history in particular, a study which we would enthusiastically support.

Sincerely,

Mariel Gonzalez RN

From: Naomi Whittaker <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Chapter 9 / Healthcare Conscience – RRM Academy
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:09:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

Subject: Public Comment: Chapter 9 – Healthcare Conscience, Religious Liberty, and the Need for Ethical Competition in Healthcare

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

On behalf of RRM Academy, an educational and advocacy organization dedicated to Restorative Reproductive Medicine (RRM), I am writing to submit this public comment to inform your recommendations regarding the protection of religious liberty, conscience rights, and the free exercise of religion within the American healthcare system.

RRM Academy exists to train clinicians and educate the public in evidence-based, ethically grounded reproductive medicine that restores normal physiology rather than overriding it, and to correct the growing spread of misinformation and coercive "standard-of-care" pressures in women's health.

RRM Academy is a religiously inclusive organization that serves patients and clinicians of many faith backgrounds, and it is not itself a Catholic institution. Likewise, Restorative Reproductive Medicine is a medical model grounded in objective biological diagnosis and treatment, not in any one religious tradition, and it is available to people of all faiths and no faith.[2][1]

Our organization's mission is rooted in the conviction that medicine must honor both science and conscience: that patients deserve accurate, non-coercive information, and that clinicians must be free to practice in accordance with their religious and ethical commitments, especially in the domain of fertility, pregnancy, childbirth, and women's health. We emphasize Restorative Reproductive Medicine as a distinct, scientifically grounded alternative to the prevailing "override and control" model that defaults to hormonal suppression, contraception, and IVF as first-line options. By training physicians, midwives, and other clinicians in RRM, we also seek to ensure that patients—especially those whose religious beliefs preclude contraception or IVF—have real, accessible medical options that align with their deeply held moral and religious convictions.[1][2]

My own professional journey as a physician illustrates why organizations like RRM Academy are essential in today's healthcare landscape. I attended a Catholic medical school in Omaha, Nebraska, which was overall supportive of my formation, but during my OB-GYN rotation I felt compelled to hide my beliefs to avoid retaliation or exclusion from training opportunities. Even at a Catholic institution, it was clear that openly

practicing in accordance with Catholic moral teaching was professionally risky, particularly in obstetrics and gynecology.

Following residency, I searched the entire country for a truly Catholic-friendly hospital where I could practice OB-GYN in accordance with my conscience and with Catholic ethical directives. That search revealed that many institutions presenting themselves as "Catholic" in branding or sponsorship were, in practice, hostile to the faith-informed exercise of medicine. During residency in Illinois, I watched a Catholic hospital system undergo a dramatic shift around 2016: the authority of the Catholic sisters was systematically stripped away and replaced with a profit-driven corporate mindset. The institution retained a Catholic name but abandoned the integrated moral framework that had previously guided clinical decision-making and safeguarded both conscience and patient dignity.

I began my attending career in 2017 at a Catholic hospital in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, still genuinely run by religious sisters and operating under clear ethical and religious directives. In this environment, RRM could flourish.

I was able to provide complex Restorative Reproductive Medicine and NaProTECHNOLOGY surgeries with multidisciplinary support, offering comprehensive fertility care to patients who did not want birth control, sterilization, or IVF and who instead sought diagnosis and treatment of underlying causes. We built a culture of trust in the community by respecting patient autonomy and collaboration, including working closely with home birth midwives. We developed a seamless system where these midwives trusted us, contacted us early for complications, and knew they would not be punished or belittled for practicing outside a hospital-centric model.

In this setting, patients were offered truly informed consent about their birth choices, such as vaginal birth after C-section (VBAC), within a framework that respected the dignity of both the patient and the provider. We recognized that the freedom to choose a home birth with a trained and supportive midwife is not only a clinical and safety issue, but also a critical component of bodily autonomy and religious freedom. Many families' deeply held religious and cultural beliefs are integrated into their birth choices, and a system that delegitimizes or obstructs safe home birth midwifery is, in effect, restricting the free exercise of those beliefs.

The rise of unnecessary C-sections is one of the clearest examples of how a corporate, protocol-driven model can distort obstetric care. When surgery is treated as the path of least resistance rather than a last-resort intervention, patients lose meaningful choice and clinicians lose room for judgment, while avoidable harm increases for mothers and babies. [11, 12, 13]

This fragile, conscience-respecting ecosystem changed dramatically when a large secular health system acquired the Catholic-run hospital in 2021. The pattern was identical to what I had witnessed during my residency: the power and presence of the nuns were erased, overt religious symbols such as crucifixes were removed on the first day of the transition, and it became clear that my Catholic identity and conscience-based practice would no longer be protected. The new corporate structure prioritized volume over safety, imposing RVU quotas and productivity metrics that forced physicians into shorter visits, rushed decision-making, and standardized protocols that left little room for individualized, ethically nuanced care.

Even when I attempted to create a conscience-driven, Catholic-aligned practice under a large academic center, systemic obstacles made it unsustainable. The dominant insurance-driven, corporate model is not merely indifferent to faith; it is structurally hostile to clinicians who practice in ways that deviate from the "one-size-fits-all" protocols designed to maximize billing and throughput. "Cookie-cutter" algorithms and business rules make it nearly impossible to bill for complex RRM evaluations or to offer alternative, cash-pay pathways that reflect different ethical commitments. Physicians are treated as interchangeable units in a machine, rather than as moral agents responsible for the good of their patients and accountable to their own consciences and religious traditions.

The human cost of this system is not theoretical. One of the most devastating experiences I witnessed was the preventable loss of a baby and the destruction of the mother's future fertility—a Spanish-speaking, devout Catholic woman who desired her child—because the system prioritized efficiency and volume over careful, individualized, and ethically grounded care. This was not an elective abortion; it was, in effect, an "abortion by system," the tragic outcome of a structure that rewards speed, throughput, and protocol adherence over clinical judgment, informed consent, and respect for both mother and child.

RRM Academy contends that such tragedies are not accidental anomalies but predictable consequences of a misaligned healthcare architecture. When corporate and insurance incentives dictate care pathways, when clinicians are punished for taking time to explain morally relevant alternatives, and when institutions suppress or marginalize faith-informed practice, both religious liberty and basic patient safety erode. Patients who desire fertility-sparing, restorative approaches cannot access them; clinicians who are trained in RRM are pressured to conform or leave; and the public square is deprived of vigorous, ethical competition in healthcare delivery.

This is why it is essential not only to protect individual conscience rights on paper, but also to ensure that organizations like RRM Academy can exist, grow, and compete on a level playing field. Ethical competition in healthcare—between different philosophical and religious frameworks, different practice models, and different approaches to fertility and childbirth—is a public good. It allows patients to seek care aligned with their beliefs, gives clinicians genuine vocational options, and exerts healthy pressure on the broader system to correct harmful "standard-of-care" defaults. When RRM-informed clinics, faith-based healthcare institutions, midwifery practices, and home-birth-supportive networks are allowed to flourish, they serve as living proof that safe, scientifically rigorous, and morally coherent care is possible without coercion or compromise.[2][1]

For these reasons, RRM Academy respectfully urges the Religious Liberty Commission to:

1. Affirm that the protection of religious liberty in healthcare includes the right of faith-informed clinicians and organizations to develop and offer alternative, evidence-based models of care, such as Restorative Reproductive Medicine, that diverge from the prevailing contraceptive- and IVF-centric paradigms.

2. Recognize that patients' freedom to choose their birth environment—including home birth with a trained, collaborative midwife—is an essential component of bodily autonomy, family integrity, and religious freedom, particularly for communities whose beliefs shape their approach to childbirth and family life.

3. Recommend structural protections that prevent corporate acquisitions and insurance contracts from de facto eliminating conscience-respecting practice models, whether through RVU quotas, prohibition of complex RRM billing codes, or policies that penalize clinicians for deviating from standardized protocols.

4. Encourage policies that foster genuine competition in healthcare delivery by protecting the right of faith-based and conscience-driven organizations, including RRM Academy and its affiliated clinics and educators, to operate, train, and communicate without fear of institutional retaliation or regulatory discrimination.

The American healthcare system stands at a crossroads. If we continue to allow profit-driven, protocol-bound structures to define "standard care" and to suppress alternatives, we will see further erosion of both religious liberty and human dignity in medicine. If, instead, we protect conscience, encourage ethical competition, and support organizations like RRM Academy that seek to restore the body rather than override it, we can rebuild a medical culture that honors both scientific excellence and the deepest convictions of patients and clinicians alike.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony and for your work on behalf of religious liberty and conscience protections in healthcare.

Sincerely,

Naomi Whittaker, MD

Founder, RRM Academy

RRMacademy.org

Sources

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[13] WHO Warns Against Unnecessary C-Sections

https://www.voanews.com/a/who-warns-against-c-sections-when-not-medically-needed/2715429.html?utm_source=perplexity

From: Calvin O'Brien <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty preservation
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:10:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members,
I respectfully submit this public comment out of deep concern for the future of religious liberty in the United States. I urge the Commission to reject any recommendation directed at the Department of Justice or any other branch of government that would weaken the historic constitutional principle of keeping religion and government institutionally separate, as well as any proposal that encourages greater unity between the two.

America's greatest contribution to the cause of religious liberty has not been the state's endorsement of religion, but the protection of every person's God-given right to worship according to conscience without government interference. This principle has allowed religious communities of every tradition to flourish in freedom while preserving civil peace.

As a Bible-believing seventh-day Sabbath keeper, I write from the perspective of a religious minority whose spiritual ancestors experienced firsthand the dangers that arise when government aligns itself with the religious majority. During America's colonial period, Baptists, Quakers, Jews, seventh-day Sabbath keepers, and many other religious minorities endured discrimination, imprisonment, fines, and civil persecution because certain established churches enjoyed the support of the state. These injustices were among the very reasons the Founders rejected religious establishments and adopted the First Amendment.

The experience of Seventh-day Adventists provides another historical warning. During the late nineteenth century, Adventists who faithfully observed God's seventh-day Sabbath were prosecuted under Sunday laws that were imposed, once again, by the religious Christian majority. Some of our fellow believers were fined, imprisoned, and even forced into chain gangs because they chose to honor Saturday as the biblical Sabbath rather than conform to popular Blue Law Sunday observances. Their only offense was obeying the dictates of conscience and remaining faithful to their religious convictions. Their experience stands as a warning that whenever civil authority is used to enforce religious beliefs or practices, freedom of conscience is inevitably endangered, and religious minorities are often the first to endure discrimination and persecution.

The medieval Inquisition demonstrated how religious institutions armed with civil authority suppressed dissent through torture, punishment, and even death. Various forms of religious extremism, including movements that have justified violence in the name of Islam, have shown how state-backed religious ideology can deny liberty of conscience. Likewise, communist regimes that officially embraced atheism illustrate the opposite side of the same error: when government suppresses religion altogether, believers are again persecuted. Though these different oppressive

systems differed in ideology, they shared one common characteristic—the concentration of civil power over matters of conscience.

The strength of the American constitutional system is that it avoids these extremes. Government was never commissioned to direct the spiritual lives of the people. The mission of the state is to preserve order, protect individual rights, and secure equal treatment under the law. The mission of the church is altogether different: to preach the gospel, emphasize truth and love through persuasion, not coercion, and call people to a voluntary faith, as Jesus did. These two institutions are strongest and remain uncorrupted when each remains within its proper sphere.

Our nation has become home to a diverse group of churches, synagogues, mosques, and religious communities because government has generally refrained from controlling or establishing religion. This constitutional heritage has protected both the majority and the minority alike. I therefore respectfully urge the Commission to recommend policies that reinforce—not diminish—the constitutional barriers separating ecclesiastical authority from civil government. Religious liberty is best preserved when government neither advances nor inhibits religion but instead protects the equal rights of all people to follow their own conscience.

The United States must remain a nation where every church is free to proclaim its beliefs without governmental control and where every citizen is free to worship—or not to worship—without governmental pressure. History has already taught us the consequences of abandoning this principle. We should not repeat mistakes that countless generations have paid dearly to overcome. For if we do, we would once again be fanning the flames of intolerance, religious bigotry, and injustice.

Respectfully yours,
Calvin O'Brien

Sent from my iPhone

From: Paul <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:10:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty,

I am writing to express my support for the continued protection of the constitutional principle commonly referred to as the separation of church and state. Although the precise phrase does not appear in the United States Constitution, the principle is grounded in the First Amendment, which provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Together, the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause protect every American's right to worship according to the dictates of conscience, to practice no religion at all, and to remain free from governmental coercion in matters of faith. Government neutrality toward religion safeguards both religious liberty and civil equality.

The historical concept of a "wall of separation between Church & State," articulated by Thomas Jefferson in his 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptist Association, reflects the understanding that government should neither establish religion nor interfere with the sincere exercise of faith. Although Jefferson's letter is not itself law, the Supreme Court has recognized it as an important historical explanation of the First Amendment's meaning.

The constitutional principles protecting religious liberty are also consistent with several teachings found in the Holy Bible, King James Version, which emphasize that faith is a matter of individual conscience rather than governmental compulsion.
In Matthew 22:21, Jesus distinguished the respective spheres of civil government and divine authority by saying, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." This teaching recognizes legitimate civil authority while affirming that ultimate allegiance belongs to God alone.

When civil authorities commanded the apostles to cease preaching the gospel, Peter declared in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men." This passage demonstrates that civil government has legitimate authority within its proper jurisdiction but does not possess unlimited authority over the conscience or worship of individuals.

Scripture also teaches that genuine faith cannot be compelled. Joshua declared to Israel, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15), acknowledging that individuals bear responsibility for their own decision regarding whom they will worship. Likewise, Elijah challenged the people in 1 Kings 18:21, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him." Both passages appeal to voluntary choice rather than coercion.

In Revelation 3:20, Christ says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." This image portrays an invitation rather than compulsion, illustrating that God Himself does not force belief or obedience but calls individuals to respond freely.
The Apostle Paul likewise affirmed the importance of individual conviction in Romans 14:5, stating, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." While this passage concerns disputes among believers, it reflects the broader biblical principle that matters of conscience should be sincere and personal rather than externally coerced.

Scripture further teaches that civil government has a defined purpose. Romans 13:1–7 describes governing authorities as ministers of God for the punishment of evil and the preservation of civil order. The passage assigns government responsibility for justice, not for compelling religious belief or establishing religious orthodoxy.

The Bible also recognizes that every person will answer directly to God. Romans 14:12 declares, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." This personal accountability underscores that faith and worship ultimately belong to the individual conscience before God rather than to the authority of the state.

These biblical principles harmonize with the constitutional protections of the First Amendment. Both recognize that civil government functions best when it protects the freedom of every individual to worship God according to conscience, to change religious beliefs, or to decline religious practice altogether without governmental preference, discrimination, or coercion.

I respectfully encourage the Department of Justice to continue faithfully enforcing the constitutional guarantees protecting religious liberty for all people. Defending both the prohibition against governmental establishment of religion and the free exercise of religion preserves the liberties secured by the Constitution and respects the dignity and freedom of conscience possessed by every individual.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your continued commitment to upholding the Constitution of the United States.

Respectfully,
Paul B. Jarvis
Biologist

From: Rodica Ban <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Personal comment separation of church and state Rodica Ban
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:11:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I respectfully ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state, including the use of government funding for religious activities and the repeal of the Johnson Amendment.

As a woman who lived under communist rule in Romania, I know from personal experience what happens when government becomes too closely involved with religion. I witnessed a system where political power sought to influence, control, and limit religious life. Churches that remained faithful to their convictions often faced pressure, while those that cooperated with the government risked compromising their mission and their witness.

One of the greatest blessings I discovered after coming to the United States was its commitment to religious liberty. The separation of church and state protects both institutions. It allows churches to remain free to follow God according to conscience without government influence, and it protects the rights of every American—regardless of faith or no faith—to worship freely.

History has taught me a lesson I hope America never has to learn firsthand: when church and state become intertwined, both are diminished. Government gains influence over matters of faith, and the church gradually loses the independence and moral authority that give it its strength.

Please preserve the historic safeguards that have made America a beacon of religious freedom for people like me who came here seeking freedom of conscience. Future generations deserve to inherit the same precious liberty that has blessed this nation for so long.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Rodica Ban

From: Angella Glidden-Wood <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State- Dr. Glidden-Wood
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:11:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing as a Citizen to uphold the constitutional right to retain freedom of religious expression and not have the government dictate my religious activity, words, or thoughts. I vote to keep the church and state separate.

As a bible believing Christian, my understanding of scripture is that the day of worship, marriage, inheritance, financial wellbeing, healthcare, how we dress, what we eat, etc. etc. is all directed by God. But God, even being God, does not force mankind to love Him. He loved us first and then has left us with a choice to do likewise.

His own Precious Son whom He sacrificed to redeem us told us to follow Him and if we love Him to keep His commandments. If we follow Him then we will love each other and not force our own will on our fellow men because He did not do that to us and we should treat our brother as we would ourselves. If we love God and Jesus then we will not try to take God's place and force people to do what even God has not seen fit to do.

With Prayers and Love,

Dr. Angella Glidden-Wood

Deer Lodge, Tennessee

From: Pat Jones <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:12:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission:
I am a Christian. I am thankful that the United States followed the counsel of Christ in separating church and state when Jesus said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Matthew 22:21.

Separation of Church and State, Freedom of Individual Conscience, is truly what has made America great!!

The Religious Liberty Commission itself was off to a wrong start from the beginning. Was there not anyone who understood what Religios Liberty means on the panel that chose the delegates? It means freedom for all religions. You had Catholics on the panel who are members of a church/state system!--already totally biased. Other than one Jewish man, you had no representatives from other religions. The leader of the panel, Mr. Patrick, was already a known Christian Nationalist in Texas who got the shortened Ten Commandments to be posted in the schools, while outlawing the full biblical version to be posted.

The DOJ should get an F for setting up this Commission and should start over and do it right.

I am against the voucher system because, not only is it wrong, but most of the money will go to the Roman Catholic Church Schools, that represent a foreign church/state system, whose Constitution is opposed to the U.S Constitution.

I would like Johnson ammendment to be fully restored and enforced, which will keep the worship services of the churches from being totally desecrated and turned into political rallies and money laundromats.

Government money should not go to any religious health or religious educational system.

The US was the first country in the history of the modern world to separate religion from the state. Why? Because they learned from history how millions were persecuted during the "Dark Ages" when the Roman church controlled the state.

During the American colonial period, Protestant state governments followed the same pattern and thousands more were persecuted. Praise God for Roger Williams and the first truly free state of Rhode Island!! Thank God for Thomas Jefferson and James Madison who won the same battle in Virginia--separation of the state from all religions, including Christianity!

A truly Christian church should be married to Christ only, as her husband for support and protection. When a Christian Church looses the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, it turns to the power of the state to enforce its doctrines. This connection destroys the church morally and is called spiritual fornication in the Bible. See Rev.17:2; 18:3.

Please learn from history so that you won't repeat it. Jesus is coming soon!

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration,

Patrick Jones
Ohio

Sent from my Galaxy

From: Mela Glover <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to DOJ
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:12:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Melba Glover

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.

When churches take government money or step into partisan politics, the corruption of politics comes in with it.

Churches end up competing for funding and answering to politicians instead of to God — and that's bad for the church and the country alike. Separation isn't a secular idea; people of faith built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here.

Please keep church and state separate. That's how we keep both of them free.

Sincerely,

Melba Glover

Waynesboro, TN

From: Bonnie Joan <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] No Separation of Church & State????
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:13:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to express my deep concern about any efforts that could weaken the longstanding principle of separation between church and state in the United States.

The constitutional protection that prevents government establishment of religion has been essential in preserving both religious liberty and democratic equality. This principle does not oppose religion; rather, it protects every person's freedom to practice their faith—or choose not to practice any faith—without government interference or favoritism.

Our nation is home to people of many different religious traditions and beliefs. Maintaining a clear boundary between religious institutions and government ensures that no single faith receives preferential treatment and that all citizens are treated equally under the law. It also protects religious organizations from becoming entangled in political power and government control.

The separation of church and state has helped create a society where diverse beliefs can coexist peacefully. Weakening this principle risks increasing division, marginalizing minority faiths, and undermining the religious freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment.

I respectfully urge you to uphold and defend policies that protect religious liberty for everyone by preserving the constitutional separation between religion and government. Future generations deserve a nation where freedom of conscience and equal treatment remain fundamental values.

If you look back through history, when church and state were meshed together, it produced the Spanish Inquisition. Our forefathers came to this land specifically to avoid being persecuted by the institution that melded church and state together. Please do not let this happen again.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our country. I hope you will continue to protect the rights and freedoms that have long strengthened our democracy.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Beres
Berrien Springs, MI

From: Robert Prescott <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Rob Prescott
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:13:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing to you as a citizen and a faithful Christian, to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state. Though this exact wording is not mentioned in the 1A to the U.S. Constitution, its definition is. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;..." Please reconsider your recommendations, especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.

When churches take government money or step into partisan politics, the corruption of politics comes in with it. There's a quote by George Santayana that applies here, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." There once was a bridge connecting Church and State in Europe that led to the persecution of tens of thousands of Christians by the Church of Rome and England. This is why the Pilgrims and other Christians escaped here to start America. This is why the wall of separation exists in the Constitution.

When Churches end up competing for government funding and answering to politicians instead of to God, that undermines the very message of Jesus and it has bad consequences for the church and the country alike. The 2 Christian principles this country was built on and has made it a shining example of Liberty and Freedom are Protestantism = A Religion without a Pope and Republicanism = A Government without a King. Separation isn't a secular idea. It is rooted in the teachings of Jesus and it was people of faith who started it.

These early Christians built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here in America. If we are to be One Nation Under God, then EVERYONE deserves to worship God as they and the Creator sees fit. Imposing any restrictions on that Liberty of Conscience is what the early American Christians were escaping from in Europe. God did and has blessed America because of that wall of separation. To remove that wall will bring the wrath of the Lamb. Please keep church and state separate.

If someone wants to worship on Friday, like the Muslims do, then they should be able to without any persecution. If the Jews and Sabbatarian Christians like Ben Carson want to worship on Saturday as the 4th Commandment states, without persecution, they should. If Catholics and other denominations want to worship on Sunday or any day, they should be able to without persecution. Or if someone doesn't want to worship at all, that should be their right too. That is God's will and that is what Christian Religious Liberty is all about.

Sincerely,
Rob Prescott
New Jersey

From: Keith Jacobs <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reglious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:13:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

Church and state most be separate. For only the reason when church and state mix only persecution happens. It alsways happens.

Who gets to say what that reglion is?
Do we have freedom of conscious, isn't that our free will gift from God? It's our right as human beings.

When you look at the Ten Commitments. The First 4 or between God and man. No government or country can be involved with first 4 but the last 6 yes.

Jesus said
Matthew 22:21

21 . They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and undo God the things that are God's.

Jesus taught separation from church and state.

I pray that The Holy Spirit will guild you all in making this decision.

God bless

From: [redacted] PII

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted] PII>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on the RLC report

Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:13:28 -0400

Importance: Normal

I want to share my views. I appreciate the RLC desire to safeguard Religious Liberty but what I see about its stand on the principle of Serration of Church & State which is more than a metaphor. Unfortunately I believe the left reinterpreted the phrase Separation of Church and State to give it a bad name. This principle has made this the greatest nation on earth. I am strongly against any move to get rid of the separation of Church & State. To get rid of that principle is a huge mistake that will essentially destroy our freedoms. Religion that needs state support is a weak religion. The State is here to protect each individual's right to freedom not to promote a particular christian interpretation of Scripture.

[redacted] PII

From: Mary Mueller <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-Separation of Church and State M. Mueller
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:13:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I am writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendation in your report that would weaken "The Separation of Church and State." The government should continue to honor; The First Amendment to our Constitution which begins "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." These two clauses are commonly known as: The Establishment Clause, gives." general guidelines that prevents the government from establishing an official religion or showing favor over the many different religions that are practiced in our country. I believe each individual should be able to worship according to what their conscience dictates; according to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Plus, the guideline of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. I believe these two clauses support "Separation of Church and State." This is a valuable principle that needs to supported in the future as it has been in the past.

Sincerely, Mary Mueller, Flint MI

From: Terry Leddon <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on Religious Liberty Commission Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:14:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

The Constitution protects religious liberty by forbidding the government from establishing a religion or from interfering in the practice of religion. It also prohibits a religious test for those running for office.

Thomas Jefferson made it clear that there should be a wall of separation between religion and politics. John Adams signed the Treaty of Tripoli where Article 11 states the United States government was "not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion." Other founding fathers made equally clear comments that America was founded on the separation of church and state.

American taxpayer dollars should not be used to support religious organizations or religious education or influence.

The Johnson Amendment is an important aspect of maintaining the separation of church and state. The separation of church and state is the very best policy for protecting religious freedom. Any policy that erodes the separation of church and state endangers religious freedom.

America is a melting pot of people from different cultures and religions. Promoting one religion above any other is a clear violation of the First Amendment.

Sincerely,
Teresa Leddon.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Sulamita Soares <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:16:00 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Response_to_Commission.pdf

In accordance with Pilar of Freedom I send the same response to. Commission.
Thank you!

From: Judith Peters <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - RLC - Judith Peters
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:17:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

Religious Liberty Commission,

I'm a United Stated citizen and I DO NOT want this Commission to dismantle or weaken in anyway the separation of church and state.

KEEP SEPARATION of Church and State

Sincerely,

Judith Peters

Sent from my iPhone

From: Patricia Leazer <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:18:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

This country was founded on freedom of religion. Many came here seeking a place where they could worship according to their free conscience. To remove that God given right would very effectively return us to the atrocities of the dark ages which they came here to escape. Worship would once again be controlled by the state and those who disagreed would be persecuted. Bad move! Have you learned nothing from our history? This is a very bad idea!

Patricia Leazer

From: cheryl boyd <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:18:29 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the statement of Pillars Of Freedom. The state should not dictate to the Church. Have a good day

From: william wyatti<PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Resources . I William Wyatt, stand in opposition to tearing down the wall of separation of church and state. The separation of church and state has stood for over 350 years. I believe it would compromise our religious liberty and our freedom of conscience. Take a look white people flooded to America no King and no Pope. In the history of the church when it ruled the State. called the dark ages. I pray God that this is reconsidered and overturned. William Wyatt.. Whitwell Tennessee
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:22:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

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https://www.justice.gov/religious-liberty-commission/resources

From: Linda Bynum <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment on RLC report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:22:23 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Religious_Liberty_Letter.pdf

Dear Committee Members,

Please find attached my comments regarding the RLC report on the separation of church and state.

Sincere regards,
Linda Bynum

July 11, 2026
Members of the Religious Liberty Commission
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State

Dear Committee Members,

I am deeply concerned about many of the recommendations outlined in the report on separation of church and state. Though protection of everyone's religious rights is touted, Christianity is what is being represented. For example, will the Quran or other sacred texts from other faiths be read and/or placed in public schools? Not likely, given the current sentiments of our society. More importantly, even among Christians there are differences in how we interpret the Bible and practice our faith. So, the question begs to be asked, whose version of Christianity will be promoted through legislation? Government support of one faith (Christianity), by default marginalizes the religious experience of others. Empowered by the arm of the law, the recommendations found in this report will legally pave the way for persecution and oppression by "Christians" against those who do not believe as they do. Though I believe in Jesus, I also know that Jesus did not compel or force people to follow him. Ironically, what drove the early settlers to America in the first place was religious freedom! They were looking for a place where one could practice their faith freely, whatever that faith is.

Scripture states "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked who can know it" (Jeremiah 17:9). The moral decline that we are experiencing is due to a "heart problem" which cannot be fixed through legislation. It is unfortunate that secularism has spread so far, as it removes religion from public life. Until Jesus returns, sin will always exist. Until then, actions that can be taken to minimize its effect is to reinstate or enforce existing laws, ie., the laws against killing, adultery, sodomy, etc., capitalizing from what is already in place.

In conclusion, the strongest motivator that can appeal to the sin-sick heart is the power of the Holy Spirit and the witness of the Christ-like life demonstrated by believers. As it has been said, "preach the gospel at all times and if necessary, use words." It is my prayer that all efforts to remove the barrier that separates government and religion be stopped. Our government must focus its energy on civil and secular matters.
Sincere regards,
Linda Bynum
PII

From: Judith Peters <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Public Comment - RLC - Judith Peters
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:24:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Judith Peters <[redacted]>
Date: July 12, 2026 at 3:17:19 PM EDT
To: [redacted]
Subject: Public Comment - RLC - Judith Peters

Religious Liberty Commission,

I'm a United States citizen and I DO NOT want this Commission to dismantle or weaken in anyway the separation of church and state.

KEEP SEPARATION of Church and State

Sincerely,

Judith Peters

Sent from my iPhone

From: Becky Baergi <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church & State - Becky Baerg
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:24:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

Please reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state. Please keep church and state separate.

If you proceed, this will only lead to corruption in politics which is bad for both church and Country. Please keep both of them free.

Please don't use government money to fund religious activities.

Please don't repeal the Johnson Amendment.

Sincerely,
Becky Baerg
Clovis, CA

From: Lavoide Wilson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:25:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

Please continue to fight for us to have religious freedom

From: Dave Christensen <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Christian nationalism
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:25:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

Christian nationalism is not about Jesus. In fact, destroys Jesus.

Christian nationalism is focused on restructuring, family and community life in America according to their political and white supremacist values

Their leaders, admittedly, have plans to destroy churches that are not vulnerable to going along with them.

DAVE CHRISTENSEN
[redacted]

Sent from my iPhone

From: Jo Benoiti<[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:26:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

I want church and state to remain separate.

Jo Ann Benoit, Lake Charles, La.

From: Michele Abshire <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Chapter 1 - Michele Hatcher LeDoux Abshire
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:27:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am very excited about the President's Executive order and the draft report that the Religious Liberty Commission (America's First Freedom) is in the process of working on. It is a wonderful work. Religion is so vital to people's lives and beneficial to society as a whole. As stated, religion is indispensable support and it is an essential aspect of what it means to be human. For the most part it is religious institutions that have built and supported schools, hospitals, along with charitable and humanitarian works. Deep-seated faith in God is the backbone of strong and healthy families bringing about healthier and happier circumstances for those that practice religion and have a foundation built in faith in God through Jesus Christ.

From: Michael Kazmierczak <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - RLC - Michael Kazmierczak
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:27:57 -0400
Importance: Normal

Religious Liberty Commission,

I am a US citizen.
Please do not remove Separation of Church and State in our country.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Michael Kazmierczak

Sent from my iPhone

From: "Rebecca L." <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENTi– Foundations of Religious Liberty – Rebecca Lopez
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:29:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am submitting this comment as an American who deeply values both religious freedom and the constitutional separation of church and state.

The genius of the First Amendment is that it protects every person's freedom of conscience. It allows people to practice their faith, change their faith, or have no religious faith at all without government favoring one religious tradition over another. That protection has allowed religion in the United States to flourish through persuasion rather than government power.

I am concerned that the Commission does not reflect America's religious diversity. A commission that is composed primarily of evangelical Christians cannot credibly claim to represent the broad range of religious and nonreligious perspectives that exist in our nation, even among Christians. If the purpose is to evaluate religious liberty for all Americans, the membership itself should reflect that diversity.

I strongly oppose any effort to weaken the separation of church and state or to tie the federal government to a particular religious tradition. Government endorsement of one specific sect of one religion inevitably diminishes the religious liberty of everyone else, including Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, atheists, agnostics, and non-Evangelical Christians.

As Quaker and a citizen, I believe religious liberty is strongest when government neither advances nor inhibits religion. The state should protect every person's right to follow their conscience, not elevate one interpretation of faith above others.

I urge the Commission to reaffirm the constitutional principles of religious neutrality and equal protection for people of every faith and of none.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Lopez

From: Michele Abshire <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Chapter 2 (Religious Liberty/Separation of Church and State) - Michele Hatcher LeDoux Abshire
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:29:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

It is wonderful that recommendations have been made to finally bring to light the truths America's Founding Fathers had in regard to how religion and government are to work together. Our nation has been blessed with Religious Freedom, but secularists have been trying to chip away at America's freedoms to worship as we were Endowed by our Creator. Even so, the truth is that our Constitution protects religious freedoms. The truth is that both government and society benefit from the influence of Christian faith, hope, love and doctrine. Hopefully, this wonderful work will finally put to rest the lie of separation of church and state. Separation of church and state is certainly not what the Founding Fathers ever envisioned or expected to come about in America. Their purpose was to keep government interference out of the Church. Thank God for this endeavor to build bridges between Church and State and for seeking to educate Americans on the benefits of religion in society, and to push back against those that seek to take those freedoms from us.

From: Michele Abshire <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Chapter 4 (Religious Rights for Children in School) - Michele Abshire
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:31:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

Children are citizens of these United States. The Constitution protects religious freedoms for America's children just as it does for adults. Children should have the freedom to practice religion in public schools, whether that be speaking, singing, praying or displaying religious symbols. They should not be censored, bullied, ridiculed, isolated or punished because they hold certain beliefs dear to their hearts. We all have the right to our own opinion. Just because everyone does not agree with an opinion or religious belief does not mean that a person is not allowed to express that belief or opinion so long as it does not tread on the rights of others. Certainly, the Bible teaches that all should love and honor one another, respect authority, forgive as Christ has forgiven, laying before us instructions to help us live and walk in a moral and ethical path. Religion plays an important role in society as a whole, and certainly it is beneficial to all facets of society including schools. We are blessed in this nation to have the Constitution protecting the rights of its citizens. We are not a socialist or communist country and we should not act like one. Principals, school board officials, teachers, aides and parents should all work together supporting students while upholding student's conscience rights and religious freedom. Those in authority should act justly protecting those freedoms for all children attending public schools. They should stand for all student's rights and when they see other students and/or teachers abusing another student's rights they should take action to set things right upholding the law of this great land.

From: Michele Abshire <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENTi– Chapter 5 (Faith on College Campuses) - Michele Hatcher LeDoux Abshire
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:32:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

As I read through the Religious Liberty Commissions draft report "Americas' First Freedom" I was amazed to learn that the founding of the first colleges in America, the institutions were committed to teaching the great Western canon for the purpose of training students to understand and use their liberty. I learned that universities and colleges adopted Latin mottos translated to things such as "Truth for Christ and the Church," "Under God's power she flourishes," and "In God we hope" to name just a few in a very lengthy list. It was further stated that there was a well-established tradition of faith and virtue in American academia. America's earliest colleges and universities taught Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Rhetoric and Logic, Ethics and Politics, Metaphysics and Theology often with students required to be proficient in arithmetic, algebra and geometry. Academic rigor was the hallmark of higher education and it was pursued with the intent of forming future leaders in knowledge and virtue, not divorced from God, but rather with a recognition of religion's role in shaping morals, standards and principles in the hearts of students who attended these schools. How far we have come away from those noble roots to where now universities and colleges have steered away from traditional courses rather teaching much that is useless and does not even help students move forward in life and find jobs. Sadly, virtue was replaced with a "fact-value" or "value-free" educational models leading to harmful ideologies often creating a hostile view towards those who hold true to Judeo-Christian values including a rise in anti-Semitism on campuses throughout the United States. It is truly a sad state of affairs. As noted in the Chapter 4 statement, we are blessed in this nation to have the Constitution protecting the rights of its citizens. We are not a socialist or communist country and we should not act like one. Deans, university/college board officials, professors, teachers, aides and parents should all work together supporting students while upholding student's conscience rights and religious freedom. Those in authority should act justly protecting those freedoms for all students attending universities and colleges. They should stand for all student's rights and when they see other students and/or teachers abusing another student's rights they should take action to set things right upholding the law of this great land. Religious persecution and Anti-Semitism should not be tolerated in any way, shape or form. We should really work hard to bring a higher standard of learning back to our colleges and universities teaching things that will be useful to the student's future, embedding within them a pursuit of truth, morals and the formation of integrity and character that is essential for students to be successful wherever life may lead them.

From: paul ban <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Personal comment separation of church and state Pavel Ban
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:32:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I respectfully ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state, including the use of government funding for religious activities and the repeal of the Johnson Amendment.

Having grown up and lived under communist rule in Romania, I know firsthand what can happen when the government becomes too closely involved with religion. I witnessed how political power sought to influence, control, and restrict all religious life. Churches that remained independent often faced pressure, while those that cooperated with the government were forced to compromise their mission and message.

One of the greatest blessings I found in coming to the United States was its strong commitment to religious liberty. The separation of church and state has allowed churches to remain free to preach according to conscience without government control or political interference. It has protected the rights of people of every faith—and those of no faith—to worship freely.

History has taught me that once the lines between church and state begin to blur, both institutions suffer. Government gains influence over matters of faith, and the church risks losing its independence and moral authority.

Please preserve the historic safeguards that have made America a beacon of religious freedom. Future generations deserve the same liberty that has blessed so many who came to this country seeking freedom of conscience.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Pavel Ban

From: lloyd caudill <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - separation of church and state. Thomas Lloyd Caudill
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:33:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

Please be advised that God does not force people to make decisions to serve Him. Thus to force a person to make a specific choice is acting like OUR enemy, the devil. Do you wish to act like him?

Sincerely, Thomas Lloyd Caudill. Kettle Falls Falls, Washington.

From: John Martin <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:34:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

Thank you for taking the time to address the issue of religious freedom.
As I read your report, I was alarmed by the commission's proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a bridge.
A bridge opens the door for churches to compete with each other for grants and other government funding.
History has prime examples of what happened during the dark ages when church and state united and became one.
I respectfully ask the commission to revise its account of American History and withdraw or modify its recommendation.
America will do best to forever maintain a complete separation of church and state.

Sincerely,

John Martin

From: Vicki Williams <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:36:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

I absolutely DISAGREE with this decision

From: Kendra Crerand <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Recommendations
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:37:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom It May Concern,

I have read your recommendations. I am writing to you to voice my opposition to them. It is a dangerous relationship for citizens subjected to state controlled religion. As a Christian American, I must implore you to consider your role in the merging of church and state.

My family has been in America since the 1600's. I come from a long line of Mennonite, Huguenot and Quaker people. They were relentlessly persecuted and were part of William Penn's "Holy Experiment." They sought refuge from state controlled religion. They are the epitome of religious freedom because they understood Christ invites while man enforces. No one should be compelled to worship anything or anyone that goes against the dictates of their conscience.

Our Founding Fathers understood what these people faced and as such put forth the principle of religious freedom. As you are aware, this is enshrined in our First Amendment. The government is to remain neutral and should not favor a single faith over others nor should it's citizen's be coerced. You cannot though you will attempt to legislate the conscience of people. Violating the First Amendment of American Citizen's will be the undoing of America and everything our Founding Fathers stood for. We need only to look at history. State controlled religion has lead to wars, civil unrest and needless bloodshed. Your recommendations will send us back to the Dark Ages. We are to be a free people not subjects of a totalitarian government.

In conclusion, the government should be no respecter of faith or religion. Thomas Jefferson described the First Amendment as building a "wall of separation." A wall is solid, static, impenetrable and permanent but only when we fortify it. You will break this wall with the removal of the Johnson Amendment. Religion and government are easily corrupted. Madison also championed the "wall" for these reasons. Please approach your recommendations with prayerful consideration and discernment. True freedom comes from Christ. We are to protect that gift for ALL.

Respectfully,

Kendra Crerand

From: Shelly Litchfield <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Public Comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:37:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Commission:

I am concerned with the bent of the RLC. Its words do not align with the First Amendment of our Constitution which says "*Congress shall make no law respecting an* establishment *of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."*

It seems to me that your commission is overstepping its bounds by seeking to promulgate a certain brand of religiosity that does not allow for those who believe differently than Christian evangelicals and nationalists. Benjamin Franklin said, "When a religion is good...it will support itself...and when its professors are oblig'd to call for the help of the Civil Power...'tis a sign of its being a bad one."

I am a retired high school teacher. I believe in Jesus. I believe in democracy. I am a law-abilding American. I am a devoted grandmother. I believe the RLC is treading on individual and Constitutional rights in the proposals it is making. This is best exemplified by the comment of the RLC's chairman Dan Patrick that "There is no separation of church and state."

I am so proud of the "quilt" of different people types who make up America which I have experienced in my educational experience, my church, my volunteer opportunities, my travel, etc. The philosophy of the current presidential administration seems so antithetical to cultures and creeds other than the one Mr. Trump has called on to gain his power - the white evangelical extremists. While Mr. Trump is not a spiritual person, he has leveraged power among this group to the detriment of immigrants, asylum seekers, and even people visiting from other countries. This is a sad time in American history.

Sincerely,

Michelle Litchfield

From: Garlyn Randall <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:37:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the piller of freedom

From: paul ban <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Personal comment separation of church and state Pavel Ban
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:37:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I respectfully ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state, including the use of government funding for religious activities and the repeal of the Johnson Amendment.

Having grown up and lived under communist rule in Romania, I know firsthand what can happen when the government becomes too closely involved with religion. I witnessed how political power sought to influence, control, and restrict all religious life. Churches that remained independent often faced pressure, while those that cooperated with the government were forced to compromise their mission and message.

One of the greatest blessings I found in coming to the United States was its strong commitment to religious liberty. The separation of church and state has allowed churches to remain free to preach according to conscience without government control or political interference. It has protected the rights of people of every faith—and those of no faith—to worship freely.

History has taught me that once the lines between church and state begin to blur, both institutions suffer. Government gains influence over matters of faith, and the church risks losing its independence and moral authority.

Please preserve the historic safeguards that have made America a beacon of religious freedom. Future generations deserve the same liberty that has blessed so many who came to this country seeking freedom of conscience.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Pavel Ban

From: Ryan Musser <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty. Public Comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:39:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the United States Commission on Religious Liberty,

I am writing to express my profound disagreement with the assertion that the United States Constitution does not establish a meaningful separation between church and state. This position is inconsistent with the First Amendment, the intent of its architects, and the American tradition of safeguarding liberty of conscience.

The First Amendment's Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses work in tandem to ensure that religion remains free from governmental control and that the government remains free from sectarian domination. Thomas Jefferson famously described this as a "wall of separation between Church & State," a principle intended to protect religion from interference, not to show hostility toward it. James Madison similarly argued that religion must be left to the conviction and conscience of every individual, maintaining that civil society possesses no authority over religious duties.

These principles were further defended by Alonzo T. Jones during the 1888 debate over the Blair Sunday-Rest Bill. Jones argued that government jurisdiction extends only to civil rights and conduct, while matters of worship and doctrine lie beyond state authority. He warned that when government legislates religious observance, it becomes an instrument of coercion. This distinction aligns with the biblical mandate to "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

The historical consequences of blurring these lines are clear. The rejection of church-state separation has historically led to religious persecution, such as the late 19th-century imprisonment of individuals in Tennessee for laboring on Sunday while observing the seventh-day Sabbath. It is deeply concerning to see modern movements again advocating for "blue laws" and the dismantling of this essential separation.

The Founders did not seek merely to tolerate dissent; they sought to prevent government from acquiring jurisdiction over religion altogether. This protects all citizens—regardless of faith or lack thereof—by ensuring conscience remains free from political control.

The wall of separation is not a modern judicial distortion but a core constitutional principle. I urge the Commission to reject any interpretation of the Constitution that diminishes this separation. The preservation of religious liberty depends upon maintaining the distinction between civil authority and matters of conscience.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Musser

From: Jean LeBlanc <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:41:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom it May Concern:

This comment regards the Religious Liberty Commission. I am a Christian and agree with Christians being able to practice their religion without facing discrimination, as well as people of other faiths. However, I want to address the first point of the 12 opportunities listed in the Summary Report, which states, "Instruct the Department of Justice to issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state."

What this means and what it could lead to is a cause for concern. Chairman Dan Patrick has been public about his lack of belief in separation of church and state. In April 2026, he said that "the separation of church and state is the biggest lie that's been told in America since our founding."

On June 26, 2026, he said, "Because, again, the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution." While the idea is not used word for word in the Constitution, the first amendment of the Constitution certainly speaks to this idea:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

According to Merriam Webster, the 6th definition for the word state is defined as "the operations or concerns of the government of a country." One of the examples given under the definition is, "the separation of church and state."

Congress is part of our government and its operations, and thus part of the state; therefore, when it is expressed that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion and so on, separation of church and state is implied.

Our founding fathers, such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, knew this to be true. Jefferson wrote in his letter to the Danbury Baptist Association, “I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ thus building a wall of separation between church and State.”

If there is no separation between church and state, would there not eventually be a *state church?* What would stop the rise of one, or something similar in spirit? History tells us that such an entity as a state church has been responsible for multiple persecutions in different countries, and that is the *opposite* of religious liberty.

Will you please consider the matter thoughtfully?

Thank you,
Jean LeBlanc

From: Ryan Musseri<[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Religious Liberty Discussion-Ryan Musser
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:42:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the United States Commission on Religious Liberty,

I am writing to express my strong disagreement with the assertion that the U.S. Constitution does not establish a separation between church and state. This position contradicts the First Amendment, the intent of its architects like Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, and the American tradition of safeguarding liberty of conscience.

The Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses ensure government remains free from sectarian domination and religion remains free from state control. This principle was further defended during the 1888 Blair Sunday-Rest Bill debate by Alonzo T. Jones, who argued that civil government jurisdiction extends only to civil conduct, not to religious worship or doctrine. Historically, rejecting this separation has led to persecution, such as the 19th-century imprisonment of seventh-day Sabbath keepers under Sunday labor laws.

The Founders sought to prevent the government from acquiring jurisdiction over religion altogether to protect all citizens' freedom of conscience. The wall of separation is a core constitutional principle, not a modern distortion. I urge the Commission to reject any interpretation of the Constitution that diminishes this separation, as preserving religious liberty depends on maintaining the distinction between civil authority and matters of faith.

Respectfully submitted,
Ryan Musser

From: Gordon Hollandi<[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State –
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:44:51 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I was disappointed to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, it is the same thing as removing it.
That wall wasn't built by secularists or atheists to keep religion out. It was built by believers, God loving people to keep the freedoms to worship the God they believe in and that so many gave up their lives for. History has shown over and over what happens to freedoms when a nation decides to choose for everyone what they should believe in. A bridge doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money and political favors to corrupt the decisions that are made towards religious activities. The church or organization that can afford the most financial support towards a political party, will be the one that gets what it is asking for.
Please don't build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects all the churches, far more than it constrains it. I am not a US citizen, how ever, as I see the religious freedoms slowly being taken away in my country, I know that the actions taken by the United States will encourage and give freedoms to our Government to follow suite in what you do.
Sincerely,
[Gordon Holland]
[British Columbia ,Canada,]

From: "L. Darylene Cunningham" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] religious liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:45:46 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Liberty_of_Conscience_Threatened.docx

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see attached letter

To the members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission.

Our Liberty of Conscience is Threatened.

The papal church will never relinquish her claim to infallibility. All that she has done in her persecution of those who reject her dogmas she holds to be right; and would she not repeat the same acts, should the opportunity be presented? Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution.

"The Constitution of the United States guarantees liberty of conscience. Nothing is dearer or more fundamental. Pope Pius IX, in his Encyclical Letter of August 15, 1854, said: `The absurd and erroneous doctrines or ravings in defense of liberty of conscience are a most pestilential error--a pest, of all others, most to be dreaded in a state.' The same pope, in his Encyclical Letter of December 8, 1864, anathematized `those who assert the liberty of conscience and of religious worship,' also 'all such as maintain that the church may not employ force.'

"The pacific tone of Rome in the United States does not imply a change of heart. She is tolerant where she is helpless. Says Bishop O'Connor: 'Religious liberty is merely endured until the opposite can be carried into effect without peril to the Catholic world.'. . . The archbishop of St. Louis once said: 'Heresy and unbelief are crimes; and in Christian countries, as in Italy and Spain, for instance, where all the people are Catholics, and where the Catholic religion is an essential part of the law of the land, they are punished as other crimes.'. . .

"Every cardinal, archbishop, and bishop in the Catholic Church takes an oath of allegiance to the pope, in which occur the following words: 'Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our said lord (the pope), or his aforesaid successors, I will to my utmost persecute and oppose.'"--Josiah Strong, Our Country, ch. 5, pars. 2-4.

But Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ now than at any former period in her history. The Protestant churches are in great darkness, or they would discern the signs of the times. The Roman Church is far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation. She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to regain control of the world, to re-establish persecution,

and to undo all that Protestantism has done. Catholicism is gaining ground upon every side. See the increasing number of her churches and chapels in Protestant countries. Look at the popularity of her colleges and seminaries in America, so widely patronized by Protestants. Look at the growth of ritualism in England and the frequent defections to the ranks of the Catholics. These things should awaken the anxiety of all who prize the pure principles of the gospel.

Protestants have tampered with and patronized popery; they have made compromises and concessions which papists themselves are surprised to see and fail to understand. Men are closing their eyes to the real character of Romanism and the dangers to be apprehended from her supremacy. The people need to be aroused to resist the advances of this most dangerous foe to civil and religious liberty.

The Roman Catholic Church, uniting the forms of paganism and Christianity, and, like paganism, misrepresenting the character of God, has resorted to practices no less cruel and revolting. In the days of Rome's supremacy there were instruments of torture to compel assent to her doctrines. There was the stake for those who would not concede to her claims. There were massacres on a scale that will never be known until revealed in the judgment. Dignitaries of the church studied, under Satan their master, to invent means to cause the greatest possible torture and not end the life of the victim. In many cases the infernal process was repeated to the utmost limit of human endurance, until nature gave up the struggle, and the sufferer hailed death as a sweet release.

The papacy is just what prophecy declared that she would be, the apostasy of the latter times. 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4. It is a part of her policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent. "Faith ought not to be kept with heretics, nor persons suspected of heresy" (Lenfant, volume 1, page 516), she declares. Shall this power, whose record for a thousand years is written in the blood of the saints, be now acknowledged as a part of the church of Christ?

In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. Nay, more, they are opening the door for the

papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World. And that which gives greater significance to this movement is the fact that the principal object contemplated is the enforcement of Sunday observance--a custom which originated with Rome, and which she claims as the sign of her authority. It is the spirit of the papacy--the spirit of conformity to worldly customs, the veneration for human traditions above the commandments of God and the bible--that is permeating the Protestant churches and leading them on to do the same work of Sunday exaltation which the papacy has done before them.

If we would understand the agencies to be employed in the soon-coming contest, he has but to trace the record of the means which Rome employed for the same object in ages past. If he would know how papists and Protestants united will deal with those who reject their dogmas, let him see the spirit which Rome manifested toward the Sabbath and its defenders.

Royal edicts, general councils, and church ordinances sustained by secular power were the steps by which the pagan festival attained its position of honor in the Christian world. The first public measure enforcing Sunday observance was the law enacted by Constantine. (A.D. 321.) This edict required townspeople to rest on "the venerable day of the sun," but permitted countrymen to continue their agricultural pursuits. Though virtually a heathen statute, it was enforced by the emperor after his nominal acceptance of Christianity.

The royal mandate not proving a sufficient substitute for divine authority, Eusebius, a bishop who sought the favor of princes, and who was the special friend and flatterer of Constantine, advanced the claim that Christ had transferred the Sabbath to Sunday. Not a single testimony of the Scriptures was produced in proof of the new doctrine. Eusebius himself unwittingly acknowledges its falsity and points to the real authors of the change. "All things," he says, "whatever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's Day."--Robert Cox, Sabbath Laws and Sabbath Duties, page 538. But the Sunday argument, groundless as it was, served to embolden men in trampling upon the Sabbath of the Lord. All who desired to be honored by the world accepted the popular festival.

As the papacy became firmly established, the work of Sunday exaltation was continued. For a time the people engaged in agricultural labor when not

attending church, and the seventh day was still regarded as the Sabbath. But steadily a change was effected. Those in holy office were forbidden to pass judgment in any civil controversy on the Sunday. Soon after, all persons, of whatever rank, were commanded to refrain from common labor on pain of a fine for freemen and stripes in the case of servants. Later it was decreed that rich men should be punished with the loss of half of their estates; and finally, that if still obstinate they should be made slaves. The lower classes were to suffer perpetual banishment.

The decrees of councils proving insufficient, the secular authorities were besought to issue an edict that would strike terror to the hearts of the people and force them to refrain from labor on the Sunday. At a synod held in Rome, all previous decisions were reaffirmed with greater force and solemnity. They were also incorporated into the ecclesiastical law and enforced by the civil authorities throughout nearly all Christendom. (See Heylyn, History of the Sabbath, pt. 2, ch. 5, sec. 7.)

Still the absence of Scriptural authority for Sundaykeeping occasioned no little embarrassment. The people questioned the right of their teachers to set aside the positive declaration of Jehovah, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God," in order to honor the day of the sun. To supply the lack of Bible testimony, other expedients were necessary. A zealous advocate of Sunday, who about the close of the twelfth century visited the churches of England, was resisted by faithful witnesses for the truth; and so fruitless were his efforts that he departed from the country for a season and cast about him for some means to enforce his teachings. When he returned, the lack was supplied, and in his after labors he met with greater success. He brought with him a roll purporting to be from God Himself, which contained the needed command for Sunday observance, with awful threats to terrify the disobedient. This precious document-- as base a counterfeit as the institution it supported--was said to have fallen from heaven and to have been found in Jerusalem, upon the altar of St. Simeon, in Golgotha. But, in fact, the pontifical palace at Rome was the source whence it proceeded. Frauds and forgeries to advance the power and prosperity of the church have in all ages been esteemed lawful by the papal hierarchy.

But notwithstanding all the efforts to establish Sunday sacredness, papists themselves publicly confessed the divine authority of the Sabbath and the human origin of the institution by which it had been supplanted. In the sixteenth century a papal council plainly declared: "Let all Christians remember that the seventh day was consecrated by God, and hath been received and observed, not only by the Jews, but by all others who pretend to worship God; though we Christians have changed their Sabbath into the Lord's Day."-- Ibid., pages 281, 282. Those who were tampering with the divine law were not ignorant of the character of their work. They were deliberately setting themselves above God.

A striking illustration of Rome's policy toward those who disagree with her was given in the long and bloody persecution of the Waldenses, some of whom were observers of the Sabbath. Others suffered in a similar manner for their fidelity to the fourth commandment. The history of the churches of Ethiopia and Abyssinia is especially significant. Amid the gloom of the Dark Ages, the Christians of Central Africa were lost sight of and forgotten by the world, and for many centuries they enjoyed freedom in the exercise of their faith. But at last Rome learned of their existence, and the emperor of Abyssinia was soon beguiled into an acknowledgment of the pope as the vicar of Christ. Other concessions followed. An edict was issued forbidding the observance of the Sabbath under the severest penalties. (See Michael Geddes, Church History of Ethiopia, pages 311, 312.) But papal tyranny soon became a yoke so galling that the Abyssinians determined to break it from their necks. After a terrible struggle the Romanists were banished from their dominions, and the ancient faith was restored. The churches rejoiced in their freedom, and they never forgot the lesson they had learned concerning the deception, the fanaticism, and the despotic power of Rome.

These records of the past clearly reveal the enmity of Rome toward the true Sabbath and its defenders, and the means which she employs to honor the institution of her creating. The word of God teaches that these scenes are to be repeated as Roman Catholics and Protestants shall unite for the exaltation of the Sunday.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, students of prophecy in the United States have presented this testimony to the world. In the events now taking place is seen a rapid advance toward the fulfillment of the prediction. With Protestant

teachers there is the same claim of divine authority for Sundaykeeping, and the same lack of Scriptural evidence, as with the papal leaders who fabricated miracles to supply the place of a command from God. The assertion that God's judgments are visited upon men for their violation of the Sunday-sabbath, will be repeated; already it is beginning to be urged. And a movement to enforce Sunday observance is fast gaining ground.

Marvelous in her shrewdness and cunning is the Roman Church. She can read what is to be. She bides her time, seeing that the Protestant churches are paying her homage in their acceptance of the false sabbath and that they are preparing to enforce it by the very means which she herself employed in bygone days. Those who reject the light of truth will yet seek the aid of this self-styled infallible power to exalt an institution that originated with her. How readily she will come to the help of Protestants in this work it is not difficult to conjecture. Who understands better than the papal leaders how to deal with those who are disobedient to the church?

History testifies of her artful and persistent efforts to insinuate herself into the affairs of nations; and having gained a foothold, to further her own aims, even at the ruin of princes and people. In the year 1204, Pope Innocent III extracted from Peter II, king of Arragon, the following extraordinary oath: "I, Peter, king of Arragonians, profess and promise to be ever faithful and obedient to my lord, Pope Innocent, to his Catholic successors, and the Roman Church, and faithfully to preserve my kingdom in his obedience, defending the Catholic faith, and persecuting heretical pravity." --John Dowling, The History of Romanism, b. 5, ch. 6, sec. 55. This is in harmony with the claims regarding the power of the Roman pontiff "that it is lawful for him to depose emperors" and "that he can absolve subjects from their allegiance to unrighteous rulers."--Mosheim, b. 3, cent. 11, pt. 2, ch. 2, sec. 9, note 17.

And let it be remembered, it is the boast of Rome that she never changes. The principles of Gregory VII and Innocent III are still the principles of the Roman Catholic Church. And had she but the power, she would put them in practice with as much vigor now as in past centuries. Protestants little know what they are doing when they propose to accept the aid of Rome in the work of Sunday exaltation. While they are bent upon the accomplishment of their purpose, Rome

is aiming to re-establish her power, to recover her lost supremacy. Let the principle once be established in the United States that the church may employ or control the power of the state; that religious observances may be enforced by secular laws; in short, that the authority of church and state is to dominate the conscience, and the triumph of Rome in this country is assured.

God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution.

I have respectfully submitted these truths;

Eugene Cunningham from Oregon.

our

Liberty of Conscience Threatened. The papal church will never relinquish her claim to infallibility. All that she has done in her persecution of those who reject her dogmas she holds to be right; and would she not repeat the same acts, should the opportunity be presented? Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed and Rome be reinstated in her former power, and there would speedily be a revival of her tyranny and persecution. {GC 564.2}

From: Robby Nalker <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Freedom of conscience
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:47:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing to urge you to strongly uphold the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state.This core American value ensures absolute religious freedom by preventing the government from endorsing or favoring any specific religion. I respectfully ask that you support policies and legislation that:Protect public education from the imposition of sectarian religious doctrines or mandated religious texts.Keep public funds allocated exclusively for public secular purposes, rather than subsidizing religious institutions.Safeguard the freedom of conscience for all citizens, including religious minorities and the non-religious.A clear boundary between religion and government is vital to maintaining a fair, pluralistic democracy. I urge you to stand firm in defending these secular protections.Thank you for your time, your public service, and your attention to this vital issue. I look forward to hearing your stance on this matter.

Robert Nalker

Avon, Indiana

From: "Rhett Schack" <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:47:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

I just found out that my government is once again trying to chip away and the wall of separation between church and state. I'm sure this initiative is at the behest of one of the many faith groups that think they should have greater influence with my government and perhaps even get financial support from the government. Our 1st Amendment forbids both by my understanding and it should remain that way. NEVER trust any faith group to be fair in their influence of the secular government… history has born out the horrors of the church meddling with the state… again and again… in country after country. Our founders were wise enough to put in the stops to prevent this from happening her in the good old USA. When faith groups get their way with the state… we will all lose both our liberty of conscience and our civil liberties. Again, a review of the history of such intermingling of the religious and civil powers and influence with each other turns into an illicit affair and we all lose.

Don't do it.

Rhett Schack
PII Cell

From: Larry Kirkpatricki<[redacted]>
To: i"[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENTi– Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:48:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

VACCINE EXEMPTIONS and PARENTAL RIGHTS. I have just completed reading your draft report. One grave problem we face here in operating churches and religious schools in Maine is the May 2019 legislative change which repealed religious and philosophical vaccine exemptions for students. The effect of this rule is that even families sending their children to private religious schools we operate are compelled to vaccinate their children often against conscience. We have had to discontinue operation of some private religious schools while families choosing not to vaccinate their children engage in the only non-vaccination option available to them: home schooling. It would be a worthy achievement if under the heading of parental rights, religious and philosophical exemptions to vaccination were restored as recommended in your report on pages 148-149. Please pursue this!

The entire slate of recommendations under “Conscience and Coercion in Vaccine Policy” (pp. 148-150) should be implemented.

JOHNSON AMENDMENT. Of great concern is the proposal to repeal the Johnson amendment. If this is done, there is no end of the mischief that will follow as money and politics are combined with religious worship. This will create not merely a bridge but a literal money pipeline, and religious liberty will suffer, not prosper. Under no circumstances should the Johnson amendment be repealed as recommended on pp. 23, 128, 201, 220.

WALL or BRIDGE. Arguably, the First amendment IS America. Your commission and many of our church members share deep concern over the extraordinarily deleterious effect of hypersecularization; the Republic can hardly be expected to flourish when a great proportion of the population is areligious. And yet, the path forward is not to retool the relationship between Church and State to the likeness of a bridge. The better path is negative law: keep the government out of the way and let churches and religious institutions fund themselves and operate with little or no governmental interference and regulation. When you shift to positive law and begin to hand out tax-payer moneys, you corrupt both Church and State. Do not pursue any blending of Church and State as described on pp. 21-22, 42, 76, 121, 179, 190f.

If the Republic is to see a societal increase in the influence of Christian values, that is up to Christians; it is not up to State. If the President and the Commission truly value religious liberty, do not act so that you inadvertently diminish it for hoped-for short term gains.

Sincerely,

Larry Kirkpatrick
Executive Secretary
Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

From: Donald Vollmer <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:49:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

I totally agree with the tenants of Pillars of Faith, which outlines this committees' plan to join church and state together. This idea has never had a good ending in every time and every place since time began.
Since the founding of our Nation until the present day, Americans deem their own existence must be understood by precepts far beyond the government to alter or define. Justice Kennedy

From: Michael David Barron <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - On the Separation of Church and State - Michael David Barron
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:49:57 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 12, 2026

Via Electronic Mail to [redacted]

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty

U.S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Room 5706

Washington, DC 20530

A Response to The Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

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On the Separation of Church and State

To the Members of the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty,

I write as a Christian who sincerely appreciates the Commission's commitment to protecting religious liberty in the United States. Religious liberty is both a biblical and constitutional principle. Genuine faith cannot be compelled by civil authority but must arise from the free exercise of conscience before God. For that reason, I welcome any efforts to defend the right of Americans to practice and express their faith freely.

I, therefore, with respect and concern, submit this letter regarding the Commission's draft report, particularly addressing its treatment of the separation of church and state. While I share the Commission's desire to strengthen religious liberty, I believe the report misunderstands the historical backdrop and constitutional purpose of this principle by portraying the separation of church and state as harmful to religious liberty.

This principle did not arise from hostility toward Christianity or a desire to remove religion from public life. Rather, it developed from centuries of political and religious experience that demonstrated the dangers that occur when civil governments assume responsibility for enforcing religious doctrine. The framers of the First Amendment inherited lessons from medieval Europe, the Protestant Reformation, and even the early American colonies, where many who fled persecution later repeated similar patterns.

History demonstrates that institutional separation has been one of the greatest safeguards of religious liberty because it protects both religious communities from government control and individuals from government interference in matters of conscience.

I. Why Separation Became Necessary: Europe's Religious History

For much of European history, religious and political authority were deeply connected. Following the Christianization of the Roman Empire, Christianity became increasingly intertwined with government structures. In the medieval concept of Christendom, rulers often viewed themselves as responsible not only for maintaining civil order but also for defending religious unity.

Although this relationship sometimes produced cooperation between church and state, it also created a system where theological disagreement could become a civil offense. Those who challenged established religious authorities were often viewed not merely as religious dissenters but as threats to political stability.

The Waldensians provide an early example. Beginning in the twelfth century, this Christian movement emphasized biblical study, simplicity, and preaching by ordinary believers. Their beliefs brought them into conflict with established religious authorities, and over time they experienced persecution through the cooperation of ecclesiastical and civil authorities, resulting in the massacre, imprisonment, and displacement of thousands of Waldensians. Their experience demonstrated how religious disagreements became persecutorial when governments participated in the enforcement of religious conformity.

A similar pattern occurred with Jan Hus and the Hussites. Hus called for reform within the church and emphasized the authority of Scripture. After being condemned at the Council of Constance in 1415, he was burned at the stake despite receiving the promise of safe conduct, and his followers were persecuted soon after. The resulting Hussite Wars showed how theological disputes could become political and military conflicts when governments assumed responsibility for enforcing religious decisions.

The Inquisition further reflected the assumption that maintaining religious unity was a legitimate function of government. Although inquisitorial systems varied across Europe, they represented the broader belief that religious dissent was not simply a matter of personal conscience but a threat requiring civil intervention.

The Protestant Reformation challenged Catholic authority but did not immediately result in the implementation of religious liberty principles. Rather, the same patterns often continued under different religious governments. Catholic governments persecuted Protestants, while Protestant governments persecuted Catholics and various Protestant denominations. The Anabaptists provide one of the clearest examples, being martyred by Protestant and Catholic authorities, suffering imprisonment, exile, drowning, burning, and execution because they rejected state control over religion and emphasized voluntary faith.

The lesson of this history is not that religion itself causes persecution. Religious communities have contributed enormously to society, education, charity, and moral development. The danger arises when governments assume authority over religious truth and use political power to suppress dissent.

When civil authorities attempt to define religious orthodoxy, they must inevitably decide between right and wrong and their method of implementation, placing matters of conscience under political control and creating the possibility of persecution, even when leaders act with sincere intentions. These attempts resulted in the culmination in one of Europe's bloodiest spectacles: the Thirty Years' War.

II. The Thirty Years' War and the Search for Religious Peace

The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) demonstrated the devastating consequences of attempting to preserve religious unity through political and military power. Although it began as a conflict between Catholic and Protestant factions within the Holy Roman Empire, it quickly expanded into a broader struggle involving political authority, territorial ambition, and competing visions of European order.

The Peace of Augsburg in 1555 attempted to resolve religious conflict by adopting the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* ('whose realm, his religion'), allowing rulers—not individual consciences—to determine the religion of their territories. However, this arrangement did not establish true religious liberty because citizens were generally expected to follow the religion chosen by their ruler. Those who disagreed often faced pressure to conform or leave.

As tensions increased, religious identity became intertwined with political allegiance. Leaders often believed they were defending their faith, but governments used religious conflicts to pursue political objectives. The result was a war of immense destruction.

Central Europe experienced famine, disease, economic collapse, and widespread devastation. Some regions lost significant portions of their population, and generations suffered from a conflict that began with attempts to enforce religious unity. The death toll is estimated to be between four million and eight million.

The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 represented an important change in European thinking. Although it did not establish modern religious freedom, it reflected a growing recognition that political stability could not be achieved by forcing religious uniformity.

Europe gradually learned that civil governments cannot create genuine religious unity through legal enforcement. Attempts to settle theological disputes through political authority produced significant division and inestimable suffering rather than sincere faith and lasting peace. These lessons profoundly shaped those who crossed the Atlantic.

III. America's Experiment: From Religious Persecution to Religious Liberty

Many settlers who came to North America were not seeking to create a society without religion. They were deeply committed Christians seeking to worship according to conscience. However, their experiences with religious conflict led many to question whether government should possess authority over matters of faith.

The Pilgrims who established Plymouth Colony in 1620 left England because they believed the established church had retained practices inconsistent with their understanding of Christianity. Their journey reflected a desire for freedom of conscience rather than government-imposed religious requirements.

The Puritans who founded Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630 also sought religious reform. However, their colony revealed an important irony: groups that had experienced religious restrictions created systems that restricted others. Massachusetts established a society where religious and civil authority were closely connected, resulting in the persecution of dissenters.

The experiences of Anne Hutchinson, Quakers, and Baptists demonstrate this danger. Hutchinson was banished after theological disagreements with Massachusetts leaders. Quakers faced imprisonment, expulsion, and execution. Baptists experienced opposition because they rejected established churches and argued that faith should be voluntary rather than enforced by the government.

Similar patterns of persecution appeared throughout the American colonies, but one of the strongest challenges to this approach came from Roger Williams. Having witnessed the Puritan government's punishment of religious dissenters as a Puritan minister, Williams concluded that civil magistrates possessed no authority over the conscience, and could not enforce religious belief or worship. He believed forced conformity harmed both society and the church because genuine faith must come from conviction rather than coercion.

After being banished from Massachusetts, Williams founded Rhode Island, which became an early example of broad religious liberty. He argued for a separation between church and civil authority, describing the need for a "hedge" or "wall" between the two. This principle was not based on hostility toward Christianity but on the belief that religion is strongest when it remains independent of political power.

These ideas influenced James Madison and Thomas Jefferson. Madison opposed government involvement in religion because he believed faith should be guided by conscience rather than civil authority. Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom affirmed that individuals should not be compelled to support religious beliefs they did not hold.

The First Amendment reflected these principles by establishing two protections: that government may not establish religion and that government may not prohibit its free exercise. These protections work together. The Establishment Clause prevents government control of religion, while the Free Exercise Clause protects religious practice.

The founders therefore did not reject religion. They rejected governmental authority over religion. That distinction is essential. Separation of church and state was not created to weaken faith but to protect faith from becoming an instrument of political power.

IV. The Commission's Draft and Its Own Experience

I appreciate the Commission's commitment to protecting religious liberty and recognize the importance of defending sincere religious expression. However, I respectfully believe the draft report misunderstands the purpose of the separation between church and state.

History does not demonstrate that separation weakens religion. Instead, history demonstrates that separation protects religion by preventing governments from controlling religious institutions, doctrines, and expressions of conscience.

The Commission's own recent experience illustrates this challenge. Following the Commission's February 2026 hearing on antisemitism, Commissioner Carrie Prejean Boller was removed from the Commission after raising questions regarding the relationship between the criticism of Israel, anti-Zionism, antisemitism, and religious interpretation.

Commission leadership stated that her removal resulted from concerns that she used the hearing for a personal or political agenda. Prejean has argued that her questions represented legitimate religious inquiry and expressions of conscience.

Regardless of how one evaluates that disagreement, the situation demonstrates an important constitutional principle: when governmental bodies become involved in religious questions, they inevitably become arbiters of acceptable religious expression.

When government officials begin determining which theological statements are acceptable, which interpretations of Scripture are heretical, or which religious viewpoints may properly be expressed in official settings, government inevitably assumes authority over questions that belong to conscience. This is precisely the danger the Establishment Clause was designed to prevent.

Protecting religious liberty does not mean protecting religion from criticism. It means preventing government from becoming the authority that determines religious truth.

The separation of church and state protects both religion and government. It prevents the state from controlling faith and prevents religious communities from becoming dependent upon political power.

This principle is also consistent with the teachings of Christ. When asked whether taxes should be paid to Caesar, Jesus replied, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are

God's' (Matthew 22:21). In doing so, He distinguished the legitimate sphere of civil government from the sphere of conscience and worship. Christ advanced His kingdom through persuasion, not coercion, providing a model for religious liberty that protects both faith and civil government.

Conclusion

I respectfully submit this comment not as an opponent of religion in public life, but as a Christian who believes religious liberty is among the greatest principles established in the American constitutional tradition.

The Free Exercise Clause protects the right of individuals and communities to practice their faith. However, genuine religious liberty requires both protection of religious expression and limits on governmental authority over religion.

The historical record demonstrates that institutional separation of church and state was not born from hostility toward Christianity but from centuries of painful experience showing that both church and state suffer when civil government assumes responsibility for religious doctrine.

Preserving institutional separation is therefore not a rejection of religion but one of the surest means of protecting it. It allows churches to remain independent, protects individual conscience, and enables people of different beliefs to live together peacefully.

I respectfully encourage the Commission to reconsider its treatment of the separation of church and state in light of both history and constitutional tradition. The strongest defense of religion is not a government that enforces religious belief, but a government that protects the freedom of individuals and communities to embrace, practice, and share their convictions voluntarily.

A nation committed to religious liberty must preserve both the freedom to exercise religion and the wisdom to prevent government from assuming authority over matters of conscience.

History teaches that the greatest threat to religious liberty has never been the existence of differing religious beliefs, but the concentration of civil power over them. The separation of church and state was adopted not to diminish religion, but to ensure that no government would again possess the authority to decide what its citizens must believe.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Michael David Barron

From: Jill Faber <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:50:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sent from my iPhone
As a Christian I am for the separation of church and state. I desire to live by Christian principles and do not feel like this should interfere with any political issue. Kindness thoughtfulness service for others according to the Holy Spirit and Scripture is how I choose to live.
The state should not have the right to decide what should be injected into my body as it was created by God and I am responsible in answering to God alone. No political power dictating anything in my personal convictions living answerable to God. I don't agree with government getting in between me and answering to God. Liberty of conscience is powerful for those who love God. We make good citizens.
Sincerely Jill Faber

From: Donita Lawless <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:53:22 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Religious_Liberty_Statement.docx

Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Philip Lawless

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, that is exactly backwards — and as a person of faith, I find the idea alarming.

That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the church free. A bridge doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money and political favors to march right in, until churches are competing for grants and answering to politicians instead of to God. History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands, and it isn't good for either one.

Please don't build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects the church far more than it constrains it.

Sincerely,

Philip Lawless

Harrah, Oklahoma

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission,
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:54:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission, 7-12-26

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter in opposition to the Project 2025 Mandate. Any time in history when religious people (Church) employs the state to enforce **Their** religious convictions which by the way have no biblical backing.To enforce and compel the consciences of the people or legislate morality it has always resulted in persecution. History will be repeated. Study the history of the dark ages. This whole idea of the church legislating and enforcing its dogmas is evil. One good source of this history is in the book Great Controversy. This book contains History as well as Prophecy. This movement is not biblical. You can also get the Great Controversy on line for free.

Sincerly Yours
Ricki Bowman

From: Chris Taylor <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please guard our freedom and maintain a separation of church and state. Thank you
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:54:44 -0400
Importance: Normal
Inline-Images: IMG_6510.jpeg

Thank you for your time.
Chris Taylor [redacted]

Separation of church and state is already clear in the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Therefore, I object to the Religious Liberty Commission's recommendation #1, "Instruct the Department of Justice to issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state."

The Johnson Amendment is necessary to maintain separation of church and state. Therefore, I object to Recommendation #9, "Repeal the Johnson Amendment."

From: A Google User<[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:56:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Sirs;
I write this letter to inform you that
I am a Staunch supporter of the separation of Church and State and the Constitution of the United States of America 🇺🇸, It is these documents which defend and up-hold our religious Liberties and Freedoms we treasure. It makes possible this open and honest communication you and I are able to have. I stand Firm in my support for the Separation of Church and State, the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights which in my opinion are the most important Documents ever written by the hands of men second to the Ten Commandments written with the Finger of God.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.
Jorge E Dominguez

From: Elena Cropper <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Elena Langel
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:57:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing to express my concern and ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment. Blurring the lines between religion and government will only weaken the moral fiber of our nation. Freedom of religion and the ability to worship and educate our children according to the dictates of conscience and not the mandates of government are the very principles upon which this nation was founded. I ask that you uphold these principles.

I agree with the comments submitted by Pillar of Freedom and I ask that you please implement them.

Sincerely,

Elena Langel
Phoenix, Arizona

From: ophelia miranda <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:01:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Dr. Carson and members of the Religious Liberty Committee,

Uniting Church and State would be the farthest from what our country has been based on, freedom. If we say that our country was based on Christian principles then blending these two would not be wise. We serve a God that is love and not force. To force someone to go one way is very far from the freedom of choice, which is what God gives us. I want to continue to see our country remain what it is known for, freedom . Freedom of choice, freedom of speech, freedom of Religion. If we don't want a repeat of what happened in our history, people dying because they didn't go along with one agenda, then to keep church and state separate from each other as it is now, would be the best decision.

Sincerely,
O. Miranda

P S. I agree with Heritage and Hope Ministries

From: Robert Shafferi <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Seperation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:01:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

The separation of church and state is the basis of our freedoms. From the pilgrims leaving the issues of the church of England, to Roger Williams in Rhode Island. The government has no right to impose its belief of what God we should worship or how and when to worship Him.

Churches, church schools and all religions should be separate from the government...As our founders set forth...

Sincerely::
Robert P Shaffer

From: cathy haas <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Path Forward
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:02:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

My comments for the Path Forward.
I do believe the USA needs formal written guidance for all governmental agencies on returning to the original definition and intention of the Establishment Clause. Our founders never intended to separate church and state in a manner to keep all religion out of government, but rather to keep government out of religion. There is a very big difference. A free society was meant to be based on basic moral standards established by God in the judeao-christian tradition, without which our founders knew, no free society would prevail.

I'm hopeful this would end the unjust legal system of targeting religious speech in the public domain. If however, that religious speech does seek annihilation of an opposing religion, the killing of someone who will not convert to their religion, or discrimination and ill treatment of a person based on their faith that is different from theirs, then that is when the government has a right to intervene with already established laws. ie terrorist organizations and such have no place in a free society.

--
Cathy Haas

From: Vivian Williams <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:03:38 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Religious_Liberty_Draft_Report.docx

7/12/26

Via Electronic Mail to [redacted]

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 5706
Washington, DC 20530

RE: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am aware of the recommendations made by the RLC, and I agree with some of the Commission's suggestions. However, I am expressing my concerns about the recommendation to make changes to the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. It is essential that **no alteration** be made to the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. I am concerned about the effects these changes could have on religious liberty.

I am thankful for the religious freedom Americans enjoy. It is a blessing to live in a society that allows for religious diversity. This religious freedom gives the cultural majority as well as the minority the right to worship and hold belief systems according to their convictions. It also allows individuals to change their personal beliefs as their conscience dictates. The First Amendment already protects individuals' freedom of speech and religion. Subtle changes to the foundation of democracy can cause a misinterpretation of the present Constitution. Any deviation from the framework of the Constitution, whether distinct or subtle, can pose a risk to the erosion of separation of powers.

I am **not in favor** of any changes being made to the First Amendment. Individuals religious and political rights are already protected and guaranteed by the current U.S. Constitution. I am requesting that the government maintain a neutral stance regarding churches, worship practices, and liberty of conscience.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my point of view.

Sincerely,

Vivian Williams

Vivian Williams
American Citizen

From: Mary Huddleston <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:04:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

Despite the awful things we can find in our past history as a nation, we have been blessed as a nation which respected the sovereignty of other nations. Let's keep to the positive portions of our past and one other example which I consider to be our most important blessing. This blessing is our freedom to worship God the Father, God the Son, Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit. One of the most important Rights is the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, the right to worship the Creator as we understand the Bible to teach us. The right to gather and worship God together. I believe we are the remnants of old Israel and among this group is the new Israel as we were baptized and admonished to be Christ's followers. These distinctive views are the rights our Founders secured for us.
Please keep the Federal Government away from the sacred right of personal conscientious right to worship God in Heaven as we understand He wants us to, not in any way other than in our Scriptures which we hold dear.
Thank you for adding my letter to our Government in a plea to keep from making a law that would force a specific day of worship upon those who believe we should in all points follow the Ten Commandments and especially the one commandment God told His people old or new to Remember. Remember The Sabbath Day to keep it Holy.
Let's keep the Blessings of God upon our nation in Whom we Trust.
Mary Huddleston

From: Janet Kahler <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:04:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

As a citizen of the United States of America I ask you, please do not destroy the wall separating politics and religion. Money given to either political or religious organizations can poison this separation.

From: Matthew Everett <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:05:57 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.
Matthew Everett

Get Outlook for iOS

From: mkross59i<[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to Letter
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:07:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom it May Concern,

I want to respond to the letter in regards to the separation of church and state. My understanding is our fore fathers intended there to be a separation of church and state. I believe I should have the power of choice as God intended it to be. I answer God alone and should be given the freedom to choose.

Thank you,
MeritaiRoss

Sent from my Galaxy

From: Tomas Ortiz <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Cc: Mark Whitacre <[redacted]>, Brian Grim <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission public hearing July 13
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:08:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

Subject: Encouraging the Respectful Recognition of Christmas During the December Season

Dear leaders of Presidential Religious Libery Commission.

I am writing as a citizen who deeply values the religious freedom guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. I respectfully ask you to encourage public institutions and government agencies to continue recognizing Christmas by its traditional name during the month of December while also respecting the diverse beliefs of all Americans.

For millions of Americans, Christmas is far more than a cultural celebration. It commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ and is one of the most sacred observances of the Christian faith. Public acknowledgment of Christmas has long been a part of our nation's history and traditions, alongside the recognition of many other religious and cultural celebrations.

I fully support the rights of every individual to practice—or not practice—their own faith. My request is not to diminish or exclude other holidays, but rather to ensure that the word "Christmas" is not unnecessarily avoided or replaced where its use is appropriate. Respecting diversity should include respecting the traditions of Christians as well.

I ask that you consider policies and public guidance that affirm the freedom of government employees, schools, and public institutions to use the word "Christmas" appropriately and without fear of harassment or discrimination, while continuing to treat people of every faith and background with dignity and equal respect.

Our nation is strongest when it protects the free exercise of religion for everyone. I hope we can preserve America's rich heritage by allowing Christmas to be openly recognized with the same spirit of goodwill, peace, and joy that has inspired generations.

Thank you for your service to our states and our nation. I would appreciate learning your thoughts on this matter and any steps you believe can help protect both religious liberty and mutual respect among all Americans.

Respectfully,

Have a blessed, hopeful, peaceful, and greatful day.

Tommy Ortiz, MBA
Converse, Texas
[redacted] cell

Enthusiasm , Service, and Care to honor God!

From: Cheryne Ellis <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:08:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom It May Concern,

I wholeheartedly believe in the words of Thomas Jefferson, "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach action only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church and State,".

I have concerns about what might happen when Man interferes with the relationship a man has with God. It interferes with what our country holds dear, which is freedom. Interference with something that everyone in the United States holds so dearly would only create chaos, on so many different levels. I pray that you will take to heart the words of Thomas Jefferson.

Respectfully,

Cheryne Ellis

Sent from my iPhone

From: Marva [redacted]
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:10:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am very concerned about the comments that "There is no SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE." The constitution does not say this in exact words but if you know TRUE history of our forefathers and Roger Williams influence along with the Spirit of God, you will understand the underlying theme written in our constitution that kept church and state separate because of the oppression it had in Europe during the Dark Ages. Have we not learned from history what this has caused. Have we not seen how great a country we have holding to this idea.

When there is no separation of church and state this will only lead to religious persecution. Forcing God on others will not work. It has to be a change of heart.

I pray that you will reconsider what you are doing by joining church and state. This will only lead to the demise of the USA and what it has stood for. There should be freedom for all religions. I am a Christian but I would never force a religion on anyone because of the freedom of conscience. God never forces and neither should we.

Sincerely Marva.

From: James Vincenti <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: Re: Automatic reply: [EXTERNAL] Church and state are always to be separate.
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:11:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."

"God requires not a uniformity of religion to be enacted and enforced in any civil state; which enforced uniformity sooner or later is the greatest occasion of civil war, ravishing of conscience, persecution of Christ Jesus and his servants, and of the hypocrisy and destruction of millions of souls". Roger Williams, "The "Bloody Covenant."

James & Brigitte Vincent

"Worship The Lord In The Beauty Of Holiness"

On Sun, Jul 12, 2026, 9:04 AM RLC (OASG) <PII> wrote:

> Thank you for your email! Please be aware public comments to the Commission may be subject to public inspection. Please do not include personally identifiable information such as addresses, birth dates, or other details you may wish to keep private.

From: "Ernesti- L.M" <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] An appeal to Religious liberty committee
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:11:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

An Appeal to the Religious Liberty Committee

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Committee,

I write to you with sincere respect and deep concern regarding any position that appears to encourage a closer union between religion and civil government. As someone who values both faith and freedom, I believe that genuine religious liberty is best preserved when church and state remain institutionally separate.

The founders of the United States recognized that government has a God-given responsibility to administer justice and protect the rights of all citizens, while matters of conscience belong to the individual and to God. This principle is reflected in the First Amendment of the Constitution, which protects both the free exercise of religion and guards against governmental establishment of religion.

History repeatedly demonstrates that when civil power and religious authority become closely united, freedom of conscience suffers. People of different faiths—or no faith at all—can face coercion, discrimination, or unequal treatment. Religious belief loses its voluntary nature when supported or enforced by the power of the state.

As Christians, we should remember Christ's own example. Jesus declared, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). He never sought political power to advance His kingdom. Instead, He invited people to follow Him through love, truth, and conviction, never through civil authority. Likewise, the apostles spread the gospel through persuasion, not legislation.

I respectfully urge the Religious Liberty Committee to continue defending the constitutional principle of separation between church and state. This principle does not weaken religion; rather, it protects the freedom of every person to worship according to conscience without government interference or favoritism.

True religious liberty safeguards believers of every denomination as well as those of other faiths. It preserves the integrity of both the church and the state by allowing each to fulfill its proper role without controlling the other.

May your decisions continue to uphold liberty of conscience, equal justice under the law, and the constitutional freedoms that have long been a source of strength and hope.

Respectfully,

[Ernest M. Kithinji]

From: Ivanna Topchiy <[redacted]>
To:i"[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Saving freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:12:10 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hello. I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.
Thank you

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Eppy Green <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: We are for separation of Church (Religion) and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:14:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Sir:

We are normal, everyday Christians. The key recommendations of concern create the following points with which we do not agree:

1. Financial support for religious, faith based non-profits
2. Financial support for religious education
3. Politicization of Churches and Religious non-profits by repealing the Johnson Amendment.
4. Singling out one religion for special government protection
5. Indoctrination of Americans in the ideology of the Commission.

Thank you for your consideration of our opionions.

Jon and Eppy Green
[redacted]

From: Beth Jepson <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:16:29 -0400
Importance: Normal

I don’t agree with that.

From: CS451 <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Seperation of Church and State - Corey Samson
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:19:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

I strongly oppose the attempts to remove or relax the Amendment of separation of church and state. To bring that down, I feel would lead to the degradation of our country and the very fabric of our society, which is the US Constitution.

Sincerely,

Corey Samson

Sent from Proton Mail for iOS.

From: Lionel Henryi<PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Response
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:21:01 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Religious_Liberty_Response.pdf

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While we are mindful of the Committee's labors, which resulted in the 12 recommendations released June 26, certain of which we agree with, we write to voice our concerns and objections to the Committee's first and ninth recommendations [1] and its obviously insufficient consideration of the warnings of the Founding Fathers of the dangers of a union of church and state or the many lessons of history regarding same.

The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice "issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state.ë [2] At the formal release of the Committee's recommendations on the same day, Committee Chair Dan Patrick publicly stated that "the separation of church and state is not in the constitution" and that the phrase "has no constitutional basis.ë [3]

As citizens and students of history, and as Christians, we are alarmed lest the flawed and unconstitutional view of the Chair of the Committee of the so-called "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" prove influential or worse, instructive, to the Department of Justice. If the Committee's opinion of the so-called "proper understanding" of the Establishment Clause is the same as that of its Chair, it is apparent that its understanding is not proper, but rather improper.

Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history.ë According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain.
Certainly, the Founding Fathers were all aware of the persecution of the Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

In Europe, the persecution of the martyrs is well documented. Today we take the Bible for granted but forget that William Tyndale was executed for translating the Bible into the English language, not by atheists but by religious bigots. It was a union of church and state that suppressed speech and the freedom of the press in England. It was a union of church and state that prohibited the work of translation of the Bible, which changed the world. It was a union of church and state that necessitated his flight to Europe. It was a union of church and state that killed him.

We respectfully ask that the Department of Justice, in considering the issue of public guidance of the separation of church and state, consider the history of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania and early Founding Father, who was repeatedly jailed for his religious faith in England. The Pennsylvania Colony became a haven, not from atheist persecutors but from religious persecutors who did not believe in the separation of church and state. The same is true of Roger Williams, founder of the colony of Rhode Island, who was ordered arrested for declaring that the civil magistrate cannot enforce the first table of the Decalogue. We ask that the Committee take into account the brutal public whipping of President Abraham Lincoln's five-time great-grandfather, Obadiah Holmes, in the Massachusetts colony, for the "crime" of religious dissent. Obadiah Holmes was not whipped by atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

We are concerned that the Committee neglected to take into account the impact of the separation of church and state on the other rights codified in the First Amendment. Free speech and freedom of the press, for example, owe their flourishing in the modern world in large part to the separation of church and state in America. Prior to the protections in the First Amendment, the Roman Catholic Church for centuries maintained a list of banned books called the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The books were subject to confiscation, and the possession of them resulted in the punishment of the owner.

Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, David Hume and Edward Gibbon, and many others, all at the behest of the Roman Papacy, which is itself a union of church and state. Free speech in the Western world is the legacy of those who risked the wrath of a unified church and state, often at the cost of their lives. We would also ask that the Department of Justice consider the repeated modern calls from the papal power today for the censorship of the internet and the suppression of free speech, contrary to the First Amendment. [4] We have no doubt that the censorship of Galileo, Kepler, Milton, and others was prosecuted under the justification of the censorship of misinformation, also.

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings. Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. We are concerned about the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

Therefore, we respectfully ask, what proper guidance can the Department of Justice hope to give to the public on the "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" if it is directed in its object by a Committee and a Committee Chair, who has neglected to more fully analyze the reasons for the separation of church and state, or the reasons why the United States codified the disestablishment of church and state in the First Amendment in the first instance?

The reference to the wall of separation between church and state is not only mentioned by President Thomas Jefferson in the letter to the Danbury Baptists, which, of course, it is. [6] What is often left out of the narrative is that Jefferson said that he personally believed that the principle of the separation of church and state is codified in the Constitution. Therein, Jefferson wrote: "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,ė thus building a wall of separation between Church & State.ë [7]

James Madison wrote, "It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of Citizens and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution. The free men of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much soon to forget it.ë [8]

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's.ë [9] Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate in the American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from the State.ë [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

In his anonymous treatise published in the Boston Gazette, John Adams, later the second President of the United States, wrote that canon law was a tyrannical form of government, as was feudal law, but that the worst of all forms of governments was a union of the two. [11] And it was Madison who stated that, "In the Papal System, Government and Religion are in a manner consolidated, & that is found to be the worst of Governments.ë

We respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee and that it adopt recommendation 1 of the Committee that it convene a public hearing, with written and oral submissions from the public, to more comprehensively study the question of the separation of church and state in history, and in American history in particular, a study which we would enthusiastically support.

We remain, Yours truly,

Lionel Henry

From: Eppy Green <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: We do not agree re any change in separating Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:24:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Sir:

We are normal, everyday Christians. The key recommendations of concern create the following points with which we do not agree:

1. Financial support for religious, faith based non-profits
2. Financial support for religious education
3. Politicization of Churches and Religious non-profits by repealing the Johnson Amendment.
4. Singling out one religion for special government protection
5. Indoctrination of Americans in the ideology of the Commission.

Thank you for your consideration of our opinions.

Jon and Eppy Green

From: Ellen Story <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Up coming vote on religious liberty:
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:25:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

This great country, the USA was founded on the principle, among others, of religious liberty. The right to worship freely, without government interference, has long been cherished.

Don't change it now. Protect our rights, stand up for the people so they can worship wherever and whenever They want without the government looking over their shoulder and dictating how to worship.

Thank you for your work in congress on our behalf.

Ellen Story

Ellen Story
It is knowledge of God that alone can make us like Him in character

From: Connie Early <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Response to Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:25:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the members of the RLC
Greeting,

I was deeply troubled by the report to discard the separation of church and state.
As a faith based citizen of this country. I find no need to change our constitution which was founded on religious freedom, use of conscience and freedom of choice.
I respectfully request you prayerfully reevaluate if this enactment would be for the benefit of this country.

Respectfully Submitted,

Connie J. Early
July 12, 2026

From: Kirsten Berben <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:25:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,
I do not agree, with bridging church and state. We know from history when combining church and state many were persecuted and executed. I have read Pillar of Freedoms comments and agree with their stance. Church's should have no place in politics and the government should have no say in Americans religious liberties. My ancestors fled to America to escape religious persecution. I also object to funding religious non-profit activities, funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses. I object to repealing the Johnson Amendment, which restricts church's political activities. I request that the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced. Thank you for your time.
Very Respectfully,
Kirsten Samson

From: Jack Pavliki<[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:26:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

From: Jeremy Toney <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:26:50 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,
I am writing to formally submit my opposition to the recommendations set forth in your draft report. Your assertion that the separation of church and state is a "lie" or lacks constitutional basis is a dangerous misreading of history that threatens the fundamental rights of all citizens.
The union of church and state is not a solution to our national challenges; it is a catalyst for institutional overreach and the violation of personal liberty. When ecclesiastical authority and state power are permitted to merge, the result is the loss of individual autonomy.
My objection to your report is rooted in a decade of lived experience regarding the destructive power of mandated reporting and state-enforced separation of families. Having experienced firsthand the trauma of having my child placed in foster care due to the intersection of religious and state systems, I know that the "bridge" you propose is a mechanism for profound, life-altering harm. Institutional influence, when bolstered by state power, does not protect families—it shatters them.

Your recommendations to repeal the Johnson Amendment, provide government funding for religious entities, and push for state-sponsored ideological conformity are direct threats to the principles of freedom. I will continue to stand against any movement, policy, or Commission that attempts to dissolve the wall of separation between church and state, as I have detailed in my own work, *The Sovereign Human Machine*.

The separation of church and state is not a negotiable policy; it is the only barrier protecting citizens from the coercion and systemic abuse that arises when these two powers collude. I urge you to abandon these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Toney Northern Illinois resident

From: Christian Chauvin <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Recommendations Concerning the Johnson Amendment and Public Funding of Religion
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:28:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the Commission:

I write as a minister of the gospel to record my respectful but firm objection to two recommendations contained in the Commission's draft report: the proposed repeal of the Johnson Amendment, and the proposed expansion of public funding for religious organizations engaged in religious activity. I object not in spite of my faith but because of it. It is precisely because I hold the free worship of God to be sacred that I regard any entanglement of the church with the machinery and treasury of the state as a peril to both; the power of the gospel requires no supplement of the power of the state; and the power of the state, united to the church, is rightly called "fornication" in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation. Any time the church has entangled itself in the matters of civil power, persecution of minority and outlier groups has been the sure result. Furthermore, such a proposition as the Commission has drafted is a departure from the plain words of the First Amendment, from the recorded convictions of the founders, and from the whole history of this nation as a refuge from religious coercion.

I. The Establishment Clause and the Wall It Describes

The Commission rests much of its argument upon the observation that the phrase "wall of separation between church and state" appears nowhere in the Constitution. This is true, and yet it proves nothing. Neither do the phrases "separation of powers," "federalism," "checks and balances," "judicial review," nor "the right to a fair trial" appear in the Constitution, yet no one imagines that these principles are therefore foreign to our constitutional order. These are simply descriptions of the very thing. And the thing itself is written plainly enough: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Those two clauses, taken together, are the settlement: the government shall neither establish religion, nor obstruct it's free exercise. As such, freedom to exercise religion means freedom to not exercise at all, and yet the remarks of the Commission have targeted "the secular left", largely consisting of atheists, and yet in the words of Jefferson concerning the right to freedom of personal belief: "The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg."(Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia,* 1785, Query XVII) The descriptor of the separation of powers does not establish atheism, but it altogether establishes freedom of religious exercise. Neither the religious right, nor the secular left, are permitted to infringe and trample upon the freedoms of another.

And that description of separation of church and state did not originate with Jefferson's 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists. More than a century and a half earlier, Roger Williams, himself a persecuted minister, wrote of "a hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world," warning that where the wall is broken, the garden is trampled. The image was born not as a weapon against religion, as the secular left may utilize it, but as a shield for the free exercise of it, thus safeguarding both the right and the left from infringing upon the individual right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In 1947 a unanimous Supreme Court, in *Everson v. Board of Education*, affirmed that "the First Amendment has erected a wall between church and State", a wall that "must be kept high and impregnable." For nearly eighty years this has been settled law. To instruct the Department of Justice to promulgate a contrary "proper understanding" of the Constitution does not to clarify the matter of free exercise of religion, but subtly undermines it.

II. The Repeal of the Johnson Amendment Would Corrupt the Church It Claims to Free

The Johnson Amendment, enacted in 1954, does one narrow thing: it forbids tax-exempt organizations, churches among them, from endorsing or opposing candidates for public office. Yet in that, it does not silence the individual from voting, or sharing his personal, independent convictions on matters independent from such platforms. Furthermore, it does not silence the pulpit upon any question of morality, doctrine, or public righteousness. A minister remains free to preach against every sin named in Scripture and to summon the conscience of the nation to justice. What the church may not do is convert its tax-exempt sanctuary into a partisan campaign headquarters while the taxpayer underwrites the privilege, lest the pulpits become the place for which political opinion is preached, and not the gospel, and if not the gospel, then not the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; thus is there a moral decline, and not a strengthening of true heaven-born spirituality.

Repeal of the Johnson Amendment would open the pulpit to the candidate and the party. It would make of the house of God a caucus room, and of the offering plate a campaign chest. Worse, it would invite unlimited and undisclosed political money to flow through congregations that answer to no election law, and the churches would become the political mouthpiece for Caesar, and not God. As such, the state would be the loser, but the church would suffer the greater loss. A church that trades its prophetic independence for a seat at the political table of Constantine forfeits the very authority that made its witness worth hearing. The prophets of Israel spoke to kings, and reproved them; they did not campaign for them, neither would they be bought or sold.

III. Public Funding of Religious Activity Revives the Grievance the Founders Repudiated

The second recommendation, which concerns the expansion of public funds to religious organizations for religious activity, is not a novelty but a relapse. This is the very question the founding generation fought and settled. In 1785 Virginia proposed a tax to support “teachers of the Christian religion.” James Madison, often cited as the father of the Constitution, answered with his *Memorial and Remonstrance*, and his argument has never been refuted: “the same authority which can force a citizen to contribute three pence only of his property for the support of any one establishment, may force him to conform to any other establishment in all cases whatsoever.” The assessment was defeated; the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom took its place; and the principle passed into the First Amendment itself.

To fund religious activity from the public treasury is to compel every citizen to become an unwilling tither to creeds he may reject in conscience. One the one hand, it makes the Muslim support the church, yet if the glove is on the other hand, it would make the Christian support the mosque, and the believer and the unbeliever alike to support doctrines they hold to be false. This is the tyranny from which the dissenters, Baptists, Quakers, and countless others, fled to these shores.

IV. The Commission’s History Is Selective, and Therefore Misleading

The draft report reconstructs a founding era in which church and state “strengthen and support one another.” While it is true that the church supports civil society by the promotion of moral people, civil law supports the church by safeguarding the free exercise and execution of its personal religious duties, so long as they do not do injury, nor curtail the freedom of any other citizen of the United States. It must be understood that America’s true religious history is one of refuge from persecution, and much of that persecution was inflicted by Christians upon other Christians. The religious tyranny which soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries was predominately Roman Catholic, according to the temporal power doctrine, which has continually undermined the separation of church and state which was normative in the 1800's until the present day. Pope Gregory XVI, in Papal Encyclical *Mirari Vos*, §20, says, "Nor can We predict happier times for religion and government from the plans of those who desire vehemently to separate the Church from the state, and to break the mutual concord between temporal authority and the priesthood." Pope Pius IX., in his Encyclical Letter of August 15, 1854, said, “The absurd and erroneous doctrines or ravings in defense of liberty of conscience, are a pestilential error—a pest, of all others, most to be dreaded in a State.” The same pope, in his Encyclical Letter of December 8, 1864, anathematizes “those who assert the liberty of conscience and of religious worship,” also “all such as

maintain that the church may not employ force." It was the doctrine of the temporal power of the Catholic Church, that caused it to exercise authority over the kings of Europe, that caused the majority of bloodshed and suppression of any dissenting opinions. Furthermore, even upon the shores of America, there were tensions which gave rise to the principles of separation of church and state, and necessitated the principles we cherish in the Constitution. The hostility of Puritan Massachusetts, as it banished Roger Williams, and hanged Quakers upon Boston Common, or when Virginia jailed Baptist preachers for the crime of preaching without a license. It was against the memory of these abuses both abroad and at home that the founders acted, and not in ignorance of it.

They wrote a Constitution remarkable for its restraint: it names no deity, appeals to no established faith, and in Article VI provides that "no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States." In 1797 the Senate ratified without a single dissenting voice the Treaty of Tripoli, which declared that "the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion." These are not the acts of men laboring to fuse the church with the state, because if they would have, they had ample opportunity to do so. Rather, these are the acts of men who had seen that union's fruits and deliberately chose to do otherwise. The American Historical Association has already observed that the report advances its constitutional claims upon distorted accounts of that history. I respectfully concur.

V. The Deeper Concern, and the True Interest of Religion

I would be remiss to close without naming the current from which these recommendations flow. They do not arise in a vacuum. They belong to a broader movement, sometimes called Christian nationalism, sometimes dominion theology, which seeks to place the instruments of civil government in the service of a single religious vision, where the church influences, yields, and exercises the power of the government. History has already tried this experiment, in every century since Constantine, and the pattern is repeated: Constantine supported the church and exempted them from taxation, and gave them special privileges. Thus did the whole pagan world flood the church, and saturated the church with the customs of paganism. Then followed the union of church and state, but contrary to the expected result, it has never produced a purer, more elevated faith. It has produced inquisitions, it benefitted a certain class and punished those outside of that class, it made test oaths, and it shed the blood of dissenters. It left the church, wherever it prevailed, weaker in the things of the Spirit and stronger only in the things of the sword, but the Lord clearly said, "Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword", and He clearly states that His kingdom is not of this world, for if His kingdom were of this world, "My servants would fight." Peter sought to use the sword, he sought to fight, and cut off the ear of a man; and in the name of this same apostle, the Roman Catholic church has also used the sword of the state to cut off the lives, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for many centuries, if such ones opposed their religious ideologies.

Here is the heart of the matter. A religion that must be propped up by the treasury of the state, or advanced by a ballot it commands from the pulpit, thereby confesses that it cannot stand upon its own truth. The God I serve does not require the assistance of Caesar to sustain His church; and a church that reaches for Caesar's hand has already loosed its grip upon the hand of Christ. The founders' wall of separation is not the enemy of religion at all. Rather, it is religion's truest earthly friend, for it alone safeguards that faith shall be rendered to God freely, out of conviction, and never out of coercion.

Conclusion

For these reasons I respectfully urge the Commission to withdraw its recommendations for the repeal of the Johnson Amendment and for the public funding of religious activity, and to affirm in their place the principle upon which this nation was founded: that a mutual independence of church and state is most friendly to practical religion, to social harmony, and to political prosperity. So Madison believed; so the experience of this country has proven; and so, I pray, this Commission will yet conclude.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian Chauvin

Teacher/Lecturer of Loud Cry of the Third Angel's Ministries

From: roy arayai [redacted]
To: "RLC (OASG)" [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:28:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am deeply concerned about efforts to eliminate the Johnson Amendment. As a person of faith, I believe this change could weaken the spiritual independence of churches rather than protect religious liberty.

Without this safeguard, churches could become instruments of political parties, candidates, and wealthy donors. Sermons and church decisions could be influenced by campaign money and political favors, while congregations become divided along partisan lines. Tax-deductible offerings could also be redirected toward political campaigns, damaging public trust in religious institutions.

The church should answer to God, not to politicians or donors. The influence of any church cannot be enhanced by the state without compromising its integrity and mission. Please preserve the Johnson Amendment and protect churches from political control and corruption.

Sincerely,
Roy Araya
Pikeville TN

From: Beverley Joseph <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request to Honor the Separation Between Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:29:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the United States Commission on Religious Liberty:

I write to respectfully express my profound disagreement with the assertion that the United States Constitution does not establish a meaningful separation between church and state. Such a position is inconsistent with the text of the First Amendment, the intent of its principal architects, and the long American tradition of safeguarding liberty of conscience through the institutional separation of civil and ecclesiastical authority.

True religion is motivated by love, not coercion. Genuine faith cannot be compelled by legislation, political pressure, or governmental preference. It is meaningful only when it is the free response of an individual conscience to God. History repeatedly demonstrates that whenever the state assumes authority in religious matters, both religion and civil liberty suffer.

The First Amendment declares that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." These twin protections were designed to preserve both religious liberty and governmental neutrality. The government's role is not to promote, endorse, or discourage religious belief, but to protect every person's right to worship according to conscience—or not to worship at all.

America's founders understood the dangers of uniting civil and religious power. They had witnessed the persecution and social division that resulted when governments favored one religious tradition over others. Their solution was not hostility toward religion but protection for religion by preventing governmental control or establishment.

As a Christian, I believe that God Himself values freedom of conscience. Throughout Scripture, God appeals to humanity through truth, love, and persuasion rather than force. Christ invited people to follow Him but never compelled belief through civil authority. Any attempt to use the power of the state to advance religion contradicts this divine principle.

The strength of the United States has always rested on its commitment to protecting the rights of all citizens, regardless of their faith or religious convictions. Weakening the principle of separation between church and state risks undermining those freedoms and creating unnecessary religious conflict.

I respectfully urge the Commission to reaffirm the constitutional principles that have served our nation so well and to continue defending the freedom of conscience that belongs equally to every American.

Respectfully,

Beverley Joseph

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Jack Pavliki [redacted]
To: "RLC (OASG)" [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:30:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

[redacted]

From: John Martin <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:31:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

America will crumble sooner or later without the wall of separation between the church and state for God in Jesus, man's supreme sovereign, stated to "Render to Caesar [state] the things that are Caesar's, and to God [church] the things that are God's."

Sincerely,

Phebe Martin

From: Deborah Gutierrez <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Deborah Gutierrez
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:31:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I strongly appeal to you for the separation of church and state. Religion is a matter of personal conscience and the government's role is to uphold moral and civil order, not to dictate religious belief. It teaches that the state should protect the rights of all people to worship according to their conscience.
The concept of keeping church and state separate has deep roots in American history. Thomas Jefferson's 1802 "wall of separation" metaphor expresses the belief that "religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God" and that the government should not interfere with religious belief or practice. This idea was influenced by earlier thinkers like Roger Williams, who advocated for a "wall or hedge of separation" between the "garden of the church" and the "wilderness of the world". This is a warning against political interference in religious matters, which could distort true worship.
Government neutrality in religion is essential for a free society. Religion is a personal matter and the state should protect religious liberty without favoring or opposing any faith. This aligns with the historical and constitutional understanding of the "wall of separation" metaphor. Please consider maintaining the separation of church and state which has brought great blessing for America.

Praying for each of you as you help lead this beautiful country.

Deborah

From: Deloris Alonzo <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I don't agree with having a bridge from state to church it's in the consituation church would be separate from state it has been like that and works like that and there's reason to change I 🙁 started worrying as soon as I found out about this
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:32:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

From: Jenny Starlin <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:33:02 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Committee,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the Commission's reported proposal to remove the separation of church and state.

History has shown that when church and state unite, individuals often lose the freedom to live according to their own convictions. Religious freeom is a foundational principle of this country, and maintaining this separation is essential to protecting that liberty.

I ask that you please reconsider this direction and continue to uphold the principles that keep our country free.

Sincerely,

Virginia Starlin
Central Lake Michigan

From: Greg Cover <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on Religious Liberty Commission.
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:37:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

Greetings, to whom it may concern, I am writing to voice some concerns that I have, in regard to the proposals in the Religious Liberty Commission. I am writing as an average American, not an attorney, scholar or historian. That being said, I know enough history to know that there are real concerns when the wall of church and state is removed. I have no problem acknowledging that there are good aspects of religion in the public life, but when church and state are joined, there seems to be a corrupting influence on both. Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island believed that the government should only enforce the last six commandments (man's relation to man) and the government has no role in legislation regarding the first four commandments (mans relation to God). He viewed forcing the conscience as "soul rape" or a greater moral crime than a physical violation. His ideas heavily influenced later American thinkers such as Jefferson and Madison and the First Amendments religion clause. I am concerned to see that argument that there is no separation of church and state in the constitution. The first amendment could not be any clearer. Please keep our government and religious institutions distinct and separate. This is one of the things that has made America great. We cannot afford to join church and state, thus marginalizing anyone whose views don't align with a state mandated religion. Thank you for your consideration in these matters.

From: Timothy Sagraves <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Report - Recomendations
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:37:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to submit my formal public comment expressing total opposition to the recommendations put forward in the June 2026 draft report. Rather than protecting true religious freedom, this document outlines an alarming blueprint to systematically break down the constitutional wall between church and state, while simultaneously narrowing the religious liberties of everyday Americans.

True religious freedom requires the government to remain strictly neutral. By attempting to elevate a singular, preferred religious viewpoint to a position of federal backing, this report actively undermines the First Amendment.

I urge the Commission to completely reject the following recommendations before a final report is issued:

1. The Subversion of the Johnson Amendment
The recommendation to eliminate or weaken the Johnson Amendment directly threatens the independence of both our political system and our houses of worship. Allowing tax-exempt religious institutions to funnel money into political campaigns and endorse candidates turns sacred spaces into partisan tools. This narrows religious liberty by forcing churchgoers into politically divided congregations and inappropriately subsidizes political speech through tax-exempt dollars.

2. The Diversion of Public Funds to Religious Education
The report's push to expand federal voucher programs and direct public tax dollars to religious private schools is a direct violation of the Establishment Clause. Public funds must support public education, which serves all children equally. Forcing taxpayers to fund religious instruction—including schools whose doctrines they may fundamentally disagree with—is a severe infringement on individual freedom of conscience.

3. The Weaponization of "Conscience Protections" to Discriminate
The report seeks to radically expand "Free Exercise" rights for corporations, government-funded agencies, and healthcare providers at the direct expense of individual citizens.

In Healthcare: Expanding medical refusal clauses allows providers to deny essential care to patients based on religious dogma, compromising patient safety and autonomy.

In Social Services: Allowing taxpayer-funded adoption and foster care agencies to reject qualified families based on sexual orientation or religion is state-sanctioned discrimination.

In the Workplace: Broadening corporate religious rights allows private business owners to override federal labor protections, stripping employees of their reproductive healthcare benefits and civil rights.

4. The Exclusion of Minority Faiths and Non-Religious Americans
Religious liberty must be absolute and equal for all people. The draft report focuses almost exclusively on protecting majority Christian institutions while largely ignoring the documented rise of discrimination against

Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and Buddhist Americans, as well as the rapidly growing secular population. By favoring one religious tradition, the report inherently narrows the freedom of all others.

Conclusion

The recommendations in this report do not defend liberty; they attempt to create a dangerous union between church and state that historical precedent proves will lead to oppression, division, and the erosion of minority rights. I demand that the Commission uphold the strict separation of church and state—the very framework that has allowed diverse religious expressions to thrive peacefully in America for over two centuries.

Sincerely,

Timothy Sagraves

From: Amanda McCraw <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:39:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of freedom comments!

Sent from Gmail Mobile

From: "Goldie R. Pyfrom" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:40:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

This importation document must be upheld. I totally support the separation of Church and State!
Sent from my iPhone ~ G

From: Stefanie Brimacomb <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:40:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

As a United States Citizen, I value Liberty and justice for all.

As a Christian, I value both religious faith and religious freedom. History has repeatedly shown that when churches gain control of government, or governments gain control of religion, freedom of conscience suffers. Genuine faith cannot be forced, legislated, or enforced by civil authority. I believe the Founders of this country were wise in recognizing distinct roles for church and state, and that maintaining those boundaries remains one of the best protections for believers and nonbelievers alike. Religious liberty is strongest when every person is free to follow their conscience without government coercion in matters of faith.

I am concerned by the suggestion that a commission appointed by one administration should reinterpret the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause in a way that departs from their historic understanding. Constitutional principles of this importance deserve careful consideration rooted in history, law, and precedent —not a revision driven by the perspective of a particular moment in time.

These freedoms have been instrumental in making America what it is today, rather than the kinds of religiously oppressive societies from which many early settlers and immigrants sought refuge. The separation of church and state has not weakened religion in America; it has protected it by preventing government from dictating matters of faith and conscience.

Please note my dissent to any recommendation that would diminish the historic safeguards protecting religious liberty and freedom of conscience. As a citizen of the United States, I respectfully urge the Commission to preserve these foundational principles for future generations.

Best regards

Stefanie Brimacomb

PII
PII

From: Bruce Powers <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:41:59 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Reponse_to_Religious_Liberty_Commission_-_07.12.2026.docx

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SUBJECT: PUBLIC COMMENT – SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE – Bruce Powers

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a *"bridge."* With respect, that is exactly backwards — and as a person of faith, I find the idea alarming.

The *"bridge"* was problematic in the American Colonies until Roger Williams came along and established Rhode Island and evolved religious freedom which allowed, for the colonist of Rhode Island, the freedom to worship according to their individual desires without government interference. That concept spread through the remaining colonies. The wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down, it was established by *God fearing* believers to keep the church free of unnecessary government encroachment in the pursuit of religious freedom. A bridge doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money and political favors to march right in, until churches are competing for grants and answering to politicians instead of to God. In essences it pits one religious organization against the other. That strategy is not Christ-like it is exactly the opposite. History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands, and it has been shown that the outcomes were extremely problematic for both groups.

I would also suggest the retaining of the *Johnson Amendment.* It helps to ensure that religious organization do not politicize or weaponize their organizations for ulterior motives.

Please don't build that bridge. Please keep the wall. We do not need further government oversight or structure in our lives. To add the lure of government funding for various church programming, detracts from our placing our faith in God and places it in *"man-made salvation"*. That is not what God intended.

Sincerely,

Bruce Powers

Bruce Powers
Vancouver, Washington

Additionally, I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments that have been submitted to the DOJ.

--
Bruce Powers

SUBJECT: PUBLIC COMMENT – SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE –
Bruce Powers

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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Sincerely,

Bruce Powers

Bruce Powers
Vancouver, Washington

From: Robert Ferris <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] ”No Separation of Church & State"
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:42:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern:

I firmly believe in "Separation of Church & State"

R Ferris

Sent from Yahoo Mail

From: Rickie Reimeri<[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] religous liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:43:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

I support separation of Church and State, as well as religious liberty for all Americans.

Rickie L. Reimer
[redacted]

From: Jefferson Banga-an <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:44:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

From: ROBIN DEAN <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENTi– Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:45:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

Religious Liberty Commission

First, thank you for understanding both the desire and the literal need for the American people to voice our opinions.

As opinions are as varied as the World Religions, I don't envy your job of giving each opinion the same importance as you plot the best course for your proposals.

I had hoped to address each of your talking points (summary), basically in order; using mostly bullet points. However, when doing my due diligence to review your plans, the first thing I've learned is that the Members of your commission consist of one person of Jewish faith, and all others of Christian faith.

Honestly, how in God's name can you hope to protect religious freedom in the USA when you aren't including all religions practiced within our boarders?

As you know, one of the core values of the United States of America is Religious freedom. While the Founding Fathers held a wide variety of personal religious beliefs—ranging from orthodox Christianity to Enlightenment Deism—they agreed on preventing religious tyranny. By guaranteeing absolute freedom of conscience, they intended to protect all individuals from state-sanctioned coercion and prevent any single denomination from gaining coercive control over the government.

It is very clear (by supporting documents published by John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison) that our Founding Fathers, insisted on including Jews, Muslims, and even Pagans. So again, if this Commission is to move forward, my hope is that you will make sure we are all represented.

**** Did you know that neither Thomas Jefferson, nor Benjamin Franklin were Christian? Me either :)**

With that said, in the Summary provided (again, thank you very much!), you shared stories regarding people who had been subjected to what you're calling "persecution" for their beliefs. While your words indicate you are protecting "all religious backgrounds", the stories are all regarding Christian beliefs.

(We can debate another time regarding COVID-19 Vaccines).

It seems that you didn't have ask for examples from other religions for which you profess to offer protection. As such, I will offer my own experiences; two very clear reactions to my religious beliefs.

The first was a few years ago, when I was first promoted to a highly sought position, and most of the team claimed to be practicing Christians. I never said one word against their beliefs; I joined in silent prays and in giving thanks. However, at one point, one person was pushing her Christian agenda pretty strongly. She refused to let me just bow out politely; she asked repeatedly why I wouldn't participate. (Since when is "I don't want too" not enough?)

I felt attacked before I had even explained that I am not a Christian. When I calmly said that we don't share all of the same beliefs; she didn't understand. I added "I am not a Christian". Honestly, I didn't know I could silence a whole room.

Through the years of working with this team, I was left out of outside parties, lunches, drinks, personal invitations. I was adored at work, non-existent when not at work.

It wasn't until this one woman left that I was promoted again. Suddenly others noticed how incredible my work ethic was; how much I did for the Team.

Before this person left, I didn't file a complaint, or a lawsuit, or bad talk that person. I continued to work with her with respect and professionalism. (My Faith teachings)

Sadly, my second interaction came much more recently and from a Family member. One of my Niece's and I were texting about a couple of troubling incidents in our county. Our conversation included some religious references.

My niece than asked if she could bounce some questions, she had about her newly embraced Christianity. I assured her that I would always answer honestly; however, she should know that I am not a Christian. Again, silence … eventually she sends me a final message explaining that as she was not able to continue a relationship.

The really sad part of both stories? Neither party bothered to ask me about my beliefs, my faith, my motivation … my "why not Christian?"

Let's talk about a statement made by Todd Blanche: "No American should live in fear that the federal government will punish them for their faith".

I too yearn to live in a world where we can each express our truest views without fear. In a world where we seek those with different beliefs, different traditions, different cultures so that we might gain enlightenment.

From what I read, this is in direct opposition of what Donald Trump sees for our Country. I live in daily fear for myself, for my beliefs, for our Country.

OK, thank you for staying with me, I shall now try Bullet Points, matching mine for yours:

12 Opportunities to Strengthen Religious Liberty for All Americans

*** 1)** The National Park Service has issued clarification of the Establishment Clause:

Separation of church and state is a political and legal principle that defines the distance between religious organizations and the government.

In the United States, it is rooted in the First Amendment of the Constitution, ensuring the government cannot establish a national religion or interfere with the free practice of faith.

The Establishment Clause: This prevents the government from creating an official state religion, favoring one religion over another, or forcing citizens to practice a specific faith.

Unsure why further clarification is needed and honestly, asking the DOJ to do the clarifying, is like a slap in the face to the Clause.

*** 2)** Again, this is already a thing:

You can access and download free "Know Your Rights" posters and guides on religious freedom from civil rights and government organizations.

These materials outline protections against discrimination, religious expression rights, and accommodations at school, work, and public spaces.

What benefits come from printing and sending these Posters to basically everywhere? At what financial costs?

*** 3)** Honestly, why is there a Commission to do what's already been done? Has no one researched anything on your "12 Opportunities"?

Already Established:

Mandated Reporting Rules:

Recommendations from religious liberty commissions specify that if a public official under whose supervision a person works does allege that the employee is improperly engaged in religious expression, they must provide a written explanation of the violation to the accused person within 30 days.

*** 4)** We are now at Bullet Point number four and from what I've found, each opportunity is already in place. I will be asking that someone please look into this Commission wanting to spend tax dollars on stuff already in place.

For sure I sense Overspending concerns, possible Government Fraud.

Official federal portals and hotlines based on the specific context of your complaint. Each entity has specific details online:

Workplace Discrimination
Civil Rights & General Violations
Healthcare & Conscience Rights
U.S. Department of Education (OCR)
U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (OCR)
Legal Advocacy: If you require legal support or representation in the face of a religious freedom violation, organizations such as First Liberty Institute provide

*** 5)** And here it is; did you hope people would stop reading? Because: whoa, hmm, hard stop: The way I read the proposal, you are asking for Judges to ignore the law and instead rule on their own, very much swayed opinions.

This terrifies me; not just the idea, but that the US Government is suggesting ignoring laws. And you have the audacity to call ignoring the law "courageous" … we are on a very slippery slope people. Crazy Scary!

Another thought, why are you referring to the Department of Defense by its nickname in a "formal" Government document? Oh, that's right, rules only work when they work for you – this is not going to help anyone.

It might stroke Trump's ego, like that needs any extra attention.

At this point, I have been trying to give an open mind to this task. After number 5, I am so mortified that I am having trouble giving the rest of your list proper attention.

FYI: I did post the following on Facebook today:

URGENT: The new Religious Liberty Commission has asked for feedback from all Americans regarding their proposed "opportunities". Number 5 seems to have been written by a deranged person.

"*12 Opportunities to Strengthen Religious Liberty for All America*é

*#5) "Nominate and confirm federal judges with the courage to decide religious liberty cases on the merits where warranted, rather than engage in improper judicial avoidance.*é

Paraphrased: Find Federal Judges who arealigned with our prospective and are willing to throw the law out the window based on "merits". Pretty ambiguous terms and illegal as hell, immoral and corrupt.

The audacity to call judges who can be swayed by anything other than the law "courageous"? Honestly, scary as shit.

Moving forward, I will be brief:

*9) This is not the right place, committee, project to include trying to repeal the Johnson Amendment. FYI: In the 70's my church tried to tell us all how to vote – that's when my understanding of just how corrupt a lot of religious institutions were (still are) kicked in.

*11) I am all for restoring everything lost by service members who declined to take COVID 19 Vaccines. Stupid and literally putting their own lives on the line; still, they had the right to decide for themselves. The problem is that by not protecting themselves, they also put others in danger.

Everything else is either BS, or fluff, or stuff already in place.

While you suggest keeping my identity out of my comments, you have my email address, you already know everything.

PII

From: KENDALL HILL [redacted]
To: "[redacted]" [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Report-Public Comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:46:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Sirs, I wish to state my opposition to a bridge between church and state. In harmony with the Constitution, separation between Church and State must be maintained.

From: john record <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:47:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

It is unfortunate that we have forgotten the discussion that took place in Virginia. This was between Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry. This will be the final destruction of the United States when we give this sort of power either to the church or to the state morality should be dealt with only by God. They had looked to Europe and seen all the bloodshed in Europe as a direct result of blending of Church and state this is a very bad thing. Please stay away from this! John record.
Sent from my iPhone

From: Nan Dudeki<PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church and State - Nan Dudek
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:47:45 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: 1_PastedGraphic-1.TIFF

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I want to express that I am adamantly opposed to the public or government funding of religious non-profit activities on public campuses, such as religious (universal or unique) clubs, schools, and I believe instead, that specific church or religious denominations, and it's members should pay for their own activities through private freely offered donations. Tax payers should not be obligated to pay those expenditures.

I also believe religion is a private and personal matter and is not one size fits all. A person should be free to pursue (any) faith or no faith, but there should not be a state established coerced universal faith, religious practice or tradition. In fact, I believe the government should maintain neutrality in its relationship to (any) religion. History has shown the detriment, brutality, persecution, imposed isolation, denial of liberty and the pursuit of happiness that occurred to the public, and people of faith during the Dark Ages. The founding fathers of colonial American fled Europe for this exact cause. Please uphold separation of church and state. It was a good idea then, and it still is a good idea. The concept of religious liberty is in the U.S. Constitution for a sound reason.

Thank you for your time in reading my letter.

Nan Dudek
Asheville, NC

From: Sarah Lundquist <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Freedom of conscience
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:48:52 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing in agreement with the Pillars of Freedom in regard to the separation of church and state. As a proud American citizen, it has perhaps, been taken for granted that a person had freedom to choose their religion and even the day of week they chose to worship. In the past and now currently that right is coming into question. I support the freedom of conscience, that every person has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The natural rights we are all born with which include the right to choose to serve God or not. As God has given us the freedom to choose Him or not, so I respect that each individual in our country and in our world has that right which is not the right of any person to force on another.
Thank you for your consideration and not only receiving, but showing respect to our fellow Americans in this regard.

Sarah Lundquist

Sent from my iPhone

From: Sydney Rodriguez <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:49:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom This May Concern:

We agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments, made by Attorney Jonathan Zirkle. Please implement them. Our country has been great because we have allowed the church to be separate from the state, having no king and no pope.

Thank-you, May God bless America.

Ariel and Shauna Rodriguez

From: Valena Haynes <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:49:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments.

Get Outlook for Android

From: Brenda Flinni<[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:49:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

I object to the Commission's draft report, which recommends building "bridges" between church and state and reversing the longstanding constitutional principle that government should remain neutral toward religion - neither promoting nor prohibiting the free exercise of faith.

I believe that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God or god, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship. I believe the legitimate powers of government reach actions only and not opinions. Legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" as Thomas Jefferson wrote, thus building a wall of separation between church and state.

Government has no authority to tell me what to believe or how to worship. Government has no authority over any religion. I value my religious freedom and respect the religious liberty of all individuals, here in the United States and worldwide, as a God-given freedom, not a freedom to be mandated, manipulated or coerced by any government.

I believe the United States must remain a nation where every church is free to proclaim its beliefs without government control and where every citizen is free to worship, or not to worship, without governmental pressure. Generations prior have paid dearly to overcome the consequences of abandoning this principle. We should not repeat these mistakes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brenda Flinn, Kansas

From: Cindy Tutsch <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:50:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty

I support the separation of church and state and promote religious liberty for all Americans.

Whenever the church and state have combined, tyranny and persecution follow in its wake. Our country was established on the premise of freedom of conscience. Please do not strike the phrase "separation between church and state" out of our country's policies.

Yours sincerely,

Cynthia Tutsch
Yakima, WA [redacted]

--
This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

From: Esperanza Bevill <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:51:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the commision of Religious Liberty.
This is a historical monumental time in our country. Not since the introduction of the Blair Bill in the late 1800's has there been such a movement to create legal enforcement to honor a day of worship. I urge you all to study the history of religious feeedom in our country. As the saying goes(to paraphrase)if we do not know our history we're doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past. You say that in the hundreds of interviews you conducted many people were denied their rights to worship as they desire which is already protected by our constitution and state laws. I'd like to remind you that it was commerce that pushed through special interest lobbyist and using the very same judicial system you recommend to now enforce these new laws. History is repeating itself. During COVID it was the government not businesses that mandated people get vaccinated. People of many faiths lost jobs, memberships and other privileges because they stood their ground. Where was the religious liberty department then?
Two major reasons people immigrated to this country; religious and economic freedom. History of all countries has shown without these two no country thrives. Even people who had no access to freedom and all this country had to offer never worried about whether their religious liberty was a risk of being lost-till now. I urge you to revisit this subject more closely. Read the history of every country whose government included religious authority in civil governing. However good your ntentions are to reverse the moral decline and other social ills, it will eventually lead to persecution of those who do not conform because the well intended laws violates their religious liberty. There is a reason the Middle Ages was called the Dark Ages. Those who did not conform to the civil/religio system at that time were severely persecuted. Don't assume it can't happen again. Ther are already who are in favor of the legislation of forced Sunday worship demanding the execution of those who will not succumb to this law. Just go to x or any other platform and read some of their post. It's astounding to hear such things from supposedly freedom loving people!
While the government may not at this time even consider such a thing, there are religious type KKK opportunityclans, and other extremist groups waiting for such an opportunity.
Consider your ways.
Thank you,
E. Bevill

From: Steve Syvertson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:51:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty:

As a Christian, I believe the separation between church and state should remain as it has been for the last 250 years.

While separation of church and state may not be in the Constitution, the states all created a system of separation in practice.

While our country needs to come to God. It is the church's obligation, not the government's, to mandate religion of any type.

I read a letter posted by Pillars of Freedom and am in 100% agreement for the separation of church.

Please consider this when making any changes.

Sincerely,
Steve Syverston

Virus-free.www.avast.com

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:52:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, this is wrong — and as a person of faith, I find the idea alarming. That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the church free. A bridge doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money and political favors to march right in, until churches are reduced to competing for grants and answering to politicians instead of to God. History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands. Persecution and strife are the sure fruits. Please review your history. Do not build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects the church far more than it constrains it.

Sincerely,

Dwight Evans
Gladstone, Oregon

From: Iva Kaltzi[redacted]
To: "[redacted]" [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – [Iva L. Kaltz]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:52:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am concerned to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, as a person of faith, I find this idea alarming.

While many democracies share similar principles, the U.S. Constitution uniquely protects religious liberty.[240] The First Amendment's "Free Exercise Clause" guarantees the right to practice any faith freely (the government cannot make any law "respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"), while the "Establishment Clause" prevents government favoritism toward a religion, or establishing a state-sponsored church, or legislating Sunday observance (as an example). This two-pronged approach ensures both religious freedom and the separation of church and state. Individuals can hold and practice their beliefs without government interference or promotion of a specific religion. This delicate balance is a cornerstone of American democracy.[241] CCW 147.2

This wall that is to be replaced by a bridge, wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the church free. A bridge will not strengthen the church; but opens the door for government money and political favors to march right in. Churches will be competing for grants and answering to politicians instead of answering to God. History is very clear about what happens when church and state join hands. It isn't good for anyone.

Separation isn't a secular idea; people of faith built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here in America.

I respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice NOT adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee.

Please don't build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects the church far more than it constrains it.

Respectfully,

Iva L. Kaltz

Stuart, Virginia oo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Jan Douglass <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillars of Freedom… I agree
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:53:57 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillars of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

From: Susan Hosei<[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] The religious commission report response
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:53:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Commission of the United States Of America

I read all 7 of the summary reports that you had and I agree that you need to meet more frequently to discuss this matter more.
I know that you want to do the right thing but history tells us that last time this happened, religious persecution started. Please reread your Bibles on Revelation 13 before making any decisions.

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon and will hold you accountable for your decisions. Please pray 🙏🏻 about this matter and fast before making any permanent decisions.

I pray for you all daily.

Sincerely, Susan Hose

From: Simi <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church and State [Simone Banks]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:55:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

The importance of maintaining the separation of church and state cannot be overstated. I was deeply troubled to learn that the Commission is considering replacing the historic wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." Respectfully, this proposal moves our nation in the wrong direction and should be rejected.

The wall separating church and state was never intended to weaken religion. It was established to protect the church from government control and to preserve the sacred freedom of conscience. When government and religion become intertwined, history repeatedly shows that both are harmed. Political influence corrupts the mission of the church, government begins to dictate matters of faith, and the liberties of those with differing religious convictions are placed at risk. The Bible teaches that worship must be offered freely, not through the influence or power of civil authority (Matthew 22:21; John 4:24, KJV).

I urgently ask you to preserve the wall—not replace it with a bridge. A bridge invites government influence, political favoritism, and the gradual erosion of religious liberty. The wall has protected both the church and the state for generations by allowing each to fulfill its God-given purpose without controlling the other. For the sake of our nation's future and the preservation of freedom of conscience, please keep church and state separate.

NO LAW, NOR DAY should be forced upon any nation, kindred, tongue or people.

Sincerly,

Simone Banks

From: amy johnson <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Report of the Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:55:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

Let me say, respectfully, that history teaches us how important separation of government and church really is. The people who came before us lived through centuries of government and religion working, tag-teaming on the citizens of the land. Religion should have one focus - God and what that means. Government should have one focus - following the constitution to safely provide for individual rights and freedoms, and protecting the country. The government's only involvement in religion is to honor and protect our rights to worship as we wish. It doesn't choose religiosity it only protects it.

As a Mayflower descendant and member of Daughters of the American Revolution, I honor my ancestors and my country and recognize what sacrifices were made to form a more perfect union than any they had experienced before. "Perfect" because the government and religion would not drop or blur their boundaries and wouldn't interfere with each other by using religion in the governing process or government in religious organizations. Keep them vastly separate!

Amy Johnson

From: Jane Keller <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:57:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

From: TimiM <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church and state issues
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:57:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern:

It's understandable that everyone wants to see positive change, however to think that such change can be accomplished through coercion or trickery is merely to shift the nature of corruption. The fact that so many people apparently support this is not compelling; it's far too easy to see how the debauchery introduced into common discourse over the last several years will encourage people to respond enthusiastically to the messaging that has been propagated by various PACs and public personalities. Nevertheless to attempt to override the conscience of the individual is mere coercion, and without freedom of conscience the other Conditionally guaranteed 'rights' become meaningless. Such action will guarantee that many people will be caught up in a snare, who were not part of any problem except to not support the popular position.
Please note this position will apply whether or not I personally agreed with your position. The only morally conscionable course of action would be to interface directly with the individual to encourage a different line of thinking or a new stance. Force and coercion are the weapons of tyrants and bullies, which observation should be enough to deter such a course of action. Such behavior is antithetical to our founding principles and everything that has indeed made America such a wonderful place for so long and so many. Please examine the historical examples of such activity, there are many, please consider that bullying even one person into accepting a position they cannot fundamentally agree with is simply abuse.

Thank you for your time,
TimiMcCuen

From: Phyllis Collins <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church and state separation
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:59:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am a firm believer of separation of church and state. I was born in USA but have worked in other countries
I am concerned about developments toward removing the wall separating government and religious freedom and cannot support it. Please keep our freedom of religion separate from all levels of government. Only God has the right to guide our mind and heart spiritually. Thank you.
Phyllis Collins
Sent from my iPhone

From: John Osteen <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:00:12i-0400
Importance: Normal

From: Kathilee Matamoros <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:02:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 12, 2026

To the Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to you in regard to the idea of building bridges between church and state. Please allow me to say that I am a born again Christian with conservative values. I love learning about God and His love for us, and I love sharing Him with those around me. I would wish that all humans on earth would come to know and love Him as I do. However, I do not believe it is the job of the government to help promote, or discourage any religion above another. I truly believe that the separation of church and state is one of the most important and unique values of the United States of America. I believe it was truly one of the most important values to the founders of our nation as well, that is why it appears in the very first Amendment.

Our forefathers knew from the recent history of the colonies, and likely from their personal history or experiences, that when church and state are united, it becomes all too easy for religious persecution to follow. The very pilgrims who famously came here were escaping persecution. Various of the colonies were formed specifically as places where people could find protection from one form of religious persecution or another, for example, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, among others.

When one religion is promoted above others by a government, it leads to restrictions for other religions. Though I would wish that all the world were true followers of Christ, imposing the teachings of Christ on others goes against the very principles taught in the Bible. When I read Christ's teachings I find Him inviting, pleading, drawing in love, but never forcing His teachings on anyone. God's government gives everyone free choice to believe and to act as they choose, and the consequences of their choices are between the individual and God only. The government can legislate civility – the ways in which individuals interact with those around them. But moral issues, those between man and God, should not be legislated in any way by a government. When governments step into the realm of religion, they WILL get it wrong. The freedom of, and/or freedom from religion I believe is one of the reasons our country has become so prosperous.

Historically our nation has been a place where others being persecuted by religious powers, including persecution by Christian governments, could come to find refuge and protection. Let us not become like the governments so many are fleeing from.

Truly, when one is free to practice their religion as they choose, or not practice religion at all, religion actually flourishes more than when it is legislated or controlled by the government, as one does not have to fear that they will somehow break a rule by living their faith to the fullest. If we feel we need greater morality in our country, then the churches, synagogues, and other religious entities need to seek revival and reformation among their people and work on improving their influence within their communities. But this should not involve the government, other than the government protecting the rights of all to practice their religion freely. If we want Christianity to be practiced freely, other faiths should be allowed the same privilege, so long as it does not

involve harm of others. Freedom of religion also affects freedom of speech, another crucial principle to the government of our nation.

When church and state unite, conflicts of interest develop. Religious powers and the power of the state are, in my opinion, the two strongest powers in society. But they both function best when left in their individual spheres of influence. When united, they become hungry for the power of the other and both become corrupted. When religious powers look to the government for power, it becomes very easy for compromise of principle to occur in order to gain power. When the government begins to look to religious powers for authority, the powers of the state easily become corrupted as well.

In the realm of public education, teaching of religion, in any form, belongs to the religious powers and to parents and families, and not to the state. I fully desire for my children to learn about God. But if I leave that to a teacher in the public school system, they may not teach my child about God in the way I know and understand Him. Said teacher may have a different understanding of God than I do. Maybe that teacher belongs to another religion altogether and their teaching of religion to my child would be skewed by their own personal beliefs, even if they have been given specific material and concepts to teach. And this concept can be applied to so many other areas of government, if church and state are not separate.

In summary, I believe that the separation of Church and State is vital to our country's freedom and prosperity, that church and state are two very strong influences in society, but need to be kept separate, with religious bodies working in the moral realm, and the state working in the civil realm. I believe that is what our founding fathers believed and intended, and it is still just as relevant, if not more so today. When church and state are not separate, they begin to compete for power and corruption of both occurs, religious suppression and or persecution ensues. We owe our prosperity as a nation to the freedoms we have. Let us keep those freedoms unadulterated.

I therefore urge the members of the Religious Liberty Commission to seek to promote and maintain the vital and complete separation of church and state so that we can truly be a place where there is "liberty and justice for ALL."

Sincerely,

Kathilee Matamoros

From: Brenda Laboy <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillars of Freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:04:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom may it concern:

I agree with Pilar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Respetuosly,

Dr. Brenda Laboy

From: Marilyn Krieger <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Marilyn Krieger
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:04:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them to maintain separation between church and state. This is so vitally important for the survival of our nation's religious freedom that we have enjoyed for the last 250 years.

The decline of a nation doesn't happen overnight; it's downward march is step-by-step. Initially, it may appear to look good on the surface, but eventually the results are national apostasy and national ruin. I am reminded of the words of John Loughborough, an American pioneer in the late 1800s, as he was advocating for religious liberty in his own church. He stated, "The first step of apostasy is to get up a creed, telling us what we shall believe. The second is to make that creed a test of fellowship. The third is to try members by that creed. The fourth is to denounce as heretics those who do not believe that creed. And fifth, to commence persecution against such." This quotation may not fit perfectly presently, but if the wall of separation of church and state is broken down, with time, it will.

Again, please maintain America's religious freedom by maintaining separation of church and state. God bless each of you as you follow the dictates of your own conscience.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Krieger
Tavares, Florida

Sent from my iPhone

From: Laurel Baum <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Let my people go says the Lord.
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:04:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

Liberty of conscience!!
Let me people go.

From: Tammie Lumeri<[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:08:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern;
This email is in regards to my religious freedom and to be able to keep my freedom and religious rights to be able to worship on the Sabbath God's biblical Sabbath keeping Sabbath not law enforced Sunday worship.
I do not agree with law enforced religion

Thank you!
Tammie Lumer
Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Kenneth Ray <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Plea for Religious Liberty for All
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:10:12i-0400
Importance: Normal

Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Religious Liberty Report – Kenneth Ray

To the Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Report of the Religious Liberty Commission.

I write because I believe deeply in religious liberty and in the constitutional principles that have allowed people of every faith—and those of no faith—to live together in freedom. My concern is that portions of the draft report appear to favor government promotion of religion in ways that are inconsistent with both the history and the purpose of the First Amendment.

The First Amendment contains two complementary protections: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." These two clauses are not in conflict. Rather, they work together to ensure that Americans are free to practice their faith without government interference while also protecting citizens from government endorsement or establishment of religion.

James Madison, often called the "Father of the Constitution," argued that religion flourishes best when left to the conscience of individuals rather than supported by government. Thomas Jefferson described the First Amendment as building "a wall of separation between Church & State," reflecting the principle that government should neither compel nor discourage religious belief. Regardless of one's views about that metaphor, history demonstrates that our nation's greatest protection for religious liberty has been governmental neutrality in matters of religion.

For this reason, I am troubled by the report's apparent support for policies such as requiring the posting of the Ten Commandments in every public-school classroom and mandating Bible reading in public schools.

These policies may reflect the beliefs of many Americans, including many Christians and Jews. However, public schools exist to educate children from every religious background. Students may be Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Christian, members of other faith traditions, agnostic, atheist, or have no religious affiliation. Government-sponsored religious displays or required religious exercises inevitably communicate that certain religious beliefs enjoy official governmental preference.

This does not expand religious liberty; it risks diminishing it for those whose beliefs differ from those favored by the state.

Our nation's constitutional tradition recognizes that religious expression by individuals is fully protected. Students may pray voluntarily, read Scripture or other sacred texts during appropriate times, form religious clubs, and express their faith consistent with the rights of others. Teachers and school employees also retain their individual religious freedoms within constitutional limits. What the Constitution has traditionally prohibited is the government itself promoting or prescribing religious observance.

The Supreme Court's Establishment Clause jurisprudence has evolved over time, and reasonable people may disagree about particular decisions. Nevertheless, the Court has consistently recognized that government must take special care in public schools because students are uniquely susceptible to official pressure and influence. That concern remains as important today as ever.

The United States has become one of the world's most religiously diverse nations. That diversity is not a threat to religious liberty; it is one of the reasons religious liberty remains so essential. The best protection for Christians is the same protection afforded to Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Humanists, atheists, agnostics, and every other American: a government that neither establishes religion nor interferes with its free exercise.

Religious liberty is strongest when no citizen must wonder whether the government regards them as an outsider because of their beliefs. It is strongest when faith is embraced freely rather than encouraged through governmental authority.

I respectfully urge the Commission to revise the report to more accurately reflect the constitutional balance embodied in the First Amendment. The Commission should reaffirm that the Free Exercise Clause and the Establishment Clause are mutually reinforcing guarantees that protect the liberty and equality of all Americans.

Our nation has remained remarkably successful because it protects freedom of conscience without granting governmental preference to any particular religion. I hope the Commission will preserve that legacy for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Ray

Strongly a Christian, but Committed to Religious Liberty for All

From: luisa cordero <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Luisa Oliver-Cordero
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:11:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

With all my respect, after reading specifics on the recent Religious Liberty Commission Recommendations, the idea of "replacing the wall of separation between church and state" really troubled me as a person who left her country of origin due to government control and as a Christian.

My name is Luisa Oliver-Cordero. Born in Cuba. In 1962, my parents left everything they own except $5.00 and 5 pieces of clothing each. My family valued the USA "Freedom of choice" way more than their financial or any comfort they had still at that time (including a pharmacy, 2 quality cars, properties, and family.)

We left Cuba because the New communist government decided to have authority over personal beliefs.

I read the response from PillarOfFreedom. I agree with their concerns.

With my life experience, I see the Committee's 2026 Recommendations clearly as an open door for the need of the government to 'define, support, and enforce 'personal values', just as communism does.

Please consider my requests:

1. That the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced. It protects the church far more than it constrains it. And
2. Protect the wall between Church and Government-Our God given FREEDOM OF CHOICE for each American, as our all-powerful God of the bible Himself does.

Sincerely,

Luisa Oliver-Cordero

From: Brandee Cruz <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment in Support of Religious Liberty and the First Amendment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:11:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to express my strong support for preserving the religious freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.
The First Amendment protects both the free exercise of religion and prohibits the establishment of religion by the government. These twin protections have long served as the foundation of our nation's commitment to religious liberty, ensuring that every American has the freedom to worship according to their conscience—or not to worship at all—without government coercion or favoritism.

I respectfully urge the Commission to oppose any recommendation or policy that could weaken these constitutional protections. Religious liberty flourishes when the government protects the rights of all people equally, regardless of their faith tradition or beliefs. Preserving both the Free Exercise Clause and the Establishment Clause helps safeguard the freedom of every American.

Our nation's diversity is one of its greatest strengths. Protecting the constitutional principles embodied in the First Amendment ensures that people of all faiths and backgrounds can live together with mutual respect and equal protection under the law.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments and for your commitment to upholding the constitutional rights and liberties of all Americans.

Respectfully,

Brandee R Cruz
Fresno, California

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Nikki Nelson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding the Report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:11:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As an American citizen, I am writing for you to reconsider revising your draft proposal for the following reasons; Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island and a leading advocate for religious liberty, risked his life after being banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He survived 14 weeks in the harsh New England winter before finding refuge, where he later established Rhode Island as a colony founded on the principle of liberty of conscience as an inalienable right.

Williams believed that civil government has the responsibility to restrain crime and protect civil order, but not to govern matters of faith. He wrote:

> “The public or the magistrates may decide what is due from men to men, but when they attempt to prescribe a man’s duty to God, they are out of place, and there can be no safety; for it is clear that if the magistrate has the power, he may decree one set of opinions or beliefs today and another tomorrow, as has been done in England by different kings and queens, and by the different popes and councils in the Roman Church; so that belief would become a heap of confusion.” ("—Martyn, vol. 5, p. 340.").

Williams' warning remains relevant today: when government assumes authority over matters of conscience, religious liberty is endangered, and history shows that persecution often follows.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” (U.S. Const. amend. I)

All this to say, please keep church and state separate at all costs. Thank you for hearing citizens' requests regarding life and liberty.

Sincerely,

Nikki Nelson

From: -Yahoo <[redacted]>
To: i"[redacted]"i<[redacted]>,i-Yahoo <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Relgious liberty Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:12:51 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agreed yes. To our liberty of freedom. And not Donald Trump decision to regulate religion.
Nor do I agree to anything that Donald Trump is trying to implement.

Byron Scott

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: John Hardin <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:14:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – By: John W. Hardin

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider and abandon the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.

- There has been religious persecution throughout the history of the world. Do not weaken the heart of our great American Constitution by giving up religious freedom enacting unneeded changes.

- Pilgrims came to this country to escape religious persecution. Do not open the door, even a crack, by allowing the State to fund religious activities.

- The Golden Rules. He who has the gold rules. Do not give the State a voice in religious matters through the State's funding of religious activities

- Karl Marx: "History repeats itself, first as a tragedy, second as a farce". Look at the history of how religious persecution creeps into governments. Do not let this happen in the United States.

- George Santayana: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"

Let us not forget the Past. Below are some of historical examples of religious persecution. It could happen again. Do not allow the State to enter the Church by funding religious activities. Discrimination and persecution will follow.

- The Spanish Inquisition (established in 1478) It was initiated by Catholic monarchs to ensure orthodoxy among those who converted from Judaism and Islam. Through royal decrees in 1492 and 1502, the Spanish Crown forced hundreds of thousands of Jews and Muslims to either convert, leave the country, or face death.

- The Holocaust: Between 1933 and 1945, Nazi Germany orchestrated the systemic persecution and genocide of six million Jews, alongside other groups, due to antisemitic and racial ideologies.

- Persecution of Early Christians: In the 1st century, the Roman Empire subjected Christians to severe persecution—including crucifixion and being burned alive—for their refusal to worship the Roman emperor.

- Persecution in the Soviet Union: Spanning from 1922 to 1991, the Soviet state promoted Marxist-Leninist atheism. Authorities suppressed all religions by destroying places of worship, prohibiting religious education, and incarcerating or executing religious leaders.

- Witch Hunts in Early Modern Europe: Between the 15th and 18th centuries, tens of thousands of individuals (predominantly women) across Europe and colonial America were tried and executed for alleged witchcraft, often driven by religious anxiety over heresy and perceived demonic influences.

From: -Yahoo <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Relgious liberty Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:15:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

Subject: Religious I\Liberty Report

I agreed yes. To our liberty of freedom. And not Donald Trump decision to regulate religion.
Nor do I agree to anything that Donald Trump is trying to implement.

Byron Scott

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Amy Werbel <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments - Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report - Amy Werbel
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:15:19 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Commission Members,

I read with interest your Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report. As a professor and historian for more than thirty years, I have devoted much of my research to the complicated relationship between culture and law in the areas of civil liberties, censorship, and freedom of expression. My comments today are submitted as an individual American citizen and historian.

The ideals of "religious liberty" in the founding of the United States are inarguable, and your report shares some of them with accuracy. I would add that here in New York City, our nation's early Dutch colony was founded by those with an acute awareness of the benefits of religious difference. Dutch settlers protested initial limits on the (profitable) settlement of Jews, Lutherans, and Quakers, most famously in the Flushing Remonstrance of 1657: "Wee desire therefore in this case not to judge least we be judged, neither to condemn least we be condemned, but rather let every man stand or fall to his own Master."

That said, those who signed the Flushing Remonstrance would be aghast had their Dutch administrators then taxed them for support of these diverse sectarian institutions -- and especially those proselytizing their own distinct religious views with which they disagreed. In ensuing years, our nation was consciously designed to reject the example of Europe's devastating religious wars by avoiding an establishment of state religion, as well as state-sanctioned religious expression.

To suggest dismantling the "wall of separation," which prevents government funds from flowing to religious schools and other organizations, is not at all supported by American history. In fact, the record of government efforts to impose support for sectarian religious cultural precepts and institutions on Americans as a whole is cautionary rather than supportive, and this is particularly true in the case of freedom of expression.

My own area of research is the censorship campaigns fomented by Anthony Comstock and his supporters in the years following the Civil War. A campaign against "vice," which reached its apex in the 1870s and 1880s, was led by state-empowered evangelical Christians who jailed atheist and agnostic publishers as "infidels," disproportionately targeted Jews and Catholics, and ultimately generated backlash which led to the creation of our first national civil liberties organizations. My point here is not just that U.S. history does not support government preference for religious expression, but also that it does not and will not work, as long as we are a pluralistic democracy honoring our founding principles.

One consistent finding in my research was that when public institutions imposed a requirement for religious expression, controversy ensued regarding whose faith was included vs. excluded and amplified vs. repressed. Your proposal for supporting display of the Ten Commandments in classrooms is relevant here. Your draft report contends that we can support either all religious faith or none, when in reality such efforts have always produced discriminatory results. In many cases these efforts ultimately have been disallowed by courts on the basis of their violation of First Amendment protections. The fundamental enduring wisdom of our founders was that the state should not decide which religious expression is allowable, except in infrequent and narrowly tailored exceptions.

The Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report's proposal for the establishment of "Conscience and Religious Freedom Divisions throughout the federal government" is especially disturbing in light of the historical examples I have studied. To suggest that taxpayers should fund punitive enforcement measures on behalf of sectarian interests in order to 'protect civil liberties' ignores generations of American citizens who have suffered the harms of these efforts and who have fought to expand liberties for all of our viewpoints, rather than for those preferred by government agents, whether elected, appointed, or anointed.

With many thanks for your attention to public comments,

Amy Werbel

From: Gabriel Diaz <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:16:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

Separation of Church and State is a constitutional principle that explains how our Religious Liberty is protected by the first amendment.

Jesus Christ stated “my kingdom is not of this worldé‘ governments whether federal or state or the religious Liberty commission do not have authority over freedom of conscience established by God.

I am one in favor of separation of Church and State

Sent from my iPhone

From: Mark Fortune <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Comments
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:18:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a deeply concerned citizen to ask you to please reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.

When churches take government money or step into partisan politics, the corruption of politics comes into the church. Churches end up competing for funding and answering to politicians instead of God — that's negative for the church and the country alike.

Separation wasn't a secular idea; people of faith built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here in the United States of America!

Please keep church and state separate.

That's how we keep both of them free.

Sincerely,

Mark Fortune
Sent from my iPhone

From: Leonard Urrea <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:19:26i-0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern,

One of the pillars of our Constitutional Republic is the separation of church and state. The First Amendment codifies it, simply stating Congress shall not establish religion, but will allow each individual the choice to exercise religion in their own way. Establishing a religious commission to build “bridges” is but a step of joining the church and the state.

We the People fought long and hard to separate ourselves from a church and state union that formed the British government during the time of our independence, and on this auspicious 250th birthday of that battle, should we again subject ourselves to such an unholy alliance? NEVER! Those who gave their lives to keep that separation would be “rolling over in their graves” at such a thought!

In all sincerity, yours truly;
Leonard Urrea
Orcutt, CA
🟦
#iamsda
#iamachristian
#iamunashamed
Play Loud & Listen Proud!

Unplugged from my iPad

From: julie anne <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Faith act
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:19:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillow of Freedom, please implement them!

From: Bob Spady <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] separation of church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:21:04i-0400
Importance: Normal

I am concerned about the recent report of the religious Liberty commission having to do with separation of Church and State. I believe that religious freedom is important and I also believe that the government should not get involved in promoting religions. I am afraid that this may create a problem for those who do not believe in the religion that the government is supporting.

I am also worried about getting rid of the johnson amendment. I am also worried about getting rid of the johnson amendment.

Thanks,

Robert Spady

From: Craige White <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty concern
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:23:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

A word of caution comes from world history whenever governments try to regulate or approve religion. As a Christian, neither God nor Jesus "forces" allegiance. They let you Choose them. When you see the lessons from governments like those of Nebuchadnezzar or the Pharoahs, Roman empires, to near present times, regulating ones conscience when it comes to Worship always fails in the end. Remember the words of Proverbs 14:12. Proverbs 14:12 KJV — There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

From: Jane Keller <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:26:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am against the happening on July 13. It is against the Bill of Rights!

From: Lee Leei <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Cc: Lee Lee Dart <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission newly released draft report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:28:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I appreciate the sentiments of this commission and its concern to protect the rights of Christians But as a Christ-follower and Bible believing person who understands our American history, I have concerns. Emeshing Religion and State can produce an overreach where the state can start dictating which religions will or will not receive help. I think it would be very difficult to be unbiased because each religion thinks THEY are the right ones. Even within Christianity there are many different interpretations of scripture and I would be very concerned if a governing state body would make decisions for myself in HOW it should be interpreted. History has proven that governments who favor a particular flavor of religion can become tyrannical and persecute minority religions. I believe we can find other ways to come alongside Christians who are persecuted and protect their rights. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lee Lee
[redacted]

From: "[redacted]"i<[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Eliminating Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:29:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

Date: July 12, 2026

U.S. Department of Justice
Attn: [Docket / Office handling Religious Liberty Commission Report]
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Re: Public Comment on Religious Liberty Commission Report – Opposition to Eliminating Separation of Church and State

To Whom It May Concern:

As a US citizen, I submit this comment in response to the Department of Justice's Religious Liberty Commission Report and, in particular, its apparent endorsement of eliminating or substantially weakening the principle commonly described as "separation of church and state."

The Report's suggestion that the federal government should abandon the separation of church and state is fundamentally inconsistent with the First Amendment and the constitutional structure it reflects. The Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause were adopted to prevent the very government-religion entanglement the Report appears to invite. Any federal initiative to "get rid of" this separation would exceed executive authority, conflict with binding Supreme Court precedent, and erode the liberties of religious and non-religious Americans alike.

The First Amendment Requires Government Neutrality in Matters of Religion
The First Amendment provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Together, these clauses restrain government from establishing an official religion, favoring one faith over another, or coercing religious participation, while also protecting individuals' free exercise of faith. The doctrine commonly called "separation of church and state" is not a mere policy preference; it is the framework by which the government honors these constitutional limits and maintains neutrality toward religion.

Efforts to dismantle that separation would open the door to:

Government sponsorship or endorsement of particular religious viewpoints.

Implicit or explicit religious tests for access to benefits, opportunities, or public office.

Coercive pressure on citizens to conform to majority religious beliefs as a condition of full civic participation.

These outcomes are exactly what the First Amendment was designed to prevent.

Constitutional Limits on DOJ and Executive-Branch Authority
The Department of Justice is charged with enforcing federal law within the bounds of the Constitution, not revising or negating its guarantees. The First Amendment can only be altered through the rigorous Article V amendment process—proposal by Congress or a convention of states and ratification by three-quarters of the states. No commission, report, or executive policy can lawfully "eliminate" a constitutional protection or its core doctrinal implementation.

By advancing recommendations that would discard separation of church and state, the Report invites DOJ to act ultra vires—outside its lawful authority—and to adopt positions that are at odds with the constitutional oath taken by all federal officials.

Protection for Both Religious Liberty and Freedom of Conscience

The separation of church and state is not hostile to religion; it is a principal safeguard of genuine religious liberty. A government that can promote, favor, or entangle itself with a specific faith is also a government that can eventually control, burden, or punish religious practice. History shows that state-sponsored religion often leads to discrimination against minority faiths and those who adhere to no religion at all.

Maintaining church-state separation ensures:

That religious communities can worship, organize, and speak without fear of government capture or favoritism.

That individuals retain freedom of conscience—freedom to believe, not believe, convert, or dissent—without state coercion.

That public institutions serve all citizens regardless of belief, promoting equal protection and civic cohesion.

Eliminating this separation would undermine these protections, replacing principled neutrality with a government-endorsed religious hierarchy.

Rule of Law, Pluralism, and Institutional Legitimacy

Our constitutional order is built on the rule of law and a commitment to pluralism in a religiously diverse society. The separation of church and state has enabled people of many faiths, and of no faith, to live together under a common civic framework in which the government does not pick religious winners and losers. Weakening or discarding this principle would:

Deepen political and sectarian division by turning religious identity into a lever of state power.

Undermine public confidence in the impartiality of law enforcement and the courts.

Invite litigation, instability, and continuous challenges to any attempt by government to favor one creed over others.

For the Department of Justice—whose legitimacy depends on being seen as neutral and fair—the embrace of policies that privilege particular religious views over others would be especially damaging.

Request

For these reasons, I urge the Department of Justice to:

Reject any recommendation in the Religious Liberty Commission Report that seeks to eliminate or curtail the principle of separation of church and state.

Affirm DOJ's commitment to enforcing the First Amendment's Religion Clauses through a posture of strict governmental neutrality toward religion.

Ensure that future reports, guidance, and enforcement policies reflect both robust protection for free exercise and a firm adherence to the constraints of the Establishment Clause.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Saxon

From: Diane Cowles <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Keep the wall of separation of church and stare
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:29:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

I believe the founding fathers understood the history of the European countries. When the Crown dictated what religion all their subjects needed to be, there always followed persecution for those who chose to worship according to their convictions.

Now 250 years later, many in this country have forgotten the history of a combination of church and state. We still have countries today that mandate the faith of all who live with in their borders suffer persecution because they worship God differently than the mandated religion.

The prosperity of our country has been because our nation's fathers understood where their right to rule in men's lives stood and where God's right to rule in men's lives stood and they didn't cross over into God's realm. Liberty of conscious to worship God or not to worship God is the precious gift from God. Let's be as wise as our forefathers and keep separation of church and state intact to protect everyone's right to worship according to the dictates of their conscience.

Diane Cowles

From: Kalon Gesellchen <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Seperation
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:30:25 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission

I am a citizen and a Christian of this freedom loving nation. It is a great responsibility to place upon yourself to determine separation of church and state, it can and will, depending on your decision, have great implications upon the very freedoms you want to protect.

The Bible is clear that we are to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's". These were the words of Christ, which show clearly, regardless of what our founding Fathers intentions were, that state and church are to be separate.

History also reveals to us the misuse and result of church and state when the Roman Catholic Church employed the Kings of the nations of Europe to enforce Her beliefs, the Dark ages. Persecution is the sure result.

It is not more laws that will solve the immoral dilemma that we are facing, it is the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. There was a saying when I was young, " a man forced against his will is of the same opinion still". Morality cannot be forced, God does not force us. It is the law of God that has been set aside by most of Christianity that is the real problem, address that and you would be much better off.

My prayers are with you to be led, not by the influence of men, but by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Blessings
Kalon Gesellchen

From: Bettijo Gullickson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment- Separation of church and state, Bettijo Gullickson
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:31:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the religious liberty commission,
I respectfully ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the historic separation of church and state, particularly those promoting government funding of religious activities and the repeal of the Johnson Amendment.
As a Christian woman, I believe the church fulfills its God-given mission best when it remains independent of political power and government funding.
Throughout history, whenever the church has relied on the state for influence or financial support, both the religious liberty and spiritual integrity of the church has suffered.
One of America's greatest blessings is its long standing commitment to protecting freedom of the conscience through the separation of church and state. This principle has allowed people of every faith-and those of no faith-to worship according to conviction without government interference. It has strengthened both our nation and our churches by preserving their proper distinct roles.
Please preserve this vital safeguard.
Keeping church and state separate protects religious liberty, the independence of the church and the constitutional freedoms that have blessed generations of Americans.

Sincerely,
Bettijo Gullickson
[redacted]

From: Charlene Blanchard <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church and State (Charlene Blanchard)
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:33:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

It troubles me to hear the Commission wants ro replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." I find that to be backwards, and frankly, alarming. The wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down, but by believers, to keep the church free. A bridge doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money and political favors to come in, until churches want gov grants/support. I think this begs for persecution to rear its ugly head by giving gov power to demand things it has no business demanding... control of the churches and its activity.

PLEASE, NO BRIDGE: KEEP THE WALL

--
Respectfully,

Charlene Blanchard

From: David Bacino <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:33:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations submitted by the Religious Liberty Committee to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. We appreciate the Committee's work and agree with certain of its proposals. However, we must respectfully express strong concerns regarding the first and ninth recommendations, which reflect an inadequate consideration of the Founding Fathers' warnings about the dangers of uniting church and state, as well as the clear lessons of history.

The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice issue guidance "clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state." At the public release of the recommendations, Committee Chair Dan Patrick stated that "the separation of church and state is not in the constitution" and that the phrase "has no constitutional basis."

As a patriotic citizen who loves celebrating 250 years of freedom (especially religious freedom), a student of history, and a Christian, I am deeply concerned that the Committee Chair's flawed and unconstitutional view could influence or guide the Department of Justice in a dangerous direction. James Madison, the principal author of the Constitution and the Establishment Clause, directly affirmed the constitutional protection of this principle. He wrote: "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history."

The Founding Fathers understood this principle from bitter experience. They witnessed the persecution of Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and other dissenters in the colonies — including ear-croppings, whippings, imprisonments, and executions — carried out not by secular authorities alone, but by religious establishments allied with government power. Obadiah Holmes, an ancestor of President Abraham Lincoln, was brutally whipped in Massachusetts for the "crime" of religious dissent — again, by religious authorities backed by the state. Our Founders also knew the long European history of similar abuses, from the execution of William Tyndale for translating the Bible into English to the broader suppression of speech, press, and conscience under unions of church and state. Figures such as William Penn and Roger Williams founded colonies as refuges from religious persecution which was enabled by the lack of government and religious separation.

The separation of church and state has also been essential to the vitality of other First Amendment freedoms. Free speech and freedom of the press flourished in America in large measure because the Constitution prevented government from enforcing religious orthodoxy. History is replete with examples of censorship under church-state alliances, including the Roman Catholic Church's Index Librorum Prohibitorum, the persecution of thinkers such as Galileo and Kepler, and the punishment of dissenters like Michael Servetus under John Calvin's Geneva. These were not abstract concerns; they demonstrated how unified ecclesiastical and civil power stifles truth, inquiry, and liberty. I and others like me therefore question how the Department of Justice could issue sound public guidance on the Establishment Clause if it follows the Committee's apparent perspective, which seems to overlook both the constitutional text and the historical reasons that the Founders insisted on disestablishment.

President Thomas Jefferson's famous reference to the "wall of separation between Church & State" in his letter to the Danbury Baptists reflected his understanding that *this principle is embodied in the First Amendment itself*. He described the Amendment as "building a wall of separation between Church & State," affirming that religion lies between a person and God, while government's legitimate powers extend only to actions, not

opinions. Madison similarly urged vigilance: *"It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of Citizens and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution. The free men of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much soon to forget it."*

I also object to the Committee's recommendation to repeal the Johnson Amendment. Jesus Christ Himself taught, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." This principle supports keeping religious and civil authority distinct, preventing both the corruption of religion by political ambition and the corruption of government by religious favoritism. Madison observed that "the number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from the State." Removing the Johnson Amendment would invite the very bargaining for votes and political favors that the Founders sought to prevent. John Adams warned that the union of canon law and civil power produced the worst form of government. Madison described the papal system, in which government and religion are consolidated, as "the worst of Governments. "

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Department of Justice to decline Recommendations 1 and 9. Instead, I support the Committee's suggestion that the Department convene a public hearing with written and oral submissions from the public. Such a process would allow a more comprehensive and balanced examination of the separation of church and state in both history and American constitutional tradition.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David J Bacino

From: JediDarti<[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Cc: JediDarti<[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:35:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As a Christ-follower and believing that a loving God created us to have free will, I object to any government overseeing my liberty of conscience. Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, in my opinion, had it correct. I am glad for his influence in helping those great men who constructed the Declaration of Independence. The history of our country was built on the foundation of freedom of conscience and it needs to stay that way.

Thanks for your consideration,

Jed Dart
[redacted]

From: Shawn Stevens <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Personal Comment Separation of Church And State. Shawn Stevens
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:37:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sent from my iPhone. Dear members of the religious liberty commission, I am writing because I care deeply about religious liberty, and the future of our country. I respectfully ask you to reconsider recommendations that would weaken the separation of church and state, particularly those involving taxpayer funding of religious activities and the repeal of the Johnson amendment I want churches to remain free to proclaim their beliefs without political pressure or financial dependent on the government once churches become closely tied to government they inevitably face outside influence that can compromise their mission and divide their congregations. The separation of church and state has never been about opposing religion, rather it has protected the freedom of every American to follow the dictates of conscience without government interference. Please protect this enduring principle, so that both our churches and our government remain free to fulfill their proper roles Thank you for your thoughtful consideration Sincerely, Shawn Stevens

From: Teresa Van Meter <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:37:50 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Dr. Carson, and the members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am a firm believer in the separation of Church and State and want it to be maintained forever because it is the best interest for the United States of America. Our founding fathers believed it! and knew it was of extreme importance to keep Church and State/ separated/ " Wall of separation between Church and State," and they wrote it into the Constitution of the Unite States of America.

Faith in God, and Liberty are the most important to me so that I may to keep God's commandments and worship Him freely on the appointed the day that He has commanded us to do so. Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11: Hebrews 4:4 and many other scriptures throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Sincerely,

Teresa Van Meter

From: Melvin and Charlene Blanchard <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church and State (Melvin Blanchard)
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:38:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

It horrifies me to hear the Commission wants ro replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." I find that to be frankly alarming. The wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down, but by believers, to keep the church free.

A bridge doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money and political favors to come in, until the gov gives churches grants/support. I think this begs for persecution to rear its ugly head by giving gov power to demand things from the churches that go against the conscience, and end up with gov control of the churches and its activity.

SO, PLEASE, NO BRIDGE: KEEP THE WALL

Sincerely,
Melvin Blanchard

From: Randy R Allen <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:39:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Dr. Carson, and the members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

Freedom is such an important right and one that has been championed in the USA since its inception. I believe the separation of church and state is at the forefront of this freedom we enjoy. Please reconsider your stance on this matter. We need God fearing people and leaders in our country, but to require, even a good thing, is to trample upon the freedom of individuals. Suffice it to say, we need to keep the Church of of politics and politics out of the church.
Please abandon this position of uniting church and state.

Randy R. Allen

[redacted] Cell

From: GregEmily Church <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:41:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please
implement them."

1. I profoundly disagree with tax money being used to provide financial support for religious, faith based non-profits.
2. I profoundly disagree with tax money being used to provide financial support for religious education
3. I profoundly disagree with the politicization of Churches and Religious non-profits by repealing the Johnson Amendment.
4. I profoundly disagree with tax money being used to provide singling out one religion for special government protection.
5. I profoundly disagree with tax money being used to provide indoctrination of Americans in the ideology of the Commission.

Signed,

Gregory Church

From: Robin Pierucci <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENTi– Chapter 9 / Healthcare Conscience – Navigating Fetal Concerns
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:43:05 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Religious_Liberty_Commission.docx

PUBLIC COMMENT – Chapter 9 / Healthcare Conscience – Navigating Fetal Concerns

7/12/2026
Subject: Public Comment: Chapter 9 – Healthcare Conscience, Religious Liberty, and the Need for Ethical Competition in Healthcare

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

Navigating Fetal Concerns (NFC)[1] is a free service devoted to walking with parents who have received a prenatal diagnosis and desire to continue the pregnancy. This service exists because parents are currently being traumatized by how the diagnosis is presented, compounded by both immediate and frequently repeated offers to terminate their baby.[2,3] As the founder of NFC, on behalf of our organization, I wish to bring this issue to your attention because currently, whether by natural law or religious teaching, the conscience rights of parents and medical professionals who recognize the inherent value of every human being, are being violated and the free exercise of religion within the American healthcare system is obstructed.

The problems related to prenatal diagnoses have rapidly grown as our technology has evolved. At issue: is prenatal testing being used to help children live vs a way to discriminate against the "imperfect"? American obstetric medical society's policy recommendations arguably are more supportive of the latter. Starting with the change in 2007 to offer testing to all women instead of only those at risk, coupled with the more recent change to endorse early screening (as opposed to diagnostic) testing,[4] prenatal testing is now as easy as a maternal blood test and routine. Problematically, with routinization, the risk of insufficient or even lack of informed consent has also developed.[5] Medical literature and my first-hand experience demonstrate that this is occurring. Parents are traumatized through the surprise of learning there is a problem with their unborn baby, which is then compounded by being immediately offered the choice of death (even when an abnormality is merely suspected, but not yet confirmed). As one mother stated, "when did death become the answer to medical uncertainty." The American Academy of Pediatrics only recently acknowledged that prenatal diagnoses

[1] https://fetalconcerns.com
[2] Aite, L., Zaccara, A., Mirante, N., Nahom, A., Trucchi, A., Capolupo, I., & Bagolan, P. (2011). Antenatal diagnosis of congenital anomaly: a really traumatic experience?. *Journal of perinatology : official journal of the California Perinatal Association*, *31*(12), 760–763. https://doi.org/10.1038/jp.2011.22
[3] Oftedal, A., Bekkhus, M., Haugen, G. N., Czajkowski, N. O., & Kaasen, A. (2022). The impact of diagnosed fetal anomaly, diagnostic severity and prognostic ambiguity on parental depression and traumatic stress: a prospective longitudinal cohort study. *Acta obstetricia et gynecologica Scandinavica*, *101*(11), 1291–1299. https://doi.org/10.1111/aogs.14453
[4] American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' Committee on Practice Bulletins—Obstetrics, Committee on Genetics, & Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (2020). Screening for Fetal Chromosomal Abnormalities: ACOG Practice Bulletin, Number 226. *Obstetrics and gynecology*, *136*(4), e48–e69. https://doi.org/10.1097/AOG.0000000000004084
[5] Cernat, A., De Freitas, C., Majid, U., Trivedi, F., Higgins, C., & Vanstone, M. (2019). Facilitating informed choice about non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT): a systematic review and qualitative meta-synthesis of women's experiences. *BMC pregnancy and childbirth*, *19*(1), 27. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-018-2168-4

are being used to remove life sustaining interventions and that it is unethical to do so.[6] Despite this, the obstetric societies insist that it is an essential part of women's health care to offer a termination.[7] The result is parents are invited to be complicit in their own child's demise, at a moment when they are vulnerable due to the trauma of this unexpected news, and this offer occurs whether or not it is consistent with parental values. Adding to the trauma, termination is not offered only once. For many parents, the offer of death is echoed and endorsed at each appointment by their OB and/or MFM physicians, genetic counselors, and other staff members. The breadth of the problem is perhaps best captured by a mother, who's unborn child was diagnosed with Down Syndrome, asked when I first met her, "why do all the doctor's want to kill my baby?"

With regards specifically to the prenatal world, the American establishment has been permitted to state, "abortion is healthcare[8]. NFC exists as an oasis for those (parents as well as medical professionals) who are being bludgeoned by this choice. We respectfully ask that this issue inform new recommendations, so that at the very least Hippocratic medicine, "do no harm", is restored to the standard of care; and at best, the inherent value of all human life is acknowledged and permitted to receive medical excellence that is united with compassion.

[6] Pyle, A. K., George, T. N., Cummings, J. J., Laventhal, N. T., Committee on Bioethics, Section on Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine, & Committee on Fetus and Newborn (2025). Guidance for Caring for Infants and Children With Trisomy 13 and Trisomy 18: Clinical Report. *Pediatrics*, *156*(2), e2025072719. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2025-072719

[7] American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (n.d.). *Facts are important: Abortion is healthcare*. Retrieved July 12, 2026, from https://www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/abortion-is-healthcare [1]

[8] Ibid

From: Andrea Small <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment religious commissions
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:43:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with freedom of pillars comments please implement them.

Sincerely,

Andrea M. Small

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to the Presidential Commission for Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:45:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

I wish to respond to the Presidential Commission for Religious Liberty's draft report suggesting that the separation of church and state is un-American and unconstitutional. I believe that this position negates the clear authority given in our Constitution under Amendment #1 that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; …" I oppose the recommendation to fund religious non-profit agencies and educational institutions because of the threat that funding will be accompanied by regulations and restrictions that conflict with the religious purposes of providing Christian outreach and educational services. As the saying goes, "he who pays the piper calls the tune".

Also, I support retention of the Johnson Amendment to restrict political activities of religious institutions and charities, and to fully enforce its provisions in order to maintain the integrity of their nonprofit status by keeping organizations out of partisan politics. Overturning the law, as proposed, will allow tax-free donations to be made to churches that could then be used to support political candidates. Overturning the Johnson Amendment will allow churches and other religious non-profit organizations to funnel large sums of money into the political arena. As a church-attending Christian, I do not want my tithe contributions circumvented to support political objectives. Malachi 3:8-11 states, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

Furthermore, I resent the special treatment proposed for Jewish people and the State of Isreal. There should be no special carve outs for them. The Jewish religion is one of many religions throughout the world. This is a discriminatory practice.

Virus-free.www.avast.com

From: Kate Baldwin <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Kate Baldwin
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:45:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As a former teacher who has taught in both public and private schools, I oppose the Commission's proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge."

The separation of church and state is intended to protect people of all faiths, as well as those with no religious beliefs. History has repeatedly shown that when this separation is weakened, the risk of one religious group gaining greater influence over government and public institutions increases. This can lead to unequal treatment of those who hold different beliefs.

For these reasons, I strongly support maintaining the separation of church and state to protect the rights, freedoms, and equal treatment of all citizens

Specifically, I object to:

- Any recommendation supporting public funding of religious nonprofit activities.
- Any recommendation supporting public funding of religious education or religious clubs on public school campuses.
- Any recommendation to repeal the Johnson Amendment, which restricts churches and other tax-exempt organizations from engaging in partisan political activities.
- I respectfully request that the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced to preserve the separation between tax-exempt status and political campaigning.
- Any recommendation that provides special treatment or preferential status to Jewish people or the State of Israel over other religious groups or nations.

Thank you for considering these comments as part of the public record.

Sincerely,

Kate D. Baldwin

From: Joel Grumm <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] The Johnson Amendment protects houses of worship from partisan politicking and ensures fair play in our campaigns. Public funds should go to public schools, not private schools. As one who grew up in parochial schools my parents believed should fund the public schools and didn't want public funds for their children's religion education. Public schools should not be pushing sectarian faith, like forcing the posting of the Ten Commandments or pushing official prayer. Institutions receiving public funding should not be allowed to discriminate against individuals but instead should treat all people fairly and equally.
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:48:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

Joel Grumm

From: ron clark <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment Separation of Church and State by Ron Clark
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:49:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

To ALL Who Are Concerned

It has come to my attention, that, in an effort to address the moral problems in our Nation, well-meaning persons, are currently proposing to our President that action be taken to tear down the wall that separates Church and State.

For this reason, I am raising a flag of caution, and registering my concern.

As a bona-fide Citizen of this United States of America, I am asking that such action NOT be taken by our President, and/or our Lawmakers.

The ignoring, and/or re-interpretation, of our a nation's past history, as well as the dangerous precedent that such action would set, are the reasons for my protest.

America came into being precisely as the result of persons fleeing societies where such separation did not exist, and their bold action resulted in the establishment of a nation, unique in human history, where persons could worship, or not worship, according to the dictates of their individual conscience, the Constitution of which clearly defines that Congress shall make no law governing the establishment of religion , nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof. This is historical fact.

The precedent that this would set has many potential ramifications, ultimately, however, such action would position our United States Government to have the legal right to establish its own crafted version of something like Sharia law!

The Separation of Church and State in our Nation, is the wall that exists for the protection of its citizens, and is at its very foundation, wisely laid by the framers of our Constitution. Not tearing down that wall will do more to contribute to the greatness of our Nation, than many realize. Consider well the importance of protecting and preserving this wall!

Respectfully,
Ron Clark

From: Kirsten West <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comments on draft report of the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:51:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 12, 2026

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

We are writing in response to the invitation for public comment on some recommendations this committee is making about our collective understanding of the phrase, “separation of church and state.” As a people of faith, we appreciate the Commission’s desire to clarify this phrase as it has been used and abused in recent history to try to exclude people of faith from the public square. However, the misunderstanding is not in the idea of separation but with whom one is separated from. Separation of church and state does not mean people of faith have to leave their religious convictions at home when engaging in commerce and public life. It does mean that the role of government is to protect the free practice of religion. Some of the proposals in the Commission’s recommendations such as eliminating the Johnson amendment go too far and open the door to government intrusion. We do not agree with the idea of building a bridge between church and state and strongly believe that we need a separation.

One of the major motivations for many people to leave Europe and come to the colonies in the 1600’s was to escape religious persecution by the state religions. It was the intent and desire of many of our founding fathers to create an environment where the state would not dictate one’s practice of religion. And while the phrase, “separation of church and state,” is not in the constitution, it was an organizing principle around which many of our institutions were formed. In recent history, that phrase has been used unfairly to prosecute people of faith who have refused to comply with state laws that overlap into areas of faith. This is not an easy balance to achieve, but trying to create a “bridge” between the state and the church would only be the first step in what inevitably becomes government tyranny. We urge this Commission to hold onto the principle of separation of church and state as it seeks to provide an environment for the free practice of religion in this country.

Sincerely,

Kirsten and Art West

From: Jim Keesler <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Church and State – Jimmy Keesler
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:51:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty,

Thank you for providing the opportunity for citizens to comment on the draft report.
I write as an American citizen who deeply values both religious liberty and the free exercise of religion. Because I cherish these freedoms, I respectfully urge the Commission to preserve the historic principle of institutional separation between church and state.
Our nation's founders recognized that government is strongest when it neither establishes nor favors religion, and that religion is strongest when it remains free from governmental control. History repeatedly demonstrates that when church and state become closely united, both institutions suffer. Government begins influencing matters of faith, while religious organizations become increasingly dependent upon political power and public funding.
I fully support protecting every person's right to worship, preach, teach, evangelize, and live according to sincerely held religious convictions, consistent with the Constitution. Religious liberty is one of America's greatest blessings and deserves vigorous protection.
However, I respectfully disagree with recommendations that would weaken the historic separation between church and state by expanding government involvement in religious institutions or by encouraging closer institutional ties between them. Such changes, even if well intentioned, risk creating division among religious groups, increasing political influence within churches, and ultimately diminishing the freedom of conscience that has long distinguished our nation.
America's diversity of faith has flourished because government has generally refrained from choosing winners and losers among religious traditions. That principle has served our nation well for generations.
I respectfully ask the Commission to reconsider recommendations that erode the separation of church and state and instead strengthen protections that preserve both religious liberty and freedom of conscience for all Americans, regardless of their faith or beliefs.
Thank you for considering my comments and for your service to our nation.

Respectfully,

Jimmy Keesler

From: Freedom Supporter <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:52:21 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Re-Presidential_Commision_on_Religious_Liberty_Draft_Report.pdf

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To: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty

Attached, please see my personal response as a U.S. citizen to the draft proposal.

Thank you!

Madalina Goia, RN, BSN, MA

Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

Through different media sources, I became aware of the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty and the recent draft report that was presented along with its proposed recommendations. Using my critical thinking that I achieved through undergraduate and graduate studies in the United States, along with my life experience growing up in a communist country, while having a Christian faith that was different than the one dictated by the communist regime, I would like to bring a few points as why I see the implementation of these recommendations to be dangerous.

Throughout my response, we will be looking at several nations that imposed religion, from the Bible times to a nation that exists nowadays; we will be looking at how growing up in a communist country where religion was imposed affected different aspects of my life, including not only freedom of religion, but also, freedom of speech and ultimately, I would like to present my views on some of the draft aspects and commission recommendations; I will, also, be offering a different angle to all the religious proceedings.

As United States of America was established by people that flew from persecution in Europe and has been predominantly protestant throughout history, we should be able to bring the argument of the Bible. We can look back at nations such Egypt, that imposed their religion on God's people. They had to flee to be able to worship their God the way they believed true worship should be. We can turn to the book of Daniel and, again, find Hebrew boys that were outcast for not worshiping the way the government imposed. Now, we can skip to the Jewish nation, and we can observe that they worship differently than the people in the United States of America, or any other nation worships. Besides keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, the nation worships a God that does not include Jesus. Protestant America believes in Jesus being the savior the world, a belief that is a central point to the nation's faith.

Growing up in Eastern Europe the government did not allow people to own a Bible, nor practice a religion that was different than the state religion: orthodoxism. I find a lot of similarities between the catholic and orthodox religion, but as a protestant believer, I cannot relate to many of their central beliefs. For example: people that practice orthodoxism believe that when someone passes away, they are able to eat and they will prepare food for them. I cannot find any evidence in the Bible to support this claim. The totalitarian regime I grew up in, not only restricted our religious freedom, but, also, freedom of free speech, the freedom to bear arms and defend yourself. As one of my history teachers correctly stated, communism looked good on paper, but not in reality.

Taking American history classes, I learned that America offers "the pursuit of happiness" through freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom to bear arms to defend yourself.

As I spent more time in this country, I learned more about what freedom feels like. I became a US citizen and was proud of this achievement. However, forwarding to present time, it makes me sad to see the proposal of the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty. Initially, it may seem that it stands for religious freedom, but one must judge everything in the context, rather than a few recommendations that are separated from the Bible history and even from the very history of United States of America. This country has been a refuge for millions of people from the time of its conception. Our forefathers fought with their blood for today's freedom. If these recommendations go forth, not only will United States decline, but the whole world will decline as a result.

I must agree with the assessment of the commission and many other people's view that a lot of things have gone wrong in our world and our country as of today. Looking at history, a lot of things were wrong back then, as well. People had gotten further from God through worship of idols, self-worship, seeking their own ways, rather than consulting with the Creator. God does want us to return to Him; however, I cannot find it anywhere in the Bible that He is interested in forced worship. Humans may be interested in a forced worship; Satan does not mind it, either.

And if we were to bring Christianity as a national religion, where would other religions fit in? An example was brought by the committee:

"The Commission heard from mothers who were lied to by their children's school administrators, children who were bullied because of their religious beliefs, healthcare workers who have risked losing their jobs due to religious objections to certain procedures, a grandson of Holocaust survivors who was restricted from public spaces because of his Jewish faith, nuns who were targeted by New York State, and workers—including military service members—who lost pensions and life savings when forced to choose between their faith and vaccine mandates, among many others".

How would these examples have a different outcome in a Christian Nationalist country?

I have been following Christian Nationalist Doug Wilson. He is a proposer of the United States of America becoming a Christian Nationalist country and having Sunday as the day of worship with several exceptions. However, as it was mentioned before by an unnamed person, I resonate with this thought: if my faith is tolerated, rather than recognized officially, that is not religious liberty, but tolerance. Once the tolerance runs out, I am subject to follow the rules of the country. Doug Wilson'a argument in the discussion was that whoever does not like it, can move away. My counterargument would be that the United States of America is looking at changing the very base of its reason of existence, the things that it has been blessed for as a country: offering freedom and "pursuit of happiness" that were God given rights to us. Once we take those things away as a country, we are on a dangerous path, I might even go as far as calling it "the path of no return".

As the left political party took everything to an extreme that is obviously not the answer to our problems in society, we have to be careful about swinging to the other extreme that would

be equally dangerous but rather look at the history of this country and return to the fundamentals that blessed this nation beyond any other nations existent at this time.

Respectfully,

Madalina Goia, RN, BSN, MA

From: Aryonna Waters <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:53:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I'm writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.
When churches take government money or step into partisan politics, the corruption of politics comes in with it. Churches end up competing for funding and answering to politicians instead of to God — and that's bad for the church and the country alike. Separation isn't a secular idea; people of faith built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here. Please keep church and state separate. That's how we keep both of them free.
Sincerely,
Aryonna Waters
Carson, Washington

Get Outlook for iOS

From: susan susanfield.me <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] For the good of all!
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:54:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern:
Please preserve our liberty (& freedom on conscience) by keeping state and church separate. Blending the two has never worked in all of human history. Morality can never be legislated.
Christians, myself included, need to spend more time spreading the gospel, then practicing politics.
Thank you
Susan Field
Florida

From: Terry McComb <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Terry McComb
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:54:32 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Letter_to_Religious_Liberty_Commission.docx

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a citizen of the US who currently resides in a foreign country because of my work as a pastor. I am very concerned about this religious liberty commission and its recommendations, that we build a bridge to span the separation of church and state.

The first amendment was put into place by thinking founders of the United States. These men all had a very clear memory of what had happened in Europe, where the union of church and state has brought persecution to people, and they fled that European country to establish a country where you were free to worship or not worship. Roger Williams was the first one to feel the irony of political persecution because of religious belief and he had to flee to the natives in the winter to save his life. He came back and became the founder of Rhode Island and established clearly the first amendment, that the government will make no religious laws and that you were free to believe or not believe. That principle of separation of church and state as spelled out in the first amendment has served the United States government and its citizens for 250 years.

This commission does not wish to weaken in any way religious liberty, which has made the United States the freedom capital of the world. It is the only nation that has ever existed in the history of nations that had no king and no pope. There was clearly a separation, and that separation created a freedom of thinking that has made America great and is needed today more than ever before in his past history.

We need no bridge to weaken that law. I object to the funding of religious education or clubs on public campuses. I object to repealing the Johnson amendment, which restricts churches political activities. I further object to the funding of religious nonprofit activities, like schools, etc. We do not wish to repeat the atrocities that the history book is full of in what happened in Europe in the 1260 years when the union of church and state ruled Europe. It could be called religious terrorism. Bloody Mary in England burned people at the stake because they believe differently than the Catholic believed in England. We do not want this repeated in any way shape or form. Therefore I ask this commission to carefully look at the objections that have been posted by the Pillar of Freedom and its submission that was made to this commission. Please for the sake of real religious liberty. Do not in any way weaken the separation of church and state.

I was appalled at this commissions mistreatment of Carrie Prejean Boller and who was removed from the commission on the hearing of antisemitism. During that hearing she expressed her personal religious beliefs, and was promptly fired by this commission. This in itself is the violation of the separation of church and state. I am ashamed that you mistreated this person so badly by removing them from the commission. So I kindly appeal build no bridge! Keep the wall of separation as clear as it has been for the past 250 years. This freedom to worship God according to the dictates of your conscience without government interference in anyway, has been what has made America such a wonderful place to live. Thank you for considering my concerns.

Blessings. Terry McComb.

From: Charlene Lukkasson <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of powers
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:55:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

I vote to keep church and state separate!

From: Teresa Van Meter <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:55:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty
U.iS. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 5706
Washington DC, 20530

Dear Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Dr. Carson, and the members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am a firm believer in the separation of Church and State and want it to be maintained forever because it is the best interest for the United States of America. Our founding fathers believed it! and knew it was of extreme importance to keep Church and State/ separated/ " Wall of separation between Church and State," and they wrote it into the Constitution of the Unite States of America.

Faith in God, and Liberty are the most important to me so that I may to keep God's commandments and worship Him freely on the appointed the day that He has commanded us to do so. Genesis 2:2-3; Exodus 20:8-11: Hebrews 4:4 and many other scriptures throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Sincerely,

Teresa Van Meter

From: Willie King <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Members of the Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:55:14i-0400
Importance: Normal

July 12, 2026

Religious Liberty Commission
Office of the Associate Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Members of the Commission,

I am writing regarding our great country, the United States of America, with a profound concern that we will continue our amazing history of being the "land of the free," by providing religious liberty and allowing freedom of conscience for everyone here, as well as championing these principles globally.

From its inception, one of the principles that has defined America's greatness has been the separation of church and state. It has been displayed before all nations that principles like religious liberty and freedom of conscience are sure safeguards resulting in national preeminence. Our colonies grew into a coalition of mighty states, becoming the greatest nation the world has ever seen.

As the intelligence of our Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution has spread throughout the planet, thousands have swarmed to the shores of America to settle under the wings of a government founded upon the ideals of civil and religious liberty. May our country's prosperity and power continue as long as time shall last.

Respectfully,

Willie King

From: Jessica Lujan <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-APPENDIX B-JESSICA M.
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:55:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,

I respectfully submit this comment to urge the Commission to defend the historic principles of religious liberty and the separation of church and state. I oppose any recommendation to the Department of Justice or another government agency that would weaken these constitutional safeguards or encourage greater unity between religious institutions and civil government.

True religious liberty does not require the government to promote religion. It requires government to protect every person's right to worship according to conscience—or not to worship—without coercion, discrimination, or interference.

American history shows why this protection is necessary. During the colonial period, Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and other religious minorities suffered fines, imprisonment, and discrimination because established churches enjoyed the support of the state. These abuses helped lead to the adoption of the First Amendment.

The experience of seventh-day Sabbath keepers, particularly Seventh-day Adventists, provides another warning. During the late nineteenth century, some were fined, imprisoned, and sentenced to chain-gang labor for performing ordinary work on Sunday after conscientiously observing Saturday as the biblical Sabbath. Their experience demonstrates that when government enforces religiously influenced observances, minority believers are often the first to suffer.

History repeatedly shows the danger of giving civil authority power over conscience. Whether through religious persecution, state-backed religious extremism, or atheistic governments that suppress faith, the result is the same: individual liberty is lost. Government should protect public order, individual rights, and equal treatment under the law. Religious institutions should advance their beliefs through teaching, persuasion, and voluntary faith—not through civil power or coercion. Genuine religion does not need the state to compel belief or observance.

I therefore respectfully urge the Commission to reject any proposal that weakens the constitutional separation of church and state. Every church should remain free to proclaim its beliefs, and every citizen should remain free to accept or reject those beliefs without government pressure.

The lessons of history are clear. When religious and civil power are united, intolerance and injustice follow. Please defend the First Amendment and preserve the religious liberty of every American.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica M

From: Intithar Elias <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Mr. Intithar Elias
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:56:12i-0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, that is exactly backwards — and as a person of faith, ***I find the idea alarming***.

Before becoming a citizen of this country, I was born in a part of the world where the corrupt governments (there were several) all enforced certain religions: it was Islamic at times (the idea was that Islam cannot survive without the power of the state), or it was communist/socialist at times (no religion that disagrees with their doctrine, therefore absolutely no freedom to any Christian), etc. I can attest that is the main reason those societies are currently in the stone ages (sometimes regressing from modern societies back to the dark ages as was in Europe in the dark ages when the Catholic church dominated all the kings and governments of Europe). **Let us never forget that those brave souls (pilgrims) that crossed the ocean and established the roots of our country were to a large extent fleeing the church in their countries of origin!**

It is a FACT that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Therefore a government cannot establish a law favoring a religious entity without trampling on the freedoms of those it governs: Those who agree with the government supported religion will no longer be free to follow the dictates of their conscience, and therefore their worship is coerced by a government that tries to take God's rightful place. As a Christian, I believe that "God is Love", and love cannot be forced/dictated by anyone (even a government, no matter how good the intensions).

I desire to ALWAYS view Old Glory, our flag, as a symbol of Liberty, especially the freedom to worship God and follow the Bible, which by the way states that Sunday, the first day of creation, is a day of work, and Saturday is the sacred "holy day" to remember our Creator who created all during the first six days!!!

Sincerely,

Mr. Intithar Elias
Mrs. Bonnie Elias (descendent of first Chief Justice, John Marshall, US Supreme court)

From: Birgit Hausted <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please protect and honor our religious liberty which can only occur as we honor the separation of church from governmental involvement!
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:56:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to submit my formal public comment expressing total opposition to the recommendations put forward in the June 2026 draft report. Rather than protecting true religious freedom, this document outlines an alarming blueprint to systematically break down the constitutional wall between church and state, while simultaneously narrowing the religious liberties of everyday Americans. True religious freedom requires the government to remain strictly neutral. By attempting to elevate a singular, preferred religious viewpoint to a position of federal backing, this report actively undermines the First Amendment.
I urge the Commission to completely reject the following recommendations before a final report is issued:

1. The Subversion of the Johnson Amendment
The recommendation to eliminate or weaken the Johnson Amendment directly threatens the independence of both our political system and our houses of worship. Allowing tax-exempt religious institutions to funnel money into political campaigns and endorse candidates turns sacred spaces into partisan tools. This narrows religious liberty by forcing churchgoers into politically divided congregations and inappropriately subsidizes political speech through tax-exempt dollars.

2. The Diversion of Public Funds to Religious Education
The report's push to expand federal voucher programs and direct public tax dollars to religious private schools is a direct violation of the Establishment Clause. Public funds must support public education, which serves all children equally. Forcing taxpayers to fund religious instruction—including schools whose doctrines they may fundamentally disagree with—is a severe infringement on individual freedom of conscience.

3. The Weaponization of "Conscience Protections" to Discriminate
The report seeks to radically expand "Free Exercise" rights for corporations, government-funded agencies, and healthcare providers at the direct expense of individual citizens.
In Healthcare:Expanding medical refusal clauses allows providers to deny essential care to patients based on religious dogma, compromising patient safety and autonomy.
In Social Services:Allowing taxpayer-funded adoption and foster care agencies to reject qualified families based on sexual orientation or religion is state-sanctioned discrimination.

In the Workplace:Broadening corporate religious rights allows private business owners to override federal labor protections, stripping employees of their reproductive healthcare benefits and civil rights.

4. The Exclusion of Minority Faiths and Non-Religious Americans
Religious liberty must be absolute and equal for all people. The draft report focuses almost exclusively on protecting majority Christian institutions while largely ignoring the documented rise of discrimination against Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and Buddhist Americans, as well as the rapidly growing secular population. By favoring one religious tradition, the report inherently narrows the freedom of all others.

Conclusion
The recommendations in this report do not defend liberty; they attempt to create a dangerous union between church and state that historical precedent proves will lead to oppression, division, and the erosion of minority rights. I demand that the Commission uphold the strict separation of church and state—the very framework that has allowed diverse religious expressions to thrive peacefully in America for over two centuries.

Sincerely,

Birgit Hausted MD

From: Michele Abshire <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] GENERAL COMMENT – Americas' First Freedom - Michele Hatcher LeDoux Abshire
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:57:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am very excited about the President's Executive order and the draft report that the Religious Liberty Commission (Americas' First Freedom) is in the process of working on. What a wonderful and amazing work! Religious freedoms are so vital to people's lives and beneficial to society as a whole.

The Founding Fathers carried a deep belief that freedom is a basic, divinely derived right that must be constantly and strongly defended and that includes religious freedom. We are blessed to be in the most wonderful country in the world. But God's Blessings upon America directly stem from a country that was founded in Judeo-Christian values and principles. A shared system of morality and ethics rooted in the Bible from both the Old Testament and New Testament teachings.

In past years, dangerous ideologies have insidiously crept their way into the hearts of many Americans. These spewed ideologies are working their way into every corner of American life, and sadly, are threatening our very existence as a nation. We must stand against the evil that threatens those values and threatens our very freedoms. The blessings God has bestowed upon this nation are contingent upon obedience to God's decrees. I am thankful for this work because I believe it is very important to hopefully open eyes and hearts.

It is time for this nation to come back to the design the Founding Fathers intended when they wrote the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights. Every chapter in the report outlining important areas where our freedoms have been chipped away at, double standards running amok, biases against religion and religious practices of seemingly mostly Christian and Jewish believers with antisemitism on the rise. Students, parents and teachers denied their rights to religious expression, bullied and persecuted. Forced stay at home, mask and vaccine mandates upon Americans, including our armed service men and women who give their lives to protect this great nation. Our healthcare system in a tragic state seemingly walking away from "First Do No Harm" in policies, practice and procedures all seemingly for the love of lucre. Harmful mandates and coercion in vaccine policies, policies that harmed millions upon millions of Americans. Religious leaders, houses of worship and faith all under fire with barriers to religious liberty in the public and private sector. Our legal system, in large part making biased and unfair rulings and decisions; its higher calling was designed to create and maintain social order, resolve disputes, protect individual and property rights. Now virtually under fire, being attacked, some even seeking to pack the Supreme Court which would undermine the checks and balances that our Founding Fathers put in place to prevent any single branch of government to accumulate too much power. A system which was created to protect against tyranny, corruption and abuse of authority.

We cannot continue to raise our fist to God in rebellion and survive. In this report, the Commission has laid out a very concise plan with a path forward for America. And to help this endeavor, let praying American's everywhere heed the words in 2nd Chronicles 7:14. "If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

From: David Bray <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Jefferson letter to Danbury, Connecticut Church
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:58:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sir,
This "stinking letter" gives us, I believe, insight into our founding father's true intentions as to the "wall of separation between church and state." No less a founder than Thomas Jefferson, one of the great authors of our founding documents, wrote of the importance of keeping religion out of the realm of state governance, and vice versa.

Today, however, this notion has gone by the wayside has our country is losing its way and is headed toward a theocracy, which would have horrified (in my humble opinion) our founding fathers. Many of them were descendants of those who had fled religious persecution in Europe and understood the importance of keeping the two apart. This project 2025 adoption is nothing less than a step down the slippery slope toward that theocracy.

I humbly request that you do not give in to precious from the " culture war" combatants who would use this to bludgeon you in your political endeavors. Please consider the ramifications for this for the future, not just the present. Hopefully, you are willing to sacrifice a political career to do what is right, and defeating this proposal is what is right.

Sincerely,
David Bray
Sonoma, California

Sent from my iPhone

From: Leonard Morris <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-APPENDIX B-LEONARD M.
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:59:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,

I respectfully submit this comment to urge the Commission to defend the historic principles of religious liberty and the separation of church and state. I oppose any recommendation to the Department of Justice or another government agency that would weaken these constitutional safeguards or encourage greater unity between religious institutions and civil government.

True religious liberty does not require the government to promote religion. It requires government to protect every person's right to worship according to conscience—or not to worship—without coercion, discrimination, or interference.

American history shows why this protection is necessary. During the colonial period, Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and other religious minorities suffered fines, imprisonment, and discrimination because established churches enjoyed the support of the state. These abuses helped lead to the adoption of the First Amendment.

The experience of seventh-day Sabbath keepers, particularly Seventh-day Adventists, provides another warning. During the late nineteenth century, some were fined, imprisoned, and sentenced to chain-gang labor for performing ordinary work on Sunday after conscientiously observing Saturday as the biblical Sabbath. Their experience demonstrates that when government enforces religiously influenced observances, minority believers are often the first to suffer.

History repeatedly shows the danger of giving civil authority power over conscience. Whether through religious persecution, state-backed religious extremism, or atheistic governments that suppress faith, the result is the same: individual liberty is lost. Government should protect public order, individual rights, and equal treatment under the law. Religious institutions should advance their beliefs through teaching, persuasion, and voluntary faith—not through civil power or coercion. Genuine religion does not need the state to compel belief or observance.

I therefore respectfully urge the Commission to reject any proposal that weakens the constitutional separation of church and state. Every church should remain free to proclaim its beliefs, and every citizen should remain free to accept or reject those beliefs without government pressure.

The lessons of history are clear. When religious and civil power are united, intolerance and injustice follow. Please defend the First Amendment and preserve the religious liberty of every American.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard M

From: Lynnette Mc Dermott <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:00:07 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Religious_Liberty_Letter_07-12-26.odt

July 12, 2026

Presidential Committee on Religious Liberty
U.S. Department of Justice 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 5706
Washington D.C. 20530

Subject: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing in **strong** agreement with the Pillar of Freedom 07/06/26 comments to your RLC draft.

The Founders of our Constitution were fully aware of the importance of the separation of Church and State, as our young country was a result of europeans fleeing homelands controlled by leaders based on who was in power, both politically and religiously. The Constitution affirms that we are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, keeping citizens free from the power of both the government and religious leaders to control our religious beliefs and actions. However, this does not mean the separation between church and state is absolute, but, rather, complementary, allowing for them to work together when possible, with one not overpowering the other. Therefore, I am supporting the upholding of the Johnson Amendment, rather than repealing it. This is time for strength, not destruction.

As a person of faith, I am happy to live in a country where I can worship God according to His written Word, The Holy Bible, as are millions of others in the United States. I realize that all citizens do not agree with my belief in an everlasting God,; as well as those who interpret the Bible differently than I do, and I honor their beliefs, as I hope they honor mine. I do not expect every person to pay taxes for my religious beliefs, churches, schools or other religious activities. It is commonly understood that whoever pays for an item or institution has some say in how that item is used or that institution is run. My beliefs are strongly held, and they are at the head of my worldview, so I will not allow the will of God to be compromised in any way by agreeing to accept favors or money for my religious activities. I am also not willing to pay for other religious organization's buildings or activities. If a religion is not able to support its own activities without the assistance of the government, perhaps it needs to re-think its organization.

I also believe it is time to consider whether or not a longstanding Presidential Religious Liberty Commission is really necessary during this divisive time. Whenever a committee or commission is formed with no end-time, the committee tends to keep making rules or regulations to justify the need for the committee, thus potentially leading to less, rather than more, religious liberty down the road.

Finally, as a member of a minority (small) church organization, I am fearful of losing my religious freedom in a democracy, where the majority makes all the decisions, and the minority is lost to the larger numbers. Please remember that we live in a republic with the separation of church and state, which has worked well for 250 glorious years.

Sincerely,
Lynnette Mc Dermott
Highland, California

From: Irinna Ratianarivo <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:03:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to submit my formal public comment expressing total opposition to the recommendations put forward in the June 2026 draft report. Rather than protecting true religious freedom, this document outlines an alarming blueprint to systematically break down the constitutional wall between church and state, while simultaneously narrowing the religious liberties of everyday Americans.
True religious freedom requires the government to remain strictly neutral. By attempting to elevate a singular, preferred religious viewpoint to a position of federal backing, this report actively undermines the First Amendment.
I urge the Commission to completely reject the following recommendations before a final report is issued:

1. The Subversion of the Johnson Amendment
The recommendation to eliminate or weaken the Johnson Amendment directly threatens the independence of both our political system and our houses of worship. Allowing tax-exempt religious institutions to funnel money into political campaigns and endorse candidates turns sacred spaces into partisan tools. This narrows religious liberty by forcing churchgoers into politically divided congregations and inappropriately subsidizes political speech through tax-exempt dollars.

2. The Diversion of Public Funds to Religious Education
The report’s push to expand federal voucher programs and direct public tax dollars to religious private schools is a direct violation of the Establishment Clause. Public funds must support public education, which serves all children equally. Forcing taxpayers to fund religious instruction—including schools whose doctrines they may fundamentally disagree with—is a severe infringement on individual freedom of conscience.

3. The Weaponization of "Conscience Protections" to Discriminate
The report seeks to radically expand "Free Exercise" rights for corporations, government-funded agencies, and healthcare providers at the direct expense of individual citizens.
In Healthcare:Expanding medical refusal clauses allows providers to deny essential care to patients based on religious dogma, compromising patient safety and autonomy.
In Social Services:Allowing taxpayer-funded adoption and foster care agencies to reject qualified families based on sexual orientation or religion is state-sanctioned discrimination.

In the Workplace:Broadening corporate religious rights allows private business owners to override federal labor protections, stripping employees of their reproductive healthcare benefits and civil rights.

4. The Exclusion of Minority Faiths and Non-Religious Americans
Religious liberty must be absolute and equal for all people. The draft report focuses almost exclusively on protecting majority Christian institutions while largely ignoring the documented rise of discrimination against Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and Buddhist Americans, as well as the rapidly growing secular population. By favoring one religious tradition, the report inherently narrows the freedom of all others.

Conclusion
The recommendations in this report do not defend liberty; they attempt to create a dangerous union between church and state that historical precedent proves will lead to oppression, division, and the erosion of minority rights. I demand that the Commission uphold the strict separation of church and state—the very framework that has allowed diverse religious expressions to thrive peacefully in America for over two centuries.

Sincerely,
mailto:[redacted]

From: D Kosarini <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:04:37 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: 1000065809.jpg; 1000065829.jpg; 1000065819.jpg; 1000065831.jpg; 1000065779.jpg; 1000065795.jpg; 1000065801.jpg; 1000065827.jpg; 1000065823.jpg; 1000065787.jpg; 1000065815.jpg; 1000065797.jpg; 1000065777.jpg; 1000065833.jpg; 1000065799.jpg; 1000065807.jpg; 1000065803.jpg; 1000065793.jpg; 1000065825.jpg; 1000065775.jpg; 1000065821.jpg; 1000065805.jpg; 1000065791.jpg; 1000065785.jpg; 1000065837.jpg; 1000065813.jpg; 1000065781.jpg; 1000065835.jpg; 1000065817.jpg; 1000065789.jpg; 1000065811.jpg; 1000065783.jpg

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I would like to endorse the following letter in regard to the separation of church and state which u have recently reviewed.
Uniting church and state will have far reaching consequences beyond even the church and state issue. Please reconsider Pt1 and Pt 9 of your suggested changes.
Dianne Kosarin

against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings. Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. We are concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

Therefore, we respectfully ask, what proper guidance can the Department of Justice hope to give to the

form of government, as was feudal law, but that the worst of all forms of governments was a union of the two. [10] And it was Madison who stated that, "In the Papal System, Government and Religion are in a manner consolidated, & that is found to be the worst of Governments."

We respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and

Citizens and one of the noblest characteristics of the late Revolution. The free men of America did not wait till usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise and entangled the question in precedents. They saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much soon to forget it.ď [8]

5:55

recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee and that it adopt recommendation 1 of the Committee that it convene a public hearing, with written and oral submissions from the public, to more comprehensively study the question of the separation of church and state in history, and in American history in particular, a study which we would enthusiastically support

5:52

The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice "issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state." [2] At the formal release of the Committee's recommendations on the same day, Committee Chair Dan Patrick publicly stated that "the separation of church and state is not in the constitution" and

5:53

The Pennsylvania Colony became a haven, not from atheist persecutors but from religious persecutors who did not believe in the separation of church and state. The same is true of Roger Williams, founder of the colony of Rhode Island, who was ordered arrested for declaring that the civil magistrate cannot enforce the first table of the Decalogue. We ask that the Committee take into account the brutal public

separation of church and state in America. Prior to the protections in the First Amendment, the Roman Catholic Church for centuries maintained a list of banned books called the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The books were subject to confiscation, and the possession of them resulted in the punishment of the owner.

Unfortunately, the Committee makes no

5:54

favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

In his anonymous treatise published in the Boston Gazette, John Adams, later the second President of the United States, wrote that canon law was a tyrannical form of government, as

Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate in the American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

Madison stated that "The

historyõ According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain.

Certainly, the Founding Fathers were all aware o the persecution of the

state is codified in the Constitution. Therein, Jefferson wrote:

"Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their

5:53

account the brutal public whipping of President Abraham Lincoln's five-time great-grandfather, Obadiah Holmes, in the Massachusetts colony, for the "crime" of religious dissent. Obadiah Holmes was not whipped by atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of

which resulted in the 12 recommendations released June 26, certain of which we agree with, we write to voice our concerns and objections to the Committee's first and ninth recommendations [1] and its obviously insufficient consideration of the warnings of the Founding Fathers of the dangers of a union of church and state or the many lessons of history regarding same.

5:55

We remain, Yours truly,

[THE UNDERSIGNED]

[1] https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr trumps-religious-liberty-commission-delivers-historic-report-draft
[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].
[3] https://www.chron.com/politics patrick-church-state-constitution-viral-22323383.php
[4] https://reclaimthenet.org/pope

history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

We are concerned that the Committee neglected to take into account the impact of the separation of church and state on the other rights codified in the First Amendment. Free speech and freedom of the press, for example, owe their flourishing in the modern world in large part to the separation of church and

others was prosecuted under the justification of the censorship of misinformation, also.

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious

Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, David Hume and Edward Gibbon, and many others, all at the behest of the Roman Papacy, which is itself a union of church and state. Free speech in the Western world is the legacy of those who

Europe. It was a union of church and state that killed him.

We respectfully ask that the Department of Justice, in considering the issue of public guidance of the separation of church and state, consider the history of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania and early Founding Father, who was repeatedly jailed for his religious faith in England. The Pennsylvania Colony

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the

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https://advent

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While we are mindful of the Committee's labors, which resulted in the 12

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." [9] Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application

legacy of those who risked the wrath of a unified church and state, often at the cost of their lives. We would also ask that the Department of Justice consider the repeated modern calls from the papal power today for the censorship of the internet and the suppression of free speech, contrary to the First Amendment. [4] We have no doubt that the censorship of Galileo, Kepler, Milton, and others was prosecuted

5:52

William Tyndale was executed for translating the Bible into the English language, not by atheists but by religious bigots. It was a union of church and state that suppressed speech and the freedom of the press in England. It was a union of church and state that prohibited the work of translation of the Bible, which changed the world. It was a union of church and state that necessitated his flight to Europe. It was a union of

5:52

United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short historyõ According to

5:55

That Congress is prohibited by the Constitution from making a union of church and state.

[8] James Madison, Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments

[9] Matthew 22:21

[10] James Madison, Letter to Robert Walsh, March 2, 1819.

[11] John Adams, Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law, 1765.

https://www.masshist.org/publ

First Amendment in the first instance?

The reference to the wall of separation between church and state is not only mentioned by President Thomas Jefferson in the letter to the Danbury Baptists, which, of course, it is. [6] What is often left out of the narrative is that Jefferson said that he personally believed that the principle of the separation of church and state is codified in the

in the constitution" and that the phrase "has no constitutional basis." [3]

As citizens and students of history, and as Christians, we are alarmed lest the flawed and unconstitutional view of the Chair of the Committee of the so-called "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" prove influential or worse, instructive, to the

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https://reclaimthenet.org/pope-francis-calls-on-social-media-platforms-to-censor-more-misinformation;

[5] https://www.youtube.com/watc v=pAUkMwlWYB8; https://www.youtube.com/watc v=CMBiPIfx-UA

[6] https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/98

[7] https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/98 – Jefferson here is clearly referring to Congress. That Congress is prohibited by the

5:54

declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State." [7]

James Madison wrote, "It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. We hold this prudent jealousy to be the first duty of Citizens and one of the

the persecution of the Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

In Europe, the persecution of the martyrs is well documented. Today we take the Bible for granted but forget that William Tyndale was

hope to give to the public on the "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" if it is directed in its object by a Committee and a Committee Chair, who has neglected to more fully analyze the reasons for the separation of church and state, or the reasons why the United States codified the disestablishment of church and state in the First Amendment in the

5:52 49

instructive, to the Department of Justice. If the Committee's opinion of the so-called "proper unders the Establi use is the sar f its Chair, nt that its und is not proper improp

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Advent Messenger

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Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim

From: Larry Crewsi[redacted]
To: "RLC (OASG)" [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Establishment Clause – Larry Crews
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:06:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission:

I write as a private citizen from Silver Spring, Maryland, asking you to hold to the plain, original meaning of the First Amendment rather than reinterpret it for present convenience. I have tried to lay out my reasoning carefully below, because I believe the case for strict separation is not a modern invention but the founders' own considered judgment, and I ask you to weigh it as such.

Consider first what happens when government favors any religion, even one a majority currently holds. A law is a precedent, and precedents outlive the majorities that write them. Once a legislature concedes that religion is a proper subject for its authority, the only question left is who controls that authority next — and control changes hands. As one writer put it to a Senate committee, it is impossible to frame a law on religion that will not end up prohibiting somebody's free exercise of it. Worse, the believer who welcomes a law favoring his own creed has bargained away his own future conscience, since he has locked today's convictions into statute and forfeited his liberty to be persuaded otherwise tomorrow. That is not a hypothetical risk to opponents of religious legislation; it is a certain cost to its supporters.

Consider next that there is no generic religion for government to adopt. The moment officials must choose a text, a translation, or a list of "principles," they are ruling on a live dispute among believers, not standing above it. Even the Ten Commandments are not common ground: Protestants and Catholics number and divide them differently, and hundreds of religious bodies claim the Bible as their own foundation while reading it in incompatible ways. A congressional committee saw this in 1830 and said plainly that for Congress to sanction one reading would be a legislative decision of a religious controversy — suited perhaps to a church council, but incompatible with a legislature that exists for political and not religious purposes. Any mandated display or curriculum today faces exactly that same unanswerable question: whose version?

Consider, too, that the historical record contradicts the notion that separation was a later imposition. Madison, who drafted the Amendment, told the Virginia convention that the general government had not the shadow of a right to intermeddle with religion, and his 'Memorial and Remonstrance' explains that the founders refused to wait for a full establishment before objecting — they saw the whole consequence in the smallest principle and rejected the principle itself. It was the churches of the founding era, having felt establishment from underneath, who pressed hardest for this separation. That is a strange origin for a policy modern advocates now blame on hostility to faith.

Finally, this is not only a philosophical argument; it is settled government precedent. Congress's own committees in 1829 and 1830, sitting while men who had lived through the founding still served, ruled that it is not the legitimate province of the legislature to determine what religion is true, and that government must protect all and determine for none. They warned that defining one religious duty by law opens the door to defining every religious obligation. Any commission proposing otherwise must reckon with overturning that founding-era judgment, not merely a later court opinion.

Protect free exercise for all, and keep the state out of the business of religion. The two commitments stand or fall together.

Respectfully,
Larry Crews

Silver Spring, MD

From: Elizabeth Rodarte <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Elizabeth Rodarte
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:06:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

Separation of church and state protects our freedom. Mixing religion and government lets the state impose one faith on everyone, leading to discrimination and tyranny.
Religion is personal.
PLEASE, keep church and state completely separate.

Elizabeth Rodarte
Garden Grove, CA

From: Darren Greenfield <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on RLC report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:08:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a deeply concerned Citizen to ask you to please reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.

When churches take government money or step into partisan politics, the corruption of politics comes into the church.
Churches end up competing for funding and answering to politicians instead of God — that's negative for the church and the country alike.

Separation wasn't a secular idea; people of faith built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here in the United States of America!

Please keep church and state separate.

That's how we keep both of them free.

Sincerely,
Darren Greenfield

Thank YOU!

Darren Greenfield

From: Bonnie Feese <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of church and state and the Johnson Amendment - Bonnie Weijohn
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:08:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

Thank you for your concern about religious liberty in the United States. I am a member of a minority religious group that relies on religious liberty to be allowed to follow the dictates of my conscience. However I am very concerned about two of the proposed recommendations to the Department of Justice: The repeal of the Johnson Amendment and the redefining of the Establishment clause.

While the Johnson Amendment often is not enforced, legalizing a religious body receiving political funds for endorsing a candidate is a recipe for disaster. I am a citizen of Montana, a state that was early plagued with political graft, senators that bought their positions, and politics run by a monopolizing company aptly named The Anaconda. The state passed the Corrupt Practices Act in 1912 providing us with some of the strictest campaigning laws in the US. After the Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission ruling in 2010, nearly a hundred years of protection slipped away and millions upon millions of dollars from outside the state have drastically altered Montana politics. Allowing churches to legally become the vehicle for political candidates invites corruption in a similar manner.

More concerning is the concept of building a bridge between church and state rather than maintaining separation. Many generations ago, my mother's family came to the United States as French Huguenots seeking religious asylum since they dissented from Catholicism, the official government church of France at the time. During that period, refusal to conform to the government supported church could and did cost families their homes, their professions, and even their lives. In the past ten years, I personally have lived in a Central Asian republic that officially espouses religious liberty, but in reality requires all religious groups to be registered with the state, will not allow small groups under 50 to register, makes changing one's religion difficult, and will arrest people for participating in an unregistered meeting. Strict government neutrality in respect to religion is the only safe course for protecting minority rights.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Weijohn
Ronan, Montana

From: [redacted] PII
To: "[redacted] PII" <[redacted] PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENTi– Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:09:52 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Presidential_Religious_Liberty_Commission_Draft_-_Comment.docx

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Please see attached for my public comment.

Sent with Proton Mail secure email.

July 12, 2026

Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of church and state – Deborah Evans

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As a citizen and a Christian, I am very concerned with the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment. To repeal the Johnson Amendment opens the door to corruption. A donation to a political campaign is not tax deductible. But donations to churches are; if you repeal the Johnson Amendment, the church most likely will become the conduit to fund political campaigns. Then the churches that get candidates elected are going to want favors because that's how politics works and corruption takes place. The same is true when churches take government money for religious education or the humanitarian aid that they provide. Churches end up competing for funding and answering to politicians instead of to God — and that's bad for the church and for the country.

Separation isn't a secular idea; people of faith built it to protect faith, and it's the reason America is a beacon of light to the world for religious freedom. Please keep church and state separate. That's how we keep both free.

Sincerely,

Deborah Evans

Rockville, Maryland

From: Leanne Miller <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Keep Religious freedom!!!
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:10:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am completely against Getting rid of the separation of church and state. Doing this would be to return to the dark ages where the church held way over the world like a dark cloud. While a belief in God is important to how we act, People should be allowed to choose. If Church and state are together, the church will begin to dictate rather than allow religious freedom. No true religion can thrive in that kind of situation. True religion comes about as a result of choice. Please do not allow Trump or any of his committees to do away with the separation of church and state.

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From: Carol Putman <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Carol Putman
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:10:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am concerned with the proposed removal of the wall of separation between church and state. As a person of faith and a lover of history, I am aware of the problems that occur when there is a "bridge" between church and state.

Our country needs the wall of separation to protect our churches from political corruption. The separation of church and state has kept religion strong.

PLEASE keep them separate so we can continue to have both a balance of power and religious freedom.

Sincerely,
Carol Putman
Ellijay, GA