

**From:** Fred Roesener <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Freedom

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 00:30:47 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them

Sincerely Fremont Frederick Roesener

[REDACTED] PII

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** Dawna West <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Freedom

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 02:07:20 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.

**From:** Joseph Petrick <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII, Joseph Petrick <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 02:33:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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As a humanist and a concerned citizen who cares deeply about American democracy and the freedom of religion and belief, I am submitting this comment to urge the Religious Liberty Commission to withdraw its June 26, 2026 drift report and abandon its recommendations.

Religious freedom in the United States rests on the principle that there is a separation between church and state. The Commission's composition and process was dominated overwhelmingly by extremist Christians, and the Commission sidelined the experiences of those with minority beliefs, reflecting exactly the favoritism the Establishment Clause was written to prevent.

Based on the rhetoric on display during hearings and the resulting proposed recommendations, it is clear that the Religious Liberty Commission is a tool of a Christian nationalist movement seeking to use the federal government to privilege one narrow faith over all other beliefs.

If the Commission finalizes this report, it will not be protecting religious liberty; it will be dangerously undermining it. I urge the Commission to reject this draft report in its entirety and to disband without further recommendations. Our government must recommit itself to the pluralistic, secular constitutional framework that protects the conscience of every American of all religions and beliefs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

--

Dr. Joseph A. Petrick

[REDACTED]  
PII PII  
PII

**From:** "Steve Davies" <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 07:43:58 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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The result of your recommendations would be giving preference to one religion. You need to address the fact that evolution is really a religion and has been given preference in our schools for many years.

Steve Davies

**From:** Roxanne August <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 07:47:54 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Roxanne August

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Roxanne August <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 07:48:20 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Roxanne August

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Roxanne August <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 07:51:15 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Roxanne August

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Ms Natty <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment to the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 08:00:00 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

**Attachments:** Public\_Comment\_to\_the\_Presidential\_Religious\_Liberty\_Commission\_Draft\_Report.pdf

**Inline-Images:** Public\_Comment\_to\_the\_Presidential\_Religious\_Liberty\_Commission\_Draft\_Report.png

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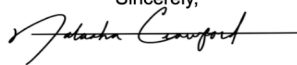
July 9, 2026

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:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,  
  
Natasha Crawford

--

*"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*  
*Romans 12:21 (KJV)*

[Steps to Christ](#)  
[National Sunday Law](#)  
[The Great Controversy](#)  
[The Crowning Act \(2021\)](#)

July 9, 2026

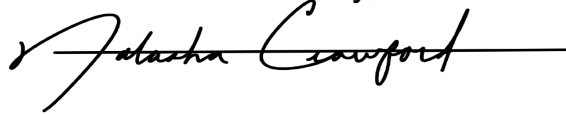
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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Natasha Crawford", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Natasha Crawford



**From:** The Everlasting Gospel Herald <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]" <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comment to the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 08:00:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

**Attachments:** Public\_Comment\_to\_the\_Presidential\_Religious\_Liberty\_Commission\_Draft\_Report.pdf

**Inline-Images:** Public\_Comment\_to\_the\_Presidential\_Religious\_Liberty\_Commission\_Draft\_Report.png

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July 9, 2026

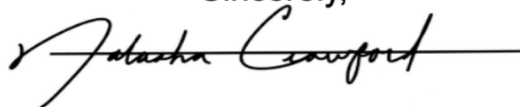
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Natasha Crawford

July 9, 2026

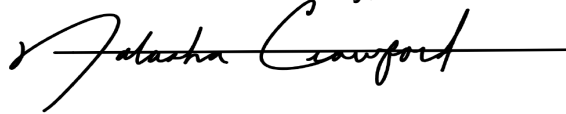
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U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
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Sincerely,

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Natasha Crawford

**From:** Diana Booker <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Opposing Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 08:18:20 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 Maimonides, 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,*

*[THE UNDERSIGNED]*

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** Alicia Kameswaran <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment Separation of Church and State Alicia Pershell

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 08:35:59 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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As a humanist and a concerned citizen who cares deeply about American democracy and the freedom of religion and belief, I am submitting this comment to urge the Religious Liberty Commission to withdraw its June 26, 2026 draft report and abandon its recommendations.

Religious freedom in the United States rests on the principle that there is a separation between church and state. The Commission's composition and process was dominated overwhelmingly by extremist Christians, and the Commission sidelined the experiences of those with minority beliefs, reflecting exactly the favoritism the Establishment Clause was written to prevent.

Based on the rhetoric on display during hearings and the resulting proposed recommendations, it is clear that the Religious Liberty Commission is a tool of a Christian Nationalist movement seeking to use the federal government to privilege one narrow faith over all other beliefs.

If the Commission finalizes this report, it will not be protecting religious liberty: it will be dangerously undermining it. I urge the Commission to reject this draft report in its entirety and to disband without further recommendations. Our government must recommit itself to the pluralistic, secular constitutional framework that protects the conscience of every American of all religions and beliefs.

Sincerely,  
Alicia Pershell



**From:** Jennifer Stark <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 09:56:18 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 8, 2026, at 4:55 AM, Jennifer Stark <[REDACTED] PII > wrote:

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] **This mindset will take this country in a direction that I promise you will NOT want to go. This separation is EXACTLY why God has blessed this country to date. Removing or eroding this separation will bring about the end-not only of this country but the world as we know it.**

We do not want the recurrence of the persecutions from the papacy OR the "Protestant churches" when this separation was eroded in earth's history. Please look at the history of the human race on this!

**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.

Jennifer Tucker

**From:** Jessica R <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] My voice in the matter.

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 10:01:14 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree fully with the comment, "Pillar of Freedom", released regarding Liberty of Conscience. I believe fully in the right to freely exercise my right to choose between governmental & religious freedoms, not combining the two. Church & State Separation was founded by our leaders, and not only them but by God the Creator of All universes. I stand firm with keeping church & state separated. I do not desire the "dark ages" to resurface. Thanks.

**From:** Steve <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 10:07:23 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Thomas Jefferson that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man and His God. ... the American 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.

Please leave the wall up

Stephen C Rose

**From:** Ferdinand Torres <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 10:14:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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

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

Please reconsider your proposal to weaken and dismantle the separation of Church and State. This does not mean to be against Church and Religion. I am myself a church member and a conservative Christian. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's statement, points of view and comments. Take them in consideration and implement them. I love God and my Country and I know that the Commission members too. Thank you, and God bless America,

Ferdinand Torres  
Orlando, Florida

**From:** Beverly Young <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church And State

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 10:19:07 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Sent from my iPhone

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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*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 Maimonides, 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,*

*[THE UNDERSIGNED]*

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** Zilpha Begley <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public comment. Separation of Church and State. Zilpha Begley

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 10:34:14 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,  
Zilpha Begley  
Corydon, IN

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Jessica Albano Shaffner <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - CHAPTER 2

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 10:41:20 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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The report refers to "Our Creator," however the Declaration of Independence, signed on July 4, 1776, specifically says that people are endowed by "their Creator certain unalienable rights." There is a big difference between those two words "our" and "their." The colonists specifically used "their" which allows for their to be differences, shows they did not all share or believe in one creator. They authors of the Declaration were writing in behalf of the colonists and they did not project into the colonists one Creator or one faith.

They wrote "assume powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and to Nature's God entitle them." They rebelled against a king who believed he was selected by the God believed in by the Church of England to be king.

The colonists believed in the separation of churches from government. Those in government may have faith or be religious, but they must separate the two when making laws and governing people.

Your report and the actions of the Trump administration, especially in the military, are trying to force religion, and specifically one religion on the people of the United States in direct opposition to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Your report protects the rights of some while violating the rights of others.

If we truly had religious liberty, men in the military could grow beards; girls in kindergarten could wear headscarves, people if color could grow dreadlocks. Kids could attend a public school without having to look at the Ten Commandments. The morals and values in those Commandments could be translated into non-denominational values people of all faiths could agree on. Instead we have a few people in government trying to force their religion on we the people.

This commission is a farce to force Americans to abide by one religion in complete defiance of our founding principles. We are losing our liberal democracy, our democratic republic.

**From:** Song Osun <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] About the wrong doing of removing the separation of church and state in the USA

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 10:44:06 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Hello! It is wrong to remove the wall separating the state and the church, because history has shown us time and again that when church and state unite persecution soon follows that union.

Don't you remember that the USA was founded on the principal that the church should never have political power. And it was founded on that principal because the founding fathers had fresh in their minds the memory of the place they fled from, Europe, where the church (the catholic church) ruled with an iron fist, and crushed all who had different opinion to their world views.

Do you want history to repeat it self? Do you want to give your power to the beast of Revelation 13?

By uniting the state with the church, you will actually give political power to the first beast which is the papacy, and to the falls prophet which is the fallen, worldly Protestantism (because Protestantism also failed and is "fallen, is fallen" according to Revelation 18:2 = the second angel's message).

If you give political power to the worldly Protestantism, he will give it to the papacy, and they together will enforce the mark of the beast, which is the Sunday law, which is worship to the papacy and satan, and is breaking the 4-th commandment that says to keep holy the Sabbath day=Saturday. And also if you unite the state and the church, you will trample all of the principals of the Constitution. You will also remove the freedom of religion and the freedom of conscience. Enforced religion and worship is not based on true faith and true love, and is just what the papacy did in the Dark Ages, it's a form of fascism but with religious flavor.

I don't want to see the USA fall into religious despotism. I don't want to see the freedom loving pillar of the world to fall and fail us all around the world.

May God Jesus Christ open your eyes to see, and to study and understand the books of Daniel (Old testament) and Revelation (new testament), and to do the right thing, to keep God's law and not fall into the trap of papism.

Do the right thing and don't mingle the state and the church, and uphold the second table of the 10 commandments, and leave the first 4 commandments between God and man. The last 6 commandments are civil commandments between the people, but the first 4 commandments are between God and man (they are personal choice).

Cheers and i hope this message reaches people with conscience and intellect in order to make the right decision which is the will of out Heavenly Father - freedom of conscience to be able to freely choose God or the world, because love should always be a free choice!

**From:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

**To:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 10:48:41 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of church and State - Cora Price

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,  
Cora Price  
Georgetown, Texas

**From:** Paulette Love <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty and Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 11:36:23 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Sent from my iPhone *TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE*

*Via EMAIL:* [REDACTED] PII

*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 Maimonides, 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]*

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*We remain, Yours truly,*

*Anna Love*

**From:** Abel Balcazar <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 11:40:55 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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.

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the subject.

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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,

Abel Balcazar

**From:** "Vence, Rachel" <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Rachel Vence

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 11:57:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

While I thank you for your efforts to improve Religious Liberty, I several concerns:

1. The government should not be funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses. Who gets to decide which religions will get funded and which ones won't? This will create an unfair balance of power, with the funded religious groups having more power.
2. The Johnson Amendment should not be appealed! Churches should not be involved in politics! When a church gets involved in politics or the government funds religious activities is gives power to one church over the other. And it gives the government power over our religious activities. Which church will ultimately have the most power? The history of religious power over the state should make very hesitant to dissolve separation of church and state. Churches should not have power over the government. And we should have the freedom to follow our conscious in regards to our own religious convictions.
3. I do not agree with the special treatment given Jewish people and the state of Israel. I have nothing against either group. However, they seem to be given many exceptions that are not extended to other religions, people groups, or countries. Our constitution states that we are all equal. And they should be treated as such and should not be given special exceptions.

In closing, I adamantly request that we, the United States of America, retain our separation of church and state! Should the separation be nullified it will put us on the path to an erosion of our religious freedom and freedom of conscience. I do not want another church telling me what to believe and how to practice it. And you do not want that either. Even more, I (and you) do not want our government telling me/us what to believe and how to practice it.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comment.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Vence

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This e-mail communication and any attachments may contain confidential and privileged information for the use of the designated recipients named above. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this communication in error and that any review, disclosure, dissemination, distribution or copying of it or its contents is prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify me immediately by replying to this message and destroy all copies of this communication and any attachments. Thank you.

**From:** Thomas Michaud <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Religious Liberty Commission Report

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 13:24:44 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to encourage the Commission to continue affirming a fundamental principle of religious liberty: government must neither establish, favor, nor enforce religion. The separation of church and state is not hostility toward faith. It is the constitutional safeguard that allows every person to worship—or not worship—according to conscience, without governmental coercion or religious discrimination.

James Madison declared in his 1785 Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments that religion “can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence.” He further maintained that religion is beyond the rightful jurisdiction of civil government. Madison understood that when government assumes authority over religious belief or practice, it threatens both individual conscience and the integrity of religion itself.

Thomas Jefferson expressed the same principle in the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. He warned against civil rulers assuming “dominion over the faith of others” and affirmed that a person’s civil rights must not depend upon religious opinions. These principles helped shape the First Amendment’s command that Congress make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting its free exercise.

A similar warning was given by Alonzo T. Jones when he testified before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor in 1888 against Senator Henry Blair’s proposed national Sunday-rest bill. Jones argued that civil government is properly civil and therefore has no legitimate authority to prescribe religious observances. Although the proposed law was presented partly as a measure for rest, it specifically identified Sunday as the “Lord’s day” and sought to promote its observance as a day of religious worship. Jones correctly recognized that once government selects, favors, or enforces a religious observance, it moves from protecting religious liberty to regulating religion.

These historical principles remain relevant. Government should protect every person’s right to practice and express faith peacefully, while refraining from imposing religious doctrines, observances, tests, or preferences through law. This protection must extend equally to Christians of every denomination, members of other faiths, and those who profess no religious belief.

As the United States advocates for freedom of religion or belief throughout the world, its message is strongest when its own policies demonstrate equal treatment, freedom of conscience, and institutional independence between religious organizations and civil government. I respectfully urge the Commission to emphasize that genuine religious freedom requires both robust free exercise and protection against governmental establishment or coercion.

A free church and a free state are not enemies. Each is more secure when government protects conscience without attempting to control it.

Respectfully,

Thomas Michaud

[REDACTED]  
PII PII  
PII



**From:** Patti Grover <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 14:10:44 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments, please implement them. Our nation was started by fleeing Europe and escaping from religious persecution under a church and state government in which millions were martyred because of this regime. Joining church and state violates our God given freedom of choice and the government does not have the right to go against this in which God gave us when Adam & Eve was created. God does not use force to make us obey him it is based on His love for us he gave us freedom of choice.



**From:** Doug A <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 14:35:19 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 Maimonides, 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,

Pastor Doug Allen

[1] <https://www.justice.gov/.../president-trumps-religious...>

[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].

[3] <https://www.chron.com/.../dan-patrick-church-state...>

[4] <https://reclaimthenet.org/pope-francis-calls-on-social...>;

[5] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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/.../adam.../index.php/view/PJA01dg2>

**From:** Tonya Cruz <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 14:38:33 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am writing to express my strong support for the continued preservation of the separation of church and state.

Our country was founded on this essential principle, which ensures both the freedom of religious practice and the independence of our governing institutions. I believe it is vital that we maintain this clear boundary to protect the diverse beliefs of all citizens and to uphold the integrity of our democracy.

Thank you for your time and for your dedication to our nation's founding values.

Best regards,

Tonya Cruz

**From:** Richard Parrish <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on the Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 14:46:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear RLC leadership,

The Religious Liberty Commission, created by President Trump, uses faith for political ends. It does not protect religious liberty. It privileges one account of it.

A commission convened to defend religious freedom for all Americans should reflect the country it serves. This one does not. Catholic and Protestant Christianity dominate its membership. Orthodox Judaism holds a single seat. Islam appears only at the advisory level. Several major world religions have no representation or voice at all.

That imbalance is not merely unfortunate. It is unlawful. The Federal Advisory Committee Act requires that a federal advisory committee be "fairly balanced in terms of the points of view represented." A body assembled almost entirely from one tradition cannot meet that standard.

The deeper defect is constitutional in spirit. When the state convenes a panel to define religious liberty and privileges a single "Judeo-Christian" framing, it makes government the arbiter of religious truth. That is the danger the First Amendment was written to prevent. Faith and conscience belong to the person, not to the state.

I denounce this commission's founding and its approach. Its recommendations rest on a membership the law does not permit. They should not be adopted or acted upon. They are discriminatory in effect, and they are a use of public power that no faith should welcome.

Best regards,  
Richard

Richard H. Parrish II, RPh, PhD, FCCP

[REDACTED] PII PII

See My Substack, Pharmutopia, at [https://open.substack.com/pub/richardhenryparrish2/p/welcome-to-pharmutopia?utm\\_campaign=post-expanded-share&utm\\_medium=web](https://open.substack.com/pub/richardhenryparrish2/p/welcome-to-pharmutopia?utm_campaign=post-expanded-share&utm_medium=web)

**From:** Clifford S <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PILLAR OF FREEDOM COMMENTS

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 14:52:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. We should not let government into our Christian Churches or fund them in any form. We also need keep any religion's beliefs from being established and enforced by the government.

**From:** mikel <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Executive Summary - Michael Pryor

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 14:56:42 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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As a humanist and a concerned citizen who cares deeply about American democracy and the freedom of religion and belief, I am submitting this comment to urge the Religious Liberty Commission to withdraw its June 26, 2026 draft report and abandon its recommendations.

Religious freedom in the United States rests on the principle that there is a separation between church and state. The Commission's composition and process was dominated overwhelmingly by extremist Christians, and the Commission sidelined the experiences of those with minority beliefs, reflecting exactly the favoritism the Establishment Clause was written to prevent.

Based on the rhetoric on display during hearings and the resulting proposed recommendations, it is clear that the Religious Liberty Commission is a tool of a Christian Nationalist movement seeking to use the federal government to privilege one narrow faith over all other beliefs. Past history shows what can happen if one faith is privileged over other beliefs, or lack of belief. Wars have been fought in such instances leading to much loss of life. To counteract this possible situation, church and state must remain separate. Laws that are written in an enlightened society must be religious belief-neutral so that all people in society benefit, no matter their belief.

If the Commission finalizes this report, it will not be protecting religious liberty: it will be dangerously undermining it. I urge the Commission to reject this draft report in its entirety and to disband without further recommendations. Our government must recommit itself to the pluralistic, secular constitutional framework that protects the conscience of every American of all religions and beliefs.

Historical references from United States in support of separation of church and state.

- Washington's caution that the federal government gives "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance" in his [letter to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island](#) (1790)
- The [Virginia Statute on Religious Freedom](#) (drafted 1777, enacted 1786) with its warning against "the impious presumption of legislators and rulers . . . who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinion and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible"
- [Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists](#) (1802), which emphasizes "that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God" and references "a wall of separation between Church & State"

- The **Petition of the Philadelphia Synagogue to the Council of Censors of Pennsylvania** (1783), which warns against the exclusion of religious minorities through religious tests for officeholding
- Article XI of the **1796 Treaty of Tripoli**, which notes that “the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion”
- James Madison’s **Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments** (1785), which notes that it is an “arrogant pretension” for “the Civil Magistrate” to presume to act as a “competent Judge of Religious Truth . . . [or] employ Religion as an engine of Civil policy”



**From:** Julie Johnson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Draft Report – Julie Johnson Sharrette

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 15:05:40 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To the Department of Justice and the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to submit my formal public comment strongly opposing the recommendations outlined in the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission's draft report.

This dangerous framework seeks to redefine the Establishment Clause and undermine the critical separation of church and state. Allowing publicly funded organizations to use religion as a shield to discriminate in hiring and service provision is a gross violation of civil rights. Furthermore, these recommendations threaten vital healthcare access—including reproductive freedom, miscarriage management, and transgender care—leaving vulnerable communities without safe alternatives. Finally, attempting to dismantle the Johnson Amendment unconstitutionally injects dark political money into tax-exempt religious institutions.

True religious freedom protects personal conscience for all Americans. It must never be weaponized by the federal government to deny others healthcare, shelter, safety, or equal treatment under the law.

I urge the Department of Justice to reject these recommendations and uphold the constitutional rights of all citizens, regardless of their faith or lack thereof.

Sincerely,

Julie Johnson Sharrette

**From:** Ugonna Woods <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty commission

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 15:12:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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 Maimonides, 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,*

*Ugonna Woods MD, FAAP, DipABLM*

**God is love**

**From:** Michelle Doucoumes <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]" <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 15:34:42 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Department of Justice and 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 Maimonides, 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.

Sincerely,

Michelle Doucoumes, Tennessee

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** Gloria Ferrer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 15:40:56 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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,

Gloria Ferrer  
Fresno, California

[Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

**From:** Sheryl Coggins <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Regarding Presidential Religious Liberty Commission draft.

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 15:49:19 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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,  
Sheryl Coggins

PII mobile/text  
PII

**From:** Jody Nolf <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Response to the Commission on Religious Liberty report

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 16:06:50 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Commission members,

I would like to submit my statement of disagreement with your report regarding the separation of church and state and your desire to repeal the Johnson Act. I am in agreement with the Pillar Of Freedom's comments that you also have already received and ask that you implement those comments.

The ultimate result of your decisions if carried forward would result in the trampling of freedom of conscious and freedom of religion.

I pray for you all to have wisdom from God to take another look at this issue and prayerfully consider the consequences of your actions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jody Nolf

**From:** SallyJo Behnke <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 16:11:45 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am submitting a copy of Andy Roman's letter as I completely agree with everything he stated. Church and State should always be separate as there is so much history of the terrible results when it was not or government attempted to intervene on our God-given right of freedom of conscience. Please see letter below.

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.

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religious beliefs or practices, freedom of conscience is inevitably endangered, and religious minorities are often the first to endure discrimination and persecution.

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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,

Sally Jo Behnke  
Fort Mohave Arizona

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**From:** connie paton <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] public comment

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 17:18:02 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To Religious Liberty Commission,

In response to your Commission's study about the separation of Church and State, I would like to add my concern.

When ever in history, the "church" and the government combined, there is persecution to those who don't adhere to the state sponsored religion. All should have freedom to worship according to the dictates of their own conscience, without the state getting involved. If one chooses not to worship according to their conscience, they have that freedom also.

Please keep the wall of separation as outlined in the Constitution in place that has grown our country and the people in it.

We are not bad people who believe there should be a wall of separation between church and state. It is a safeguard to all it's citizens.

Sincerely,

Connie Paton

**From:** mike03m <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 17:25:56 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Sir,

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 I 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 citizen and student of history, and as a Christian, 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, I 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 I 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. I 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 Maimonides, 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. I 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 a follower of Jesus Christ, I am 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 I would enthusiastically support.

Respectfully yours,

H. Michael Boulton, MD

**From:** Suzi Gilmore <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religion Liberty Commission

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 17:26:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments on the issue of religious liberty in America. Please implement them. I strongly believe that America needs to continue to maintain a separation between church and state, following the words of the First Amendment of the Constitution. Therefore, no religion should have precedence over another, such as the nation of Israel. Therefore, I object to funding religious non-profit activities, religious education, and religious clubs on public campuses. I also object to repealing the Johnson Amendment, which restricts a church's political activities. I request that this amendment be fully enforced.

Thank you for standing for religious liberty of all people and all faiths by continuing to support the separation of church and government that our Constitution upholds.

**From:** TerryandPat Higgins <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] response to report

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 17:29:15 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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My wife and I agree with Pillar of Freedom response regarding the proposed separation of church and state. These two pillars of our life in America need to remain separate and permit religion to be a free choice not a civil decision. Terry and Patricia Higgins

**From:** j booker <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Opposing Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 17:38:14 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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 Maimonides, 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,*

*[THE UNDERSIGNED]*

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** garydalrymple <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 17:58:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Time is Running Out: You have Until July 13, 2026, to Make Your Voice Heard

The time to act is now. Submit your concerns to the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission by July 13, 2026, and make your voice heard. Express your objections 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 in America.

Send your email to the Religious Liberty Commission at [REDACTED] PII

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Below is my letter to the Commission:

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,  
Gary Dalrymple  
Sent from my Galaxy

**From:** Philip Langdeau <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State Comment

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 18:00:02 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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 Maimonides, 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.

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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,

Philip Langdeau  
Panama City, Florida  
Concerned Citizen

PII

**From:** garydalrymple <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 18:02:23 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Time is Running Out: You have Until July 13, 2026, to Make Your Voice Heard

The time to act is now. Submit your concerns to the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission by July 13, 2026, and make your voice heard. Express your objections 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 in America.

Send your email to the Religious Liberty Commission at [REDACTED] PII

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Below is my letter to the Commission:

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,

Gary Dalrymple from Arkansas from my Galaxy

**From:** Ken Dunlap <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 18:06:18 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I submit my 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 our constitutional principle of keeping religion and government separate or any other proposal that encourages unity between the two.

Sincerely,

Dotti Dunlap  
Battle Ground, WA  
Sent from my iPad

**From:** Susan Smith <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 18:28:58 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 Maimonides, 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,

Susan

**From:** Thomas Mayhew <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 18:39:36 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.

Jonathon Zirkle has researched this topic thoroughly and has written well on the subject.

Please look into his comments. They contain my convictions as well.

If Freedom is beautiful...and it is... Religious Freedom is stunningly beautiful and essential to the well being and prosperity of America.

I realize the secularists have created significant problems, but combining Church and State will only worsen them.

There is Biblical evidence that eliminating the separation of Church and State will actually lead to national ruin.

I don't want that to happen because I love America and her people.

Most sincerely,

Thomas Mayhew

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PII

PII

PII

PII



**From:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:05:37 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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 Maimonides, 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?

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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,

*Cynthia Tolbert*

Cynthia Tolbert, Esquire

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <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: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

To: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Frank Bongolan

Date: Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:07:49 -0400

Importance: Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was deeply troubled to read that this 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.

Remember, what caused the 1260 years of religious persecution from 538AD to 1298AD? It was when the Church united with the State to forward its doctrines. Please review history about this. If we don't learn from our mistakes in the past we are prone to repeat them.

Please don't build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects our civil and religious liberties. I know our precious US Constitution may not say the words "Separation of Church and State" but the principles are there. These principles are what our great nation was built upon.

Sincerely,  
Frank Bongolan  
Folsom, California

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***God's 4th Commandment says:***

***"REMEMBER the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the SEVENTH day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the SEVENTH day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11).***

**From:** Paul Bunge <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** Religious Liberty Commission <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Paul M. Bunge

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:08:08 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

My name is Paul Bunge. I am writing to express my firm opposition to the recently released draft report.

Anyone who has even a rudimentary knowledge of history would know that the text and recommendations of the Commission's draft report are utterly wrong and potentially very dangerous. The founders were very aware of the centuries of conflict in Europe inspired by religious adherents and they wanted to avoid that conflict here. The Commission's report would take us backward.

**From:** "Pat Rampy" <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty commission.

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:16:57 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Our ancestors fled the European continent in order to escape the persecution resulting from the union of church and State there. Don't do it here.

God bless!

Pat

Prophecyhelps101.com

Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! Eph. 6:10.

**From:** Ken Barre <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Kenneth Barre

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:19:54 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I was alarmed that the commission wants to build a "bridge" between church and state. It's disgraceful that this commission so quickly forgets the history of the middle ages and protestant period, where religion was part of government and anyone who didn't follow specific government-defined religious beliefs were tortured and killed. The Roman Catholic Church is guilty of millions upon millions of murders, demonstrating there is no religious liberty when government is involved.

This country was founded as a reprieve from the travesty in Europe. According to James Madison, "The purpose of separation of church and state is to keep forever from these shores the ceaseless strife that has soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries." <https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/63859>

Our foundation is based on keeping religion and government separate. The NAME of the commission includes "Religious Liberty," yet you disgrace that name and all of the martyrs in history by continuing down this path.

Please, for the sake of all who died before, all who sacrificed all for this bastion of freedom, and for all future generations refrain from going down this tragic path toward a "bridge."

Sincerely,  
Kenneth Barre  
Apopka, Florida

**From:** Carlos Rivera <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comments-Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:20:34 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Carlos Rivera

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,

Carlos Rivera

Alton, MO



From: Justin Lessig <[REDACTED] PII >

To: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Report

Date: Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:49:47 -0400

Importance: Normal

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To the Religious Liberty Commission,

I appeal to you on behalf of the ***real true freedom of Religious Liberty Commission- the heavenly courts above, God's kingdom, not man's kingdom***. Man's soul belongs to God alone. The human soul is exclusively the domain and property of the Almighty God alone. There is no mere sinful mortal human being on earth- and that's what all of us are, sinful mere mortals- who has the right to interfere in the sphere of this most sacred religious temple- man's freedom of conscience- in regards to a man's religious convictions, which belongs to the God of heaven and earth alone. Have you never read Daniel chapter 3 regarding the three hebrews who would not bow down to king Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, an unhinged pompous treasonous show of religious forceful display of a combination of church and state in which he commanded all men to bow down to his image? But what saith the Lord of Hosts? The Almighty God Himself intervened and cleared up any confusion in regards to the matter by answering back to Nebuchadnezzar that he, Nebuchadnezzar, was in the wrong by miraculously delivering the three hebrews out of the fiery furnace, who opposed and stood against this idolatrous and blasphemous combination of religious and civil power by not bowing down to it. God Himself revealed to all the known universe that awesome prophetic day- for Daniel's time and place in history, *and our time and place in history*- that He, the God of heaven and earth- ***rejects any and all notions or attempts of a blasphemous unholy union of church and state to control men's consciences in the realm of religion***. Freedom of conscience **IS** forever eternally God's exclusive religious property and domain alone- it belongs to Him and no one else in the entire universe. When the time should come when a false apostate religious power so controls the civil power through a unification of church and state, and decides to usurp the prerogatives of Almighty God alone in an attempt to control man's freedom of conscience in religion- ***let it be known it to you, it is an act of the highest treason in the sight of the Almighty God and the angelic courts above***.

Listen to this you wise sages: "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him ***by force*** (the crowd, the "Jewish extremist nationalists" of Christ's day, or "Christian extremist nationalists" of our day) to make Him a king, He departed again unto a mountain alone...John 6:15

**Christ's kingdom is not of this world. John 18:36.** If Christ's kingdom were of this world, he told us at the immediate time of his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane by the brutalistic and heartless bloodthirsty roman soldiers, "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and He will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" Matthew 26:53. Christ- the Son of God Himself, rejected any and all attempts at any combination or forms of union of church and state. Christ, the Lord of Lords, King of Kings, was **THE** true Protestant Himself so why I ask, are you meddling and forcefully intruding your way into the affairs of Christ the King that belongs to him alone- the sacred right of duty of conscience?

Sincerely,

Justin Lessig



**From:** Dave Lyons <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Religious Liberty Report - DAVID B. LYONS

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:50:57 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To whom it may concern,

I object to government funding of Religious non-profit activities because he who holds the money controls the organization. I don't want government to be in control of religious activities.

I object to government funding of religious education and clubs on public campuses for the same reason as stated above. I feel the God has the funds in his control. if these organizations need money, they need to go to God, not the government. You are not God!

I object to repealing the Johnson Amendment because I do not want the the church, any church, to have any power in government. I don't mind if the leaders of government have religious beliefs, in fact I think that is a good thing. But, I don't want their church to have any power in government.

While I understand that the words "separation of Church & State" are not found in the constitution, Thomas Jefferson, who penned the words that were miss-quoted and taken out of context did write,

"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."

The 1st amendment prohibits the acts that you want to implement.

In Summary I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Thank you,

David B. Lyons

**From:** Ericka Triebwasser <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]" <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religiuos Liberty

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:54:49 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely  
Ericka Triebwasser  
Sent from Gmail Mobile

**From:** Nerida Bates <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] For separation of Church and State

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:56:01 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Please defend the long enshrined separation of church and state.

Nerida Bates  
US Citizen

**From:** michael tucker <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Please protect the Separation of church and state

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 19:56:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am a life-long Christian believer and Minister of the Gospel. I am greatly troubled by the final report issued by the Religious Liberty Commission.

Thomas 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,”

I believe that government has no authority to tell citizens what to believe, or how to worship, and that government lacks authority over religion. Please reconsider your position on this issue and maintain the protection people of faith and their houses of worship have enjoyed for the past 250 years.

Pastor Michael Tucker

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Mary-Ann Saeva <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – MaryAnn Saeva

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 20:15:31 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As a citizen and a person of faith, I am deeply troubled by the Commission's proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge."

This wall was built by believers to keep the church free, not by secularists to restrict religion. A bridge opens the door for government funding and political influence, forcing churches to compete for grants and answer to politicians instead of to God. History demonstrates that the blending of church and state is detrimental to both.

I urge you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken this separation—specifically, using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment. When churches engage in partisan politics or accept government funding, they inherit political corruption. Separation protects faith, which is precisely why religion has remained strong in our country.

Please maintain the separation of church and state - that's how we keep both free.

Sincerely,

Mary-Ann Saeva  
[Marianna, Florida]

**From:** Joseph Gaston <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment Joseph Gaston Religious Liberty Commission Report"

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 20:40:09 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am a PCUSA Minister who is very grateful for the separation of church & state. I commend for your study the Barmen Declaration as a statement of faith by Karl Barth & other German Christians who opposed the Nazi take over of the German Lutheran Church.

Joseph Gaston

mobile [REDACTED] PII

[REDACTED] PII

An Old Farm Boy Pastor/Chaplain (Retired)



**From:** Marilyn Edwards <marilyn.luvpcejoy7@gmail.com>

**To:** "RLC (OASG)" <RLC@usdoj.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 20:54:06 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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]*

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*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.*

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*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.*

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*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,*

Marilyn Edwards

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Jason Kaiser <[REDACTED]>

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT—Separation of Church and State—Jason Kaiser

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 21:10:50 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I believe that the separation of church and state would destroy religious liberty in the United States. The Johnson amendment must be must be enforced to prevent religion from interfering with the state and vice versa. If that is removed there would be little in the way of a state sponsored religion. If there were a politicized religion what version of religion would that be? Evangelical, Lutheran, Baptist, Catholic? I believe religion government needs to remain completely neutral in relationship with religion.

People came to America from Europe in the 1600's and 1700's for the opportunity to freely practice their religion without state or state sanctioned church persecution. Please don't repeat the mistakes from history that Europe made. Keep the wall between religion and the state so people can worship as their conscience dictates.

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them

**From:** "Grace P. Cox" <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 21:13:25 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: The Department of Justice

*I as an individual have read the following information. I could not improve upon it, nor could I have had the ability to do the research involved and compose something similar to express my sentiments. So, obviously, I am taking advantage of the work of others more knowledgeable and capable than I in order to submit these precepts for your consideration. Where it says "we" I could insert I; but I will prayerfully submit it as is and respectfully ask that it be read thoughtfully. May I draw your attention to the last paragraph, below, as I sincerely hope that such a public hearing with public input would be convened.*

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.

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Sincerely,

Grace Cox

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** Ryan Ahlquist <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 21:27:57 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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We remain, Yours truly,

Ryan Ahlquist

**From:** Carla Riley <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 21:36:44 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my earnest beliefs regarding the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state.

I uphold the principle of religious freedom for all people. From my own study and research, I know that freedom of conscience is one of the great principles that America has stood for from her birth. All men and women are free to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience.

History has shown that when church and state are married together, it always produces a disastrous union that fosters abuse of power and torture.

This is why these words within the Constitution hold ultimate significance for me and all Americans: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."

They ensure that the past atrocities committed due to such a union would never happen again on American soil.

I thank God for raising up men who stood for this principle, forever embedding it within the DNA of American liberty.

Here, I will share a quote by President Thomas Jefferson that I greatly respect and love. He wrote these words in response to citizens concerned about religious freedom:

"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."

Although not a writer of the Constitution, Jefferson is a primary founder of American freedom. This statement clearly shows his understanding and support of the separation of church and state based on the Constitution.

Lastly, I will add that this is clearly a biblical principle as stated in Matthew 22:21: "Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

More than anything else, this settles the matter for me! Christ himself established the principle of the separation of church and state, teaching his disciples—and all of humanity throughout the ages—that what belongs to God cannot, and must never, be surrendered to Caesar.

I sincerely thank you for taking the time to read my comments on this urgent matter. I'm not eloquent, but my words are genuine.

Below, you will find a letter that I've taken the liberty to include. It comprehensively explains the principles that I endorse on this matter.

May your thinking on this and future matters be Christ-inspired, that God may bless the decisions you all make.

Sincerely,

C. Riley

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Enclosed: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: PII

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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.

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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 Maimonides, 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]

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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]

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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.

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We remain, Yours truly,

C. Riley

One Christian voice united with many

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-UA>

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

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

[9] Matthew 22:21

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[11] John Adams, Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law, 1765.  
<https://www.masshist.org/publications/adams-papers/index.php/view/PJA01dg2>



[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

**From:** Timothy Arnott <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Please reconsider the direction you're heading:

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 21:45:33 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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July 10, 2026

To whom it may concern:

If you truly want to bring religion back to America, it's not going to happen through the arm of governmental legislation and judicial prowess! You need only to go back to the foundation of true religion, the Holy Scriptures, to get the prescription, namely,

14 If MY people, which are called by MY name, shall a) humble themselves, b) and pray, c) and seek My face, d) and turn from THEIR wicked ways; THEN will I hear from heaven, and will forgive THEIR sin, and will heal their LAND.

Notice, God isn't addressing the atheists, the worldly minded, the agnostics, the "heathen", He is addressing His people, the Christians, church goers. What is His message? Write laws to reform the nation? No!

Number one, "humble yourselves" and "pray" and "seek My Face" and "turn from YOUR WICKED WAYS".

No mention of legislation, strong arm of government, likeminded judges being chosen. He has one message: my people are messed up and THEY need to get THEIR act together. For example, 50 years ago America celebrated the 200th birthday with the Boston Pops orchestra. 50 years later, Trump celebrated with a rock concert! Shame on him. Shame on America. So-called christians are worshipping the Adversary of souls with satanic music. So-called christians have joined hands with the corrupt entertainment industry and are using their godless music to supposedly bring honor to Christ. What darkness! What blindness. These so-called christian

entertainers are wannabe rock stars, seeking the same glory to themselves the rock stars are seeking for themselves, declaring to the world they have never known Jesus, because if they had, they would have the attitude of the apostle Paul,

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ my Lord”!

These so-called Christians have never read the words of Christ, or they would have bumped in these critical words,

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh (movies, popular music, novels), and the lust of the eyes (shop till you drop, greed, grinding down the poor, buying stocks you know will jump up with your tweet, then, selling immediately to make millions), and the pride of life (rock stars, movie stars, sports stars, political stars, prideful leaders), is NOT of the Father, but is of the WORLD.

17 And the world passeth away (FOREVER), and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

The will of God is not legislation, better laws, denying our founding documents, it's stated above. That is what you all should be preaching and doing.

Shame on you for telling Americans the separation of church and state doesn't exist. How dare you!

On another note, 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.

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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.

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Sincerely,

Timothy Arnott

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Kathy Sabelino <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I agree with pillars of freedom comments

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 21:46:39 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Hello,

I AGREE WITH PILLAR OF FREEDOMS COMMENTS. PLEASE IMPLEMENT THEM.

Kathleen G. Sabelino

[REDACTED] PII

**From:** James Wright <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment; Presidential Liberty Commission Draft

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 22:13:41 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

" SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE"

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We remain, Yours truly,

[THE UNDERSIGNED]

[1] <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/president-trumps-religious-liberty-commission-delivers-historic-report-draft>

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<https://www.masshist.org/publications/adams-papers/index.php/view/PJA01dg>

**From:** houstons4378 <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 22:34:29 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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,

Andy Roman from Oklahoma  
Sent from my Galaxy

**From:** Debby Keeton <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 23:01:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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 Maimonides, 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,*

*[THE UNDERSIGNED]*

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <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:** Ellen Butler <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Regarding the Religious Liberty Commission Report

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 23:06:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Esteemed Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to clarify that I firmly believe that we in America have achieved greatness and prominence in the world due to the long standing policies in place since our founding fathers drafted the Constitution and later the Bill of Rights. If we disregard the simplicity of guaranteeing religious freedom in our country, we will go down in infamy! The United States Government must CLEARLY avoid legislating and suggesting practices in matters of faith and stick to regulations involving civil jurisdictions as outlined in the the last six of the ten commandments given from Mt. Sinai. Regarding the first four, they must keep in place the "hands off" policy.

Roger Williams was persecuted by his own denomination, but his principles of true religious freedom have been paramount in the success of the "American Experiment" and the "American Dream". Thomas Jefferson is another example of one who was very clear on the separation of Church and State.

I have serious concerns about some of the content of the Commission Report, under the guise of Religious Freedom! Freedom will be lost if "The Church" looks to the State to regulate and encourage religiosity.

Keep, reverence, and maintain the wall between Church and State, it has kept America safe and free! Thank you for your time.

A Concerned US Citizen,

Ellen Butler  
Business Owner  
Oregon

**From:** Rainbow Water <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 23:08:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 Maimonides, 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.” 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,  
Brandon & Heather Bartlett

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-UA>

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

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[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.

**From:** Gary Barker <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Comments

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 23:23:27 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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,

Gary Barker from Colorado



**From:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment- Religious Liberty Report must be ditched

**Date:** Fri, 10 Jul 2026 23:50:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As a Christian and a concerned citizen who cares deeply about American democracy and the freedom of religion and belief, I am submitting this comment to urge the Religious Liberty Commission to withdraw its June 26, 2026 draft report and abandon its recommendations.

Religious freedom in the United States rests on the principle that there is a separation between church and state. The Commission's composition and process was dominated overwhelmingly by extremist Christians, and the Commission sidelined the experiences of those with minority beliefs, reflecting exactly the favoritism the Establishment Clause was written to prevent.

Based on the rhetoric on display during hearings and the resulting proposed recommendations, it is clear that the Religious Liberty Commission is a tool of a Christian Nationalist movement seeking to use the federal government to privilege one narrow faith over all other beliefs.

If the Commission finalizes this report, it will not be protecting religious liberty: it will be dangerously undermining it. I urge the Commission to reject this draft report in its entirety and to disband without further recommendations. Our government must recommit itself to the pluralistic, secular constitutional framework that protects the conscience of every American of all religions and beliefs.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Nancy Bukowski

**From:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 00:16:19 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I have read the Religious Liberty report and I don't agree with eliminating the wall of separation between church and State.  
Keep Religious freedom as it has been in the last 250 years

Keep Church and State separate!

Thank you!

Loice

**From:** Caleb Smith-Plummer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 01:48:07 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,

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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,

Caleb Smith-Plummer from Ohio

**From:** Paul Terry <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Contact the Department

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 02:03:05 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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<https://www.justice.gov/contact-us>

Dear members of the religious Liberty commission I agree with pillar of freedom comments.

I am 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 church takes government money or step into partition 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 is not a secular idea; people of Faith build 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, Paul Terry Baton rouge, Louisiana

**From:** S Vatter <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 02:04:19 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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As a historian, I find the position articulated in the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report mistaken.

Religious liberty emerged from the practical realities of sectarian conflict and vibrant pluralism, NOT from a monolithic Christian consensus. The founding generation confronted a world marked by religious conflict and diversity. Protections for religious liberty developed in response to disagreement among denominations and competing spiritual traditions, not from a broadly shared Christian consensus.

This is supported both by Thomas Jefferson's 1802 statement to the Danbury Baptists "that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God" and references "a wall of separation between Church & State" AND by the Virginia Statute on Religious Freedom (drafted 1777, enacted 1786) with its warning against "the impious presumption of legislators and rulers...who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinion and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible"

By recommending that the DOJ back strategic litigation to support state laws requiring the display of the Ten Commandments in public schools, the report actively promotes state-sponsored religious favoritism. Despite the long history of religious pluralism in the United States, this approach abandons secular neutrality and uses the machinery of the federal government to elevate one religious tradition over all others.

**From:** Tina Rhea <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-- Religious liberty-- Tina Rhea

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 02:45:29 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Public comment to the Religious Liberty Commission:

I would like those considering the meaning of the Constitution and religion in the US to keep in mind that, aside from the First Amendment, there is only one mention of religion in the Constitution: at the end of Article VI, it says, “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.” There is no mention of God, Jesus, the Bible, Christianity, or any other religious reference. If the Founders had wanted to put such religious references into the Constitution, they could have done so — they chose not to do it. Therefore the Founders did not encourage the expression of Christianity or any other religion.

The Presidential Religious Liberty Commission FAQ states in #13 that “Public meetings may be opened with prayer....” Assuming that these prayers are almost certainly going to be Christian in nature, please note that public prayer is contrary to the Biblical teaching of Jesus:

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seest in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matthew 6:5-6)

Therefore opening a public meeting or any other public function with prayer is contrary to the will of Jesus and should not be encouraged by the government, as it would be openly encouraging many people to violate their religion.

FAQ #1 states: “when Americans exercise their religious liberty by living their faith— from praying to serving the poor to treating people with charity to upholding moral standards— people live more fulfilling lives, they build vibrant families, bolster our communities, and ultimately, strengthen our nation.”

I strongly object to this statement, as it implies that only religious people aid others, donate to charity, uphold moral standards, live fulfilling lives, and strengthen our nation. About 29% of Americans, when questioned about their religious beliefs, answer that they are agnostic, atheist, Humanist, or simply “none” for having no religious beliefs — more than Catholics (19%), more than Evangelicals (23%), and nearly half as many as all Christians (62%). We are just as generous, as moral, and as good Americans as people of any religious faith. It is wrong and discriminatory to state that only those who profess a religion are generous, moral, upstanding Americans.

Please note also the wording in the Treaty of Tripoli: “the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion....”

This treaty was ratified by the United States Senate unanimously and without debate on June 7, 1797, and signed three days later by President John Adams. The men who ratified and signed this treaty were among the Founders, some of whom had signed the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution, and they knew what America was and was not. And they ratified and signed a treaty stating that the government of the United States was not founded on the Christian religion, or any other. (The point of stating this in the treaty was to say that there was nothing preventing the United States from making a treaty with a predominantly Muslim nation.)

Keep in mind that freedom of religion, especially when so many Americans are not religious, also includes freedom from religion. No American, adult or child, should be made to feel excluded or in any way less a true American by officials making public proclamations or posting or erecting public statements or monuments to their own religion.

Thank you.

Tina Rhea  
Greenbelt MD



**From:** Monroe Lines <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 03:09:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I AGREE WITH PILLAR OF FREEDOMS COMMENTS

**From:** Dawn Presswood <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 04:24:25 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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 I 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 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, I 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 Maimonides, 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. I 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, I am 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 I would enthusiastically support.

I remain, Yours truly,

Dawn Presswood

[1] <https://www.justice.gov/.../president-trumps-religious...>

[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].

[3] <https://www.chron.com/.../dan-patrick-church-state...>

[4] <https://reclaimthenet.org/pope-francis-calls-on-social...>;

[5] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAUkMwIWB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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/.../adam.../index.php/view/PJA01dg2>

**From:** Dimi Filyova <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] About newly released draft report

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 07:20:25 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Dimi Filyova

**From:** Glenda Piñero <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 08:09:38 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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]

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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 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.

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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.

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We remain, Yours truly,

Glenda Pinero

[1] <https://www.justice.gov/.../president-trumps-religious...>

[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].

[3] <https://www.chron.com/.../dan-patrick-church-state...>

[4] <https://reclaimthenet.org/pope-francis-calls-on-social...>;

[5] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-UA>

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

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<https://www.masshist.org/.../adam.../index.php/view/PJA01dg2>



**From:** deb christensen <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 09:18:51 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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,

Debbie Christensen

**From:** Christy Austin <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 10:28:36 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.

C Austin

**From:** Tommy Waters <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 10:29:22 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Time is Running Out: You have Until July 13, 2026, to Make Your Voice Heard

The time to act is now. Submit your concerns to the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission by July 13, 2026, and make your voice heard. Express your objections 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 in America.

Send your email to the Religious Liberty Commission at [REDACTED] PII

\*\*\*\*\*

Below is my letter to the Commission:

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.

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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,

Tom Waters from Tennessee

**From:** Pamela Jiranek <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Religious Liberty Commission draft report

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 10:47:15 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am submitting this comment to urge the Religious Liberty Commission to withdraw its June 26, 2026 draft report and abandon its recommendations.

Religious freedom in the United States rests on the principle that there is a separation between church and state. The Commission's composition and process was dominated overwhelmingly by extremist Christians, and the Commission sidelined the experiences of those with minority beliefs, reflecting exactly the favoritism the Establishment Clause was written to prevent.

Based on the rhetoric on display during hearings and the resulting proposed recommendations, it is clear that the Religious Liberty Commission is a tool of a Christian Nationalist movement seeking to use the federal government to privilege one narrow faith over all other beliefs.

If the Commission finalizes this report, it will not be protecting religious liberty: it will be dangerously undermining it. I urge the Commission to reject this draft report in its entirety and to disband without further recommendations. Our government must recommit itself to the pluralistic, secular constitutional framework that protects the conscience of every American of all religions and beliefs.

Pam Jiranek  
Earlysville, VA

**From:** Francisco Franquiz <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] P R O T E S T

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 11:27:41 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 Maimonides, 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,  
Francisco Franquiz

PII

**From:** mayra capella <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 11:58:12 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 Maimonides, 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]

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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.

With due respect,

Mayra Capella

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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>

Mayra Capella

**From:** AP <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State - Andriy Portyanko

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 12:17:55 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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.

Andriy Portyanko  
Putney, VT

**From:** A Diary Of Heaven <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 12:23:56 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 with kind regards,

Dominique Fúzková from Los Angeles.

**From:** G Gillum <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Freedom

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 12:30:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.  
Sent from my iPhone



**From:** DANA JESTER <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 12:57:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Sent from my iPhone

I agree with Pillar of freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Dana Jester

**From:** Religious Liberty <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Response to Religious Liberty Commission Report

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 13:00:44 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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July 11, 2026

**To the Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission:**

I am writing to formally submit my comments and outline several pressing legal concerns regarding the draft report, "Americans' First Freedom." While the Commission's dedication to preserving the First Amendment is evident, the proposed recommendations raise significant constitutional issues, particularly regarding the delicate balance between the Establishment Clause and general free speech limitations.

The report advocates for a sweeping reinterpretation of the separation of church and state, specifically targeting policies that prevent government-funded institutions from imposing religious doctrines on the broader public. While protecting the internal, faithful mission of religious organizations is a bedrock constitutional principle, we must be highly cautious of how the Commission's proposals might inadvertently expand free speech restrictions in the public square.

By recommending that institutions receiving federal funding operate with expansive exemptions from established civil rights, healthcare, and educational standards, the state risks effectively deputizing private religious enforcement. This creates a fraught legal environment where the free speech and conscience rights of dissenting citizens, employees, and students could be severely restricted under the guise of an institution's overarching religious liberty. True religious freedom ensures the government does not silence individuals, but it cannot be weaponized to silence others in publicly funded arenas.

Furthermore, the recommendation to repeal the Johnson Amendment fundamentally alters the statutory nature of tax-exempt entities. Removing this restriction does not merely protect the pulpit; it risks transforming houses of worship into unregulated conduits for partisan political campaigns. This policy shift would heavily entangle the state's tax apparatus with religious and political speech, blurring the lines of government endorsement.

Our constitutional framework relies on a vital, historical balance. It absolutely guarantees that the state will not suppress individual religious exercise, but it equally demands that the government does not establish, fund, or coerce religious orthodoxy. I strongly urge the Commission to reconsider and revise its recommendations to ensure that efforts to protect religious liberty do not inadvertently foster state-sanctioned free speech restrictions for the broader American public.

Sincerely,

**Michael D. Peabody, Esq.**

Los Angeles, California

**Michael D. Peabody, Esq.**  
President

PII

PII

**From:** Larry Peterson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Draft report of the Presidential Liberty Commission 6-26-26

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 13:01:19 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Regarding your report, intentions and goals to bring us back to the dark ages of uniting church and state. Protect our 1st ammendment rights that prevents the government from establishing an official religion, interfering with religious exercise, censoring speech or the press, infringing on peaceful assembly, or denying the right to petition the government. Anything less will bring us back to the dark ages that the framers of the constitution never wanted to happen again! 🔥🔥🔗🔒👤

"I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please Implement them."

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13wd1AsF3m6STwD-v0ywpXFYnI-VRv8TF/view>

**From:** Melissa Frost <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Religious Liberty Commission Recommendations

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 13:22:30 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO the Department of Justice:

*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 it's 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 Maimonides, 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." Where there is union of church and state, there has always been persecution.*

*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,*

Melissa Frost, NP

[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=pAUkMwIWyB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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>

*“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” (Num. 6:24-26)*



**From:** Marcia Watson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 13:22:36 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them."

**From:** Bille Mayer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Religious Liberty Commission Recommendations

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 13:29:32 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To the Department of Justice:

*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 it's 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]*

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*We remain, Yours truly,*

Billie Mayer

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-UA>

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

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**From:** Tennis Boy <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Hyun Sik

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 13:32:04 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To Whom It May Concern:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please  
implement them.

Best,

Hyun Sik

Loma Linda, CA

**From:** Tom Bledsoe Jr <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comments

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 13:36:39 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I want to publicly state that I do not agree with government funding of religious non-profit activities. I also disagree with the proposal for government funding of ANY religious education or any religious clubs on public educational campuses. Public or government funded education should NEVER include religious education for or from any denomination. I would also like to state my objections to any repeal of the Johnston Amendment and I want to state my full support of the Johnston Amendment's FULL implementation and enforcement! Finally, I want to publicly state my full support and complete agreement with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Implementation of their comments is vital!

Respectfully, Tom Bledsoe Jr



**From:** Melissa Frost <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Religious Liberty Commission Recommendations

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 13:37:45 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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." Where there is union of church and state, there has always been persecution.*

*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,

Oriana Frost

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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>

*“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” (Num. 6:24-26)*

**From:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

**To:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 14:14:51 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Below is my letter to the Commission:

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,

Virginia Brauher of Colorado

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

**From:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 14:24:01 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedoms comments. Please implement them.

God is Good, all the time  
all the time, God is Good  
Sharon M Love



**From:** Nicole Louis <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 14:46:37 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 Maimonides, 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,

[THE UNDERSIGNED]

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** don ingram <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 15:11:24 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with pillar of Freedom comments, please implement them.  
Don ingram

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

**From:** Lesley Johnson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Concerns Regarding Church-State Separation in the Religious Liberty Commission Report

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 15:19:13 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the direction and implications of the Religious Liberty Commission Report. While the report presents itself as a defense of religious freedom, many of its recommendations would, in practice, erode the historic and constitutional separation between church and state.

The report's framing of religious liberty as a "bridge" between church and state is especially troubling. The First Amendment was designed to prevent government entanglement with religion, not to encourage cooperation between the two. When government begins to promote, endorse, or facilitate religious activity, it inevitably privileges certain faiths over others and places minority beliefs at risk.

The report encourages government-led religious expression, including state-approved prayer in schools, government-funded religious institutions, and official religious messaging in public settings. These actions go beyond protecting individual rights; they represent state involvement in religious life. History shows that such entanglement leads to coercion, not liberty.

True religious freedom requires government restraint. It requires neutrality, not partnership. It requires that faith remain voluntary, not influenced or supported by state power. The Founders understood this clearly. Madison wrote that religion is "wholly exempt from the cognizance of civil authority," and Jefferson warned against any government action that would direct or influence religious practice.

I respectfully urge the Department of Justice to reaffirm the constitutional principle of church-state separation and to ensure that future policy protects religious liberty through government neutrality rather than government involvement. This is the only model that safeguards the rights of all people—believers, nonbelievers, and religious minorities alike.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Lesley Johnson

**From:** Jim Richards <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 15:42:26 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

*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 Maimonides, 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]*

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*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.*

*Yours truly,*



**From:** Ami Bergman <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 16:34:50 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dept. Of Justice,

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 Maimonides, 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,

Wesley and Amy Gaebel

**From:** Christy Letourneau <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment re: Pillars of Freedom

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 16:47:15 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I know that church and state division is a truth in our country's foundation, and I believe it was for very important reasons. I do not believe that anything good can ever come from combining church and state and I do not support this change at all!

The very fact that you are covering up history, and actually lying about it, is highly implicative and suspicious. It does not evoke trust at all.

I do not want this initiative to progress whatsoever!

Miriam Christina Alessi Letourneau

**From:** Dianna Alcede <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 17:05:08 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To whom it may concern,

It is very alarming to hear that the United States government would even consider joining church and state. This country was founded by freedom loving individuals who fled from religious persecution before.

If church and state are allowed to join forces, the state by mob rule could impose whatever religion they wish. It is my sincere prayer that freedom from state religion is avoided at all costs.

Sincerely,  
Dianna Alcede  
Lake Charles, La

**From:** Tom Proudfoot <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I agree with pillaroffreedom.org

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 17:23:45 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Hello,

Please take the response of [pillaroffreedom.org](https://pillaroffreedom.org) to heart as they represent my own views and tens of thousands of other fellow believers along with me.

Thank you & may God bless you!

Tom Proudfoot [REDACTED] PII

From: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

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

Subject: [EXTERNAL] KEEP RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FREE

Date: Sat, 11 Jul 2026 17:28:33 -0400

Importance: Normal

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To each one that is involved in this huge concern, and that certainly includes JD Vance and President Trump, I beg of you to keep our choice of religion and our choice of which day we wish to worship on, be OUR OWN decision and NOT APPOINTED BY GOVERNMENT. REMEMBER "THE DARK AGES" AND the 1000'S OF LIVES TAKEN BECAUSE THEY WOULD NOT OBEY, BY CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION, THE ROMAN CATHOLIC POLICY. Did they mind that others wanted to? NO, of course not. They just wanted to worship God as they understand and desired to worship HIM, our Master, Maker and Redeemer, and therefore and rightfully so, this issue most certainly concerns Sunday worship. Sunday is **factually**, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week which makes Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week and the ONE God directs us to worship on and to keep holy. In no way has it ever changed. In no way, does the Bible EVER say this was done away with. Moses' laws were done away with when the curtain was torn from top to bottom in the sanctuary at the death of Christ. However, the 10 Holy Commandments were not done away with nor changed when Christ was crucified. Christ said, "I came not to destroy the law but to fulfill." Matthew 5:17. I would that all would turn to HIM according to Biblical direction and follow HIS LEAD AND HIS LEAD ONLY, and that was His desire for Israel in Christ's day as well, and it is HIS desire for us NOW as well.

At age 91, these are my thoughts and have served me well as I have chosen to serve HIM, my Lord and King.

Betty McAllister (The rest of this is copied and pasted. God bless you and keep you).

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### **Time is Running Out: You have Until July 13, 2026, to Make Your Voice Heard**

The time to act is now. Submit your concerns to the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission by July 13, 2026, and make your voice heard. Express your objections 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 in America.

Send your email to the Religious Liberty Commission at PII

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Below is my letter to the Commission:

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,

Andy Roman from Oklahoma



**From:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

**To:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State - Stacy W.

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 17:34:08 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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,

Stacy W.  
Phoenix, AZ

**From:** Valarie Arnett Hartsfield <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment- Separation of Church and State- Valarie M. Hartsfield

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 17:47:56 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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"I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them."

- Church and State should remain separate, like the founders intended, for their union, as history attests, always leads to persecution.
- Repealing the Johnson Amendment would be a big mistake. The church should not be directly involved in politics.
- The preferential treatment of the Nation of Israel Jewish people is based on a false futuristic interpretation of bible prophecy and needs to stop. Too much blood and treasure is being spent on a false understanding of bible prophecy.

The 1st amendment: **Congress shall make no law concerning an establishment of religion. Nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof.**

Sincerely,

Valarie M. Hartsfield

Springville, CA

**From:** Faith Makes Things Possible Not Easy <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment: Presidents Commision on Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 17:57:06 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Please!

To whom it may concern,

I feel we should keep church and state separate.

Our country sets the standard that many countries follow, we have a HUGE responsibility to not only the American citizens, but to people around the world.

under our current administration we have it great, but for the leaders that follow this could lead down a rabbit hole that could end up very bad. The separation of Church and State is what founded this country

I agree with the Pillar of Freedoms response please implement them

Sincerely

Tammie Keller

**From:** Brenda Smith <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 18:03:15 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 Maimonides, 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

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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>

Sincerely,  
Brenda Smith

P11

P11

**From:** Jonathan Geraci <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 18:23:16 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*To whom it may concern,*

*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.*

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*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 Maimonides, 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,*

*Jonathan*

[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=CMBiPIfx-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:** alan harmon <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 18:25:36 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Alan Harmon, Broker Associate

[REDACTED]  
PII

PII

PII

**From:** Dean Ferrell <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 18:28:14 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am deeply concerned that the Commission is considering replacing the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." Although the exact phrase "separation of church and state" does not appear in the Constitution, however, the concept, the principle behind it, the protection of religious liberties, is firmly present.

The wall of separation was built by people of faith to protect faith. The colonies realized that religious liberty flourishes when church and state remain separate.

History shows that many in Europe suffered oppression, tyranny, and forced worship. Many came to this country to escape that oppression; seeking freedom to worship according to their conscience.

The Founders created a document intended to protect religious freedom for future generations, allowing each person to honor God, according to conscience. If the wall of separation is replaced by a "bridge," what happens to those who have no religion or do not believe in God? Will they be expected to comply with religious practices they do not share? God is not honored by forced worship. That is the danger this "bridge" will produce.

Please abandon the bridge and keep the wall. The wall protects people of all faiths, and those with none.

Replacing the wall of separation with a "bridge" could eventually threaten my freedom to worship on the seventh day of the week, Saturday, in accordance with my conscience.

Sincerely,

Blanca Ferrell

Kettle Falls Washington

**From:** Kristen <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Bridge Between Church and State-Kristen Gillison

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 18:29:26 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I believe that that removing the wall of separation of Church and State would not only destroy religious liberty but it goes 100% against the will of God. First of all, what religion will be the religion that is politicized? If Christianity, which denomination? Christians differ in their beliefs based on which denomination they believe in and to take that option away from them would be taking away their religious liberty. As for my comment about this plan going wholly against God's will, which I'm assuming since you're trying to build a bridge between Church and State, you'd want His opinion on the matter, God does not want anyone to be forced to worship Him. To force a person to worship God, they are not doing it out of love for Him and God wants our love, not our obligatory worship.

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Thank You,

Kristen Gillison

**From:** Lynell S <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 18:50:56 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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"I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them."

**From:** Melvin Deans <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 18:51:34 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I wish to express my deep concern about freedom of conscience, that every human being should be free to worship God as he sees fit on whatever day he sees fit (it's a personal matter between him and his God (or no God if he sees fit). The government should not dictate in matters of religion. That has caused much persecution in the past. The last 6 commandments are a matter for government to be concerned with, but the 1st 4 commandments are a matter between the individual and his God.

You can not really force people to be "Christian" any more than someone can force you to love them. Jesus NEVER used force. He sought to lead by example and encourage people to GIVE their hearts to Him. It is a very personal choice we all must make that should NEVER be coerced! by government or any one else. Betty

Spencer Deans , Johnston, SC [REDACTED] PII  
[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)



**From:** RSDD05 <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church & State - Raymond Sansonetti

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 18:58:22 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Members of the Religious Liberty Commission, thank you for this awesome chance to address one persons thoughts concerning the freedom of choice, the freedom of conscience and the freedom of religion.

I see no moral reason why I, or anybody else, should have the power to take away your freedoms as listed above according to the ideology I might live by, making my thoughts greater than your thoughts.

The separation of church and state maintains your rights from my ideology and my rights from your ideology so that neither of us, like some religions currently do, will punish the objectors of that religion by taking away the freedom of choice to have another point of view and force the objector to comply or be punished!

To combine church and state will cause the church to use the state to be the enforcer of religious laws, and I have no moral right to force you, or anyone else, to believe like me and comply or be punished.

I understand what I have written, but I believe you understand it a whole lot more in your capacity as a member on this Commission.

Please, in your freedom to think and choose, maintain our right to freely think and choose!

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

**From:** Mxx Bxxxxx <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 19:13:37 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

**Attachments:** PublicComment\_20260711\_MMB.pdf

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July 12, 2026

Via Electronic Mail to [REDACTED] PII

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

Re: PUBLIC COMMENT - Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

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

As a citizen and a person of faith, I am deeply troubled by the Commission's proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge."

This wall was built by believers and founders of this country in order to keep religion free from the government and not to allow secularists to restrict or control religion in anyway. A bridge opens the door for government funding and political influence in churches. 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. There should not be a state established coerced universal faith, religious practice or tradition. History has shown again and again that the government needs to maintain neutrality in its relationship to (any) religion. The Dark Ages is just one such example that clearly shows the detriment, brutality, persecution, imposed isolation, and denial of liberty and the pursuit of happiness that results when government combines with a church. The founding fathers of colonial American fled Europe for this exact cause. Please uphold separation of church and state. The concept of religious liberty is in the U.S. Constitution for a sound reason.

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments submitted to the Commission in its entirety and respectfully ask that the Commission revise its account of American history and withdraw or its recommendations. America will do best to forever maintain a complete separation of church and state.

Sincerely,

Marion  
Barber

Digitally signed by  
Marion Barber  
Date: 2026.07.11  
18:02:24 -05'00'

Marion Barber

**From:** Dominique Wheeler <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 19:16:48 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Department of Justice,

I have read the Pillar of Freedom response, and I agree with it.

I pray that together we can maintain religious liberty for all!

Sincerely,  
Dominique Gremillion  
US Citizen, age 30.

**From:** Dar Moore <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Darlene Moore

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 19:27:02 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Religious Liberty Commission response letter

**From:** Henry Stubbs <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT Separation of church and state - Henry Stubbs

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 19:30:22 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Sirs,

My family and I respectfully request immediate reconsideration of any language in the Religious Liberty Commission report or resulting deliberations that would break down or in anyway weaken the separation of church and state.

We strongly believe our government should not support religious groups, schools or activities and should not enact laws that would in any way favor or regulate related activities. In the same way, we do not believe that any religious entity or organization should control the legislative decisions and activities of our government.

Our family knows firsthand what can happen when the freedom to worship God, according to your own conscience and beliefs becomes regulated by the state. The result is that eventually, either the state begins selecting a particular brand or form of worship and even mandating worship, or religious entities begin having too much influence in the decisions of the state and the rules and regulations which control society. Mandated worship is not worship at all. All true worship must come from the heart and an individual's relationship with God must not be interfered with by the state and neither should the affairs of the state be dictated by any religious organization, no matter how zealous for good that they may be.

Like our founding fathers, including Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison, William Penn and many others, we believe in an America that allows freedom of religion and ensures that neither the state nor religion interfere with each other or attempt to legislate or control the activities of the other.

Thank you for inviting this opportunity for citizens of the United States of America to respond to the Religious Liberty Commission Report.

Sincerely,

*Henry Stubbs and family,  
West Union, South Carolina*

**From:** Anne Plaisted <[REDACTED]>

**To:** "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

**Cc:** Anne Plaisted <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Anne E. Plaisted

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 19:35:52 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. Do not act as if the separation of church and state should be removed by the US Government.

**From:** Cheryl Cherington <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 19:37:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Please note: I agree with Pillar  
of Freedom's comments . Please implement them.

Cheryl Cherington  
Myerstown, PA



**From:** Don Saporito <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Response to commission's report

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 19:46:55 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I was saddened to read about the report from the commission about the separation of church and state. Especially the statement saying that the statement saying the separation of church and state was the biggest lie told in history. Yes I understand those exact words aren't in the constitution but the concept certainly is. The framers of our constitution wanted to make sure this country had no king and our churches had no Pope. If you know your history every time church and state unite PERSECUTION follows. Just look at the dark ages when the church used the power of the state to enforce her dogmas. Millions we killed, if you don't believe that read Foxes book of martyrs. I am a Christian and I believe everyone needs a saviour but please don't try to force Christianity down their throats. If the Holy Spirit can't convince them and neither can our churches maybe there's something wrong with them, meaning our churches. Making laws to force closures of business won't make more people go to church. If religion is forced on people you will have Christian's who have "a form of Godliness but denying the power there of". I won't even get into the suggestion of the repeal of the Johnson act. In short i pray the commission will re- look at some of it's findings.

Thanks Don Saporito.

**From:** ron moore <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I agree with the pillar of freedom response. The fact that our government is pushing for the bridging of religion and state together is the biggest argument that our founders of our country did not want religion and state to be together., that's why we do not have it now. I am a Christian. I believe there should be a Wall of separation of church and state. This is why our ancestors fled Europe from the constraint of Popery, and seeking freedom of religion.

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 19:53:05 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Thank you. Ron Moore  
Sent from my iPad

**From:** "B. W." <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 20:02:22 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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 Maimonides, 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,*

- [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=CMBiPifx-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:** Claire Luz Day <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state!

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 20:13:31 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments!

America needs this so please implement this separation of church and state indicated in the Constitution!

Sincerely,

Clara Diaz

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Wendall Hathaway <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Urgent Appeal: Defend Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 20:15:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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 Maimonides, 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,

Wendall Hathaway  
Sent from my iPhone □

**From:** Riley Brown <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 20:24:50 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of freedom's comments.

**From:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

**To:** [REDACTED PII]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 20:27:47 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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.

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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.

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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]

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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.

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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,

Jo Ann Armbrust

[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=CMBiPIfx-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/>

**From:** Melissa Walker <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comment

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 20:42:30 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comment, please implement them.

Maranatha

Melissa

True love only looks for the good, until the worse is forced upon it.

**From:** Adelina Perlee <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Defending separation of state and church

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 20:52:31 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely, Lilia Perlee



**From:** nestor anamuro <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State.

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 20:54:55 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Nestor Anamuro

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,

Nestor Anamuro

San Bernardino, California

**From:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – draft of the Religious Liberty Commission Report

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 20:59:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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## 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, 7th Day Sabbath-keeping Christian, 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 Sabbath keepers 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,

Michelle Miller from Nevada

Sent from [Proton Mail](#) for Android.

**From:** Heather Nickel <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Heather Nickel

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:01:26 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing to voice my concerns on the recommendation in your report that would begin to eliminate the separation of church and state. Our great Country was founded on religious freedom, but even the founders knew that in order to achieve and sustain this great freedom, we would have to separate law and religion. Once we start merging these two entities, religious freedom will ultimately crumble.

I am especially concerned with using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.

Money never comes without strings attached. Religious organizations taking large amounts of money from government organizations means the government has a say in what goes on in that recipient's church. My wealthy uncle recently donated a large sum to a school that needed money for a new building project. Did they want his say in the plans for the new building? Nope! But they sure did want his money. In the end, they listened to him because of his large donation. And well they should! If they didn't want his input, they should not have accepted his money. Churches should not be putting themselves in a position where they are indebted to their state, they should only be obligated to God.

The Johnson Amendment keeps churches and other nonprofit organizations from endorsing political parties and I cannot think of an instance where this is a bad idea. The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits puts it this way: "Allowing nonprofits to engage in partisan politics would undermine public trust, politicize community service, jeopardize donations and volunteer support, and create confusion. Nonprofits serve people, not parties."

For these reasons, I'm asking you to reconsider your recommendations. I also want to say I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments and I would like you to implement them.

Sincerely,  
Heather Nickel  
Bowdoinham, Maine

**From:** Jay Thomas <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:01:29 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

*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 I 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.*

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*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. I 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.*

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*Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonides, 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. I 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 a follower of Jesus Christ, I am mindful of Our Lord's words that I "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 I would enthusiastically support.*

*I remain, Yours truly,*

Jay D. Thomas



**From:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Huiling Chang

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:03:13 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

Sincerely,  
Huiling Chang  
Redlands, CA

**From:** Susan Johnson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:09:41 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I support Pillars of Freedom comments

The Johnson amendment especially concerns me.

Churches must remain free of political influence.

Please prayerfully consider the results of repealing the Johnson amendment

Gratefully  
Susan Johnson  
Sarasota Florida

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Commission Report

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:09:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To the RLC:

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom submission to the RLC.

I also wish to point out spiritual genius of the founders of our nation. They fully expected amendments, as our nation grew. Particularly in regards to slavery, as "all men are created equal"; and to the necessity of freedom of worship or not to worship. The first amendment begins with the prohibition respecting an establishment of religion. This is based on the experience of the nation of Israel way back in the time of Daniel. In Daniel 3, the ruler attempted to establish a state sanctioned religion.

Again, in the first amendment we have the corresponding prohibition against limiting religious worship. This is based on Daniel 6, where the ruler attempted to impose a limitation on religious worship. These issues were a large part of the grievances of the colonies against Great Britain.

Thus the genius of the founders was to create a nation without a king, and a church without a pope.

Once I studied the ideas of American Exceptionalism and the shining city on the hill. My study brought out the deep spirituality of at least some of the founders. We truly have a unique country. This so called "American Experiment" is an opportunity for the world to see genuine political and religious freedom. To advance the recommendations of the RLC will surely mitigate against this great experiment.

The nation of Babylon had opportunity at the highest levels of government to embrace both political and religious freedoms. History shows that they missed the time of their visitation. I pray that we as a nation not repeat this mistake. Thank you.

**From:** Jeanette Spencer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:15:45 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them without delay!

Jeanette Spencer

**From:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

**To:** Rlc <[REDACTED PII]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Kyron Heinrich

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:17:16 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,

Kyron Heinrich  
Cleveland, TN

**From:** linda Evans <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:26:31 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear members of Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments . Please implement them. I am extremely opposed to tearing down the wall of separation of church and state. Freedom of conscience should be protected.

Thank you,  
Linda Evans

**From:** Daniel Evans <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedoms-Separation of Church and State a Need

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:35:08 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To the comission,

I am writing because I agree with Pillar of Freedom and their statements and writings on the separation of church and state. I believe it is a need for church and state to remain separate because it lessens the possibility of corruption and oppression on either side and allows the free practice of religion in the United States. Please implement Pillar of Freedom's comments.

Thank you for your time in reading this email,

Daniel Evans

**From:** Debra Racz <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Yes, there is separation of Church and state

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:37:01 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Commissioners,

Please accept my personal comment for the record before the public comment period closes.





TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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 Maimonides, 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]*

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*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]*

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*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.*

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*We remain, Yours truly,*

*Debra and Marty Racz*

- [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=pAUkMwIWYB8>;  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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/PJA01>

Sincerely,

Debra Racz

Debra Racz reminds us to worship the LORD of the Sabbath.

"Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath"

Mark 2:27, 28 PS: The seventh-day sabbath is God's idea.

**From:** Mary Bell <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Church and state

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:41:09 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I think that as our for fathers we should have the right to believe as we desire and church and state should remain separated  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Elisabeth Mizner <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:41:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

Elisabeth Mizner



**From:** H Fritz <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Protest

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:46:40 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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As a United States Citizen, I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,  
Helmuth Franz Fritz

**From:** Victor Powell <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Keep the separation of church and state intact!

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 21:48:34 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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*We remain, yours truly,*

*Victor Powell*

<https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html>

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[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:** Daniel Burke <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Daniel Burke

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 22:01:39 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

In addition to that, I have some concerns of my own.

The situation of christians campaigning for religious legislation is troubling to me because historically speaking, every time a religious organization took control of a state in this way, it has always led to religious and civil intolerance and persecution.

The first time we see something like this is when Christ came to this earth to set up the Christian church. At this time the leadership of the church was the Sanhedrin. And because the leadership didn't believe in Christ they used the arm of the law, in this case Pilot, to kill the Son of God and persecute his followers after he rose. But the Jews were not even the worst offenders when it comes to a religious organization using the state to further it's goals.

This can be seen in no greater clarity than in the dark or middle ages. From the time the Roman Catholic church usurped authority over the rest of Christendom around the year 538 AD until they lost power in the 1700s, they had killed more people than any other single power in history. All because they felt like it was their prerogative to punish what they considered heretics using the arm of the state. This was so bad that most of the wars fought throughout Europe from the mid 1500s through the 1700s were fought by a population desperate for religious freedom against the tyranny of a state church.

As soon as they lost the power over the governments of Europe, they lost the ability to kill innocent people. And so they haven't even up to the present time.

While the church of Rome is the most vicious of the Christian organizations to take control of a secular government, that doesn't mean that all other churches would be fine in her place. No, not at all, in order to prove this, I want you to consider the church of England, which is another church that had control over a state. And even though it wasn't as dangerous to non conformists as the Roman one, it still put many to death and many fled. In fact the famous Pilgrim fathers came here to flee from the persecution of that Church.

In fact every christian denomination that has managed to gain control over a government has almost immediately started to persecute those who worship differently to them whether it be the Lutherans of Prussia or the Calvinists of Geneva, this has been a recurring theme whenever a church is allowed to influence legislation.

And it's not just Christianity that has this issue either, as can be seen when we take a look at the nations that are governed by the Islamic faith even to this day, non Muslims are mistreated and persecuted in those countries. That's not because Islam is inherently more violent than Catholicism or even protestantism, no it's because they have a strangle hold on the governments in those countries so they use the arm of the law force others to pay more respect in the best case or to convert in the worst case.

From the Puritan minister Rodger Williams to the writers of the Constitution, America was founded on the principle that how, what, or if he worships is between a man and his God with the state having no jurisdiction in

the matter. So please honor that tradition of freedom for all people that call this great nation their home.

Sincerely,

Daniel Burke

Colcord, Oklahoma

**From:** AOL Mail <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty in jeopardy with adoption of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Report

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 22:02:00 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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## Response to the adoption of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Report

My ancestry is Prussia (Germany) in the 1800's and England in the 1600's. They left those countries for a better life due to religious and economic suppression issues and were able to set up here in the colonies and the United States. The freedoms they received were the incentives for a better life, worship as their conscience dictates. life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. At no time when the mix of the government and religion was the outcome favorable for the ideals they had sought for, hence giving up all for these ideals.

I have been in 15 countries. I am an Air force veteran, volunteer in church missions, and donate so others can have basic clean water. Also donate and help construct church buildings for in countries not as fortunate. I have traveled to many countries that do not have the freedoms we enjoy. included was a mission trip to Russia. In the history of Europe, the last 1260 plus years has seen oppression, imprisonment, even martyrdom for those who want to exercise their God given right to choose. The Church of the Dark Ages was responsible for this persecution. Why would we want to build another "bridge" that existed in Europe with the same outcome?

Allowing government funding of religious NGOs and nonprofit organizations makes them dependent on the funds and provide political influence and affect their ability to solicit from the general public, therefore I object.

The Johnson Amendment that affects political actions from the religious organizations should be enforced. We already know political contributions influence outcomes of elections by pacts.

Religious education and clubs in public schools and campuses should be free from the influence of political operatives who have an agenda that might disappointedly favor one class above another.

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please Implement them.

Sincerely and Respectfully:

Larry R. Brandt.



**From:** Vivian Allen <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 22:09:52 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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"I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them."

**From:** Cavell Blood <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State - Cavell Blood

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 22:12:17 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I'm writing as a private citizen and a Christian to ask you to drop the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state, specifically the proposals to fund religious activity with government money and to repeal the Johnson Amendment.

I don't want my church taking public money, and I don't want it drawn into partisan politics. I'd ask you not to push it toward either in the name of helping it. When a church takes government funding, it starts answering to the officials who control that funding. When it wades into campaigns, it takes on all the compromise and cynicism that come with them. Either way it ends up competing for favor and looking to politicians instead of to God, and a church in that position has already given up the thing that made it worth protecting.

Separation of church and state was never a secular attack on religion. People of faith fought for it, precisely to keep faith free, and that's a big part of why religion has stayed as strong as it has in this country.

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments and ask that you implement them.

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

Sincerely,

Cavell Blood

Centerville, TN

**From:** DARLENE Newman <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Cc:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 22:24:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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July 11, 2026

Dear Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's submission and comments and respectfully ask that you implement each of their recommendations.

As the saying goes, those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Christians should absolutely be free to support government policies and civil laws that reflect their moral convictions and worldview.

At the same time, our nation's enduring commitment to religious liberty must be preserved.

Religious freedom is one of the foundational principles upon which our country was established. Our conscience belongs to God alone. It is not something that can be surrendered to the government because it does not belong to the government in the first place. Freedom of conscience belongs to each individual and to God, and government has no rightful authority to own or control it.

Some have dismissed Thomas Jefferson's famous 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists with derogatory language. Yet Jefferson was one of the principal authors of the Declaration of Independence and an influential architect of the principles embodied in our nation's founding documents. Few people were better positioned to explain the meaning of constitutional protections such as "Congress shall make no law..." and the guarantee of the "free exercise" of religion. His explanation deserves careful consideration.

History repeatedly demonstrates the dangers of uniting church and state. When religious institutions have been given civil power, persecution and tyranny have often followed.

Christ's own crucifixion came about through cooperation between religious leaders and the Roman government. Centuries later, the union of church and state within the Roman Empire contributed to widespread religious persecution during what is commonly referred to as the Dark Ages. The abuses of that era helped give rise to the Protestant Reformation and the call for greater religious liberty. Wherever religious institutions have wielded civil power, history has too often recorded oppression and martyrdom.

Many of America's earliest settlers came seeking freedom from religious persecution, including oppression associated with the established Church of England. They desired a nation where individuals could worship according to their conscience while living peacefully under just civil laws.

Roger Williams recognized the importance of protecting liberty of conscience. He founded what became Rhode Island after experiencing religious persecution in Massachusetts. He established Providence as a refuge for religious minorities, including Quakers and Jews, where the government had no authority over matters of conscience.

In his landmark 1644 work, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*, Williams argued that combining religion and civil government corrupted both faith and government and inevitably led to persecution.

For these reasons, the institutional separation between church and state should remain intact. However, that principle should never be misused as a weapon against people of faith.

The separation of church and state does not mean that Christians—or any other citizens—must set aside their moral convictions when voting, participating in public life, or advocating for laws they believe promote justice and the common good. Every citizen has the same constitutional right to participate in the democratic process, regardless of religious belief.

I experienced this principle firsthand while working for state government as a Project Manager. A church applied to lease a public high school's multipurpose room on weekends through a program that was open to all community organizations. Our state office initially denied the request, claiming it would violate the separation of church and state.

I believed that interpretation was incorrect. I contacted the state's chief attorney and explained that denying the church equal access solely because it was a religious organization would not uphold the Constitution—it could instead constitute unlawful religious discrimination. The Constitution was never intended to exclude religious organizations from equal participation in public programs. Rather, it was designed to protect them from government control and unequal treatment.

After discussing the matter with the state's chief attorney, the issue was reconsidered. This experience reinforced my conviction that the proper application of church-state separation protects religious liberty rather than restricting it.

The separation between church and state should continue to safeguard both government and religion. At the same time, freedom of religion and freedom of conscience must be respected for every individual, and no one should be penalized because of sincerely held religious beliefs.

Again, I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments and respectfully ask that you implement all of their recommendations.

God bless America.

Sincerely,  
Darlene Newman

**From:** John Irlam <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State - John Irlam

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 22:32:54 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 exactly opposite of the original intent as stated by Thomas Jefferson. As a person of faith, I find this idea alarming since history has demonstrated that every time a union of church and state has been formed, many followes.

That wall of separation wasn't built by secularists to suppress religion, it was built by believers to keep the church free and independent of government. A bridge doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money and Politics to influence churches that 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,

John Irlam  
Oak Glen, California

**From:** alexander lewis <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Alexander and Julia Lewis

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 22:38:06 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Religious Liberty Commission Members,

We are writing as citizens 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 the repealing of the Johnson Amendment. Please keep the "wall" of separation of church and state strong.

This "wall" of separation was a foundational principle critical to forming our great nation. It is also the reason our country's citizens can enjoy religious freedom currently. Should that "wall" crumble: civil authorities then define theological doctrines which unintentionally lead to biases and preferences of one religion over another. Those definitions and biases would breakdown the very principle that makes our nation great, and ultimately lead to government-endorsed religious preferences and persecution. Ironically enough, the same spirit of persecution that drove those on the Mayflower to look for a better land. Let us uphold our duty to protect our great nation by protecting this fundamental principle of the "wall" of separation of church and state, and not let history repeat itself.

Sincerely and God bless,  
Alexander and Julia Lewis

**From:** H Robertson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidents Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 22:40:00 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Committee Member.

I am writing my response to the Presidents Religious Liberty Commission consideration to remove the barrier between church & state, commonly called the "Separation of Church and State." I agree with organizations like Pillar of Freedom comments and all Americans who enjoy democracy.

History has shown the world the dangers of or allowing that wall to be removed. In fact, we have the recorded history of what was falsely called the "Middle Ages" but more accurately called the "Dark Ages." If we are honest and ask the question as to why the pioneers of this nation left England & Europe. It was because of the tyranny, and abuse of the citizens in those countries. The "church" was in control and in charge of the state(s) wrecking unimaginable havoc, pain, suffering and degradation. The co-mingling of these bodies has never been successful and has caused the destruction of nations, much like a Cancer eating away the body from the inside.

Additionally, the writings in the U.S. Constitution were not accidental or a misprint. If there is fault in the First Amendment, would not that mean there are errors in the entire document? I believe the founders meant exactly what was written and agreed upon. These amendments contained in the U.S. Constitution have been the greatest evidence of America's strength! To consider after 250 years the first amendment "doesn't mean what they say that it means" is not only wrong but an egregious error on behalf of those who have an unholy agenda.

I'm hoping honesty will prevail and the Amendments will not be changed, altered or amended contrary to their original rendering.

Thank you for the time to read my letter.

He communicated this and the same message to His people in the past & today: **When** He loaded the Ark and sent the flood; **When** He overrode nature and made Sarah fertile; **When** He sent plagues upon Pharaoh; **When** He took Gideon's 300 and conquered the Midianites; When He burst from the tombs showing Himself to about 500 believers-His message still is **I AM that I AM**.

**From:** Lisa Heber <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – [Melisa Heber]

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 22:57:14 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am against the idea that we should change the wall of separation between church and state with a bridge. I believe some sincere religious people are under the impression that the separation of church and state is a problem that prohibits people from expressing their religious beliefs in public. This is a mistaken idea. The concept of separation of church and state helps to preserve our religious freedom. It ensures us freedom OF religion, and does not stipulate freedom FROM religion.

The government need not have anything to do with supporting religious organizations, including the schools of various church groups. I believe it is in the best interest of all Americans for churches to fund their own charitable work and their own schools.

I am a Christian myself, but do not wish my beliefs to be imposed on any other religious faith or any other Christian denomination. I do hold the right to use my words to influence by fellow citizens (influence, not force) to consider my beliefs including those of a religious or spiritual nature.

I gladly pay citizen taxes that support the public school system and public assistance for the needy. I expect my taxes will not be used to fund any religious organization and I expect my taxes will not be withheld from any individual because of their differing religious beliefs.

In addition to taxes I support my personal church with donations for schools where we may teach our children our unique beliefs and make donations to charitable work I am personally interested in, especially that done by my church.

I do not want any of my tax money supporting other churches. Let the government support the public without discrimination or giving privilege to a particular religion.

Keep a wall of separation between the church and state and protect our religious freedom from influence and coercion from the government.

Please do not repeal the Johnson Amendment.

Also, I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns and objections.

Sincerely,  
Melisa Heber  
Jonesborough, TN



**From:** Rocky Taft <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 23:10:58 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them!  
Becky Taft

**From:** Julie Meditz <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 23:17:42 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To whom it may concern ,  
I agree with the pillar of freedoms comments. Please implement them !  
Julie Meditz

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Jessica Voorhees <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]" <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church & State - Jessica Voorhees

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 23:20:29 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Jessica Voorhees  
Crouse, North Carolina

**From:** [REDACTED] PII

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] freedom of religion

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 23:31:42 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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,

a concerned citizen

**From:** ourplacetwo <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comments

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 23:46:13 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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 Maimonides, 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,

[THE UNDERSIGNED]

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** Joyce Klau <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 23:49:32 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them!!  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Pearl Ingram <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 23:58:28 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Religious freedom has been one of the key pillars of the American republic and I agree with what the pillar of freedom has said and I wish you would implement that.

**From:** Janey Johnson <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Carolyn Johnson

**Date:** Sat, 11 Jul 2026 23:58:45 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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**Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:**

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

My 6th great grandfather came to the Americas from Cropwell Bishop, England in 1677 landing on the Delaware River settling in Burlington, New Jersey as an indentured servant, fleeing from religious persecution. His son Timothy Matlack emerged as a prominent political and military leader during the American Revolution, serving Pennsylvania in multiple critical roles while also making a lasting cultural contribution through his penmanship. He was chosen to inscribe the Declaration of Independence. I have always been indebted to them for the freedoms we now have.

This is why I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." I feel that this is backwards and as a person of faith, I find this to be very shocking. It was built by believers to keep the church separate from the state. A bridge doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money and political favors to come in, eventually churches will be competing for grants and answering to politicians instead of to God. History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands, it has always led to oppression.

Please don't build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects the church far more than it constrains it. Please keep church and state separate. That's how we keep both of them free.

Sincerely,  
Carolyn Johnson  
Battle Ground, Washington

**From:** Leeann Ward <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 00:04:18 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To The Religious Liberty Commission,

Respectfully, I wish to ask you to consider upholding the Separation of Church and State because Jesus says, Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. (Revelation 3:20) Jesus does not force people to love Him. It is for us to decide if we will love Him. I do not want the government to force me to worship God. I want to decide for myself. God did not make us robots. He gave us free will to choose Him or not. God does not force us to love Him, and the government should respectfully not interfere whether its citizens want to worship or if they chose not to worship. There are many religions and we need to not force anyone to worship our God or their own God. I am a Christian and I choose to follow Jesus but not by coercion from the government or by anyone else. Render unto Caesar's the things which is Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. (Matthew 22:21). Thank you for your time RLC, Leeann Ward

**From:** Maria Ameneiro <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] First Amendment of The Constitution of the United States of America

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 00:30:09 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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 Maimonides, 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,*

*[THE UNDERSIGNED]*

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** Kevin Powell <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 00:35:21 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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.*

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*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.*

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*Kevin Powell*

[1] <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/president-trumps-religious-liberty-commission-delivers-historic-report-draft>

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

**From:** Juan Felipe Martin Concepcion <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 00:36:26 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*We remain, Yours truly*

*Juan Felipe Martin*



**From:** Lisa Cribbs <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]" <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – FULL REPORT – Lisa Cribbs

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 00:42:00 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am submitting this formal public comment to register my profound opposition to the June 26, 2026 draft report from the "Presidential Religious Liberty Commission," a group whose name is exactly opposite of what it intends to achieve. This 224-page document does not represent a good-faith effort to protect the pluralistic fabric of American religious freedom, as imagined by its founders and preserved by all following generations. Instead, it serves as an ideological blueprint to systematically dismantle the separation of church and state and establish a specific brand of dogmatic Christian nationalism as a preferred state ideology.

The draft report's assertion that America was founded as an explicitly Christian nation relies on a **blatant fabrication** of American history. Anyone claiming the founders designed a Christian state is either ignorant of the historical record or misrepresenting it. The main body of the United States Constitution is an intentionally secular document; God is never mentioned, and the only reference to religion is Article VI, Clause 3, which explicitly bans any religious test as a qualification for holding public office.

The historical record from the founding generation is crystal clear on this intent:

\* The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment explicitly bars the government from establishing a state religion or favoring one faith over another, creating a foundational boundary that the Commission's recommendations directly violate.

\* In his famous 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists, Thomas Jefferson explicitly stated that the Establishment Clause built "a wall of separation between Church & State." The Commission's attempt to dismiss this as a "belabored metaphor" or blame it on 20th-century secular philosophy is a bad-faith distortion. Jefferson used the phrase precisely to explain the structural purpose of the First Amendment.

\* The separation of church and state was not an accidental byproduct; it was a deliberate guardrail to protect liberty of conscience for all. As James Madison noted in his Memorial and Remonstrance, true religious liberty requires that the state exercise zero authority over the soul.

\* This secular foundation was officially declared to the world in the Treaty of Tripoli, signed by President John Adams in 1797, which stated in the text ratified unanimously by the Senate that 'the Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion.' Not a single senator objected. The founders found the statement entirely unremarkable because it described exactly what they had built.

By recommending that the Department of Justice back strategic litigation to mandate sectarian displays like the Ten Commandments in public schools, push for the total repeal of the Johnson Amendment to allow tax-exempt entities to operate as political dark-money operations, and build taxpayer-funded "religious violation" reporting hotlines and federal poster mandates across secular

public spaces, the Commission is advocating for a sweeping, state-sponsored infrastructure of religious favoritism. These interconnected proposals directly subvert our constitutional architecture; the Constitution protects freedom *of* religion by guaranteeing freedom *from* government-sponsored religion.

Furthermore, I object to the misuse of federal taxpayer funds to underwrite this partisan effort. Operating under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, this Commission has utilized public funds to host one-sided hearings and compile an ideological report that requires unconstitutional actions and runs entirely contrary to the views of the majority of Americans. This concern is not merely my opinion — a coalition of Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh organizations has already filed a federal lawsuit alleging the commission violated FACA by representing only a single Judeo-Christian viewpoint despite being tasked with protecting religious liberty for all Americans. Active litigation over the commission's legal compliance makes continued taxpayer funding of its operations impossible to justify.

The absurdly narrow 15-day public comment window provided for this extensive report further demonstrates a lack of transparency and an intent to avoid genuine public scrutiny. I urge the Commission to immediately withdraw this non-factual, biased, and dogmatic report and cease all taxpayer-funded operations aimed at eroding the secular guardrails of our democracy.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Cribbs

Grandview Heights, Ohio

**From:** Nancy Calzado-Hill <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 00:50:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Nancy Calzado-Hill

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,  
Nancy Calzado-Hill  
San Diego, California

**From:** Jacquelyn Davis <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Jacquelyn Davis

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 01:03:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was appalled to learn that the Commission wants to bridge the separation of church and state. That absolutely should not happen! Bringing state/government and church/religion together has historically proven time and again not to safeguard, but rather destroy, the integrity of religion as doctrine becomes for sale and is no longer lead by divine inspiration or conscience of believers...which is why believers separated it to begin with. Our country was sought out by those seeking relief from persecution of political rulers deciding their religious beliefs. America has long proclaimed freedom of many things, among them: freedom of speech, the pursuit of happinesses, and the Johnson Amendment...and should uphold these foundational principles! Our government should protect our rights, not decide our beliefs, and financially support the ones they pick and choose, that is not just and the state of government has no place there!

I agree with Pillars of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

A very concerned citizen, Jacquelyn Davis

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone  
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

**From:** AJ Friedberg <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Sep

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 01:12:42 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

Alex Friedberg

**From:** Debbie Baker <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public comment - Religious Liberty Commission - separation of church and state

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 01:12:53 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

Debbie Baker

**From:** Mary Hilde <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment Regarding the Religious Liberty Commission Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 01:38:15 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To: The U.S. Department of Justice & whom it may concern:

Thank you for providing the public an opportunity to comment on the Commission's recommendations.

I write as an American citizen and as a Christian who believes that one of our nation's greatest strengths is its protection of religious liberty for every person. The freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment do not exist to favor one faith over another, but to ensure that every individual can worship (or choose not to worship) according to conscience, without government interference.

For this reason, I am deeply concerned by Recommendation 1 and the suggestion that the Department of Justice redefine or reinterpret the constitutional principle commonly described as "the separation of church and state." Although those exact words do not appear in the Constitution, the principle itself is firmly rooted in the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.

Thomas Jefferson explained that the First Amendment built "a wall of separation between Church & State" because religion is "a matter which lies solely between Man & his God." James Madison, the principal architect of the Constitution, likewise warned that history demonstrates the dangers of religious and civil authority becoming intertwined. Their concern was not hostility toward religion but protection for religion.

The lessons of history should not be forgotten. Throughout Europe and the American colonies, governments that joined civil and religious power repeatedly persecuted those whose beliefs differed from the majority. Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and many others suffered imprisonment, fines, whippings, and even death because government assumed authority over matters of conscience. William Tyndale was executed for translating Scripture into English. Roger Williams was banished for defending liberty of conscience. William Penn endured imprisonment for his faith. These examples remind us why America's founders intentionally rejected a system in which government directs or favors religion.

The separation of church and state has not weakened faith in America. It has strengthened it. By preventing government from controlling religion and religion from controlling government, our nation has created an environment where faith can flourish through conviction rather than coercion. This protection has benefited every religious community, including my own.

I am also concerned by the recommendation to eliminate the Johnson Amendment. Churches should remain free to proclaim biblical truth without becoming political organizations or instruments of partisan influence. History has shown that when religious institutions seek political power, and politicians seek religious endorsement, both institutions are diminished.

As a Christian, I believe Christ's instruction to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" establishes an enduring principle. Civil government has an important role, but it is not entrusted with governing conscience. Faith cannot be compelled by law, nor should government determine religious truth.

I respectfully urge the Department of Justice not to adopt recommendations that would weaken the historic constitutional protections separating church and state. Instead, I encourage the Department to preserve the First Amendment's safeguards, continue protecting the religious liberty of every American, and invite broad public and scholarly discussion before altering the nation's understanding of these foundational principles.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to protecting the constitutional rights and freedoms of all

Americans.

Respectfully,  
Mary Hilde



**From:** Daneen Campa <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Freedom of Religion

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 01:46:16 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To whom it may concern.

“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them. \_

Thank you,  
Daneen Campa

**From:** Lorelie M <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 01:57:39 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*To: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE*

*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 Maimonides,*

*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,*

*Chuck and Lorelie Montgomery*

**PII**

- [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=pAUkMwIWYB8>;  
<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>.

Please follow and like us:  [ID-State-Icon](#)

**From:** [REDACTED] PII

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment- Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report- Janet Morikone

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 02:40:55 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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July 12, 2026

Via e-mail to [REDACTED] PII

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:

I am in objection to the Commission's effort to weaken and dismantle the separation of church and state.

\* I object to funding religious non-profit activities.

\* I object to 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.

\* I object to the special treatment given Jewish people and the state of Israel, and whether you desire complete neutrality in the government's relationship with religion.

\* I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

### **First Amendment**

"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."

I beg you to not do away with this amendment by building a bridge between church and state. For liberty, for freedom of conscience—we need freedom to worship without government help or laws governing our churches.

Sincerely,

Concerned Citizen

**From:** Phyllis Scherer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church & State

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 03:05:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

**Inline-Images:** drive\_favicon\_2026\_32dp.png

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I Phyllis Scherer AGREE with “Pillar of Faith” and their view and letter to you. Please see attached. Please keep them separate.

Response to Commission.pdf  
drive.google.com



Many Blessings,

Phyllis



**From:** Lizzy Shellum <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 03:23:13 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of freedom comments

**From:** Susane Lee Hong <susanelh@verizon.net>

**To:** "RLC (OASG)" <RLC@usdoj.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 03:23:33 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

Thanku, Susane Lee-Hong

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Jim Armstrong <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Cc:** Jim Armstrong <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 06:15:08 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Have a great day!

[REDACTED] PII

[REDACTED] PII

[REDACTED] PII

**From:** Nathan Cobb <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 06:27:22 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedoms comments. Please implement them.

**From:** Nathan Cobb <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 06:29:39 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comment. Please implement them.

**From:** Nathan Cobb <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 06:30:42 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

**From:** Chris Kris <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- separation of church and state-christine liddle

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 06:52:42 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am troubled to learn that you wish to do away with the separation of church and state.

As a person of faith, this is exactly the wrong thing to do. Separation of church and state is there to keep the government out of religion.

Doing away with this separation opens the door for government money and political favors to take over churches and people of faith.

I don't want churches answering to politicians rather than God.

Keep the wall. It protects the church more than constrains it.

Sincerely,

Christine Liddle

Panama City, Florida

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

**From:** "Tom and Donna Watson" <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment Separation of Church and State Donna Watson

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 07:33:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's Comments. Please Implement them.

We need separation of church and state. The US has always been for freedom of religion.



**From:** Jamaal Roberts <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment – Religious Liberty Commission Report – Jamaal Roberts

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 07:34:33 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To whom it my concern

I wanted to voice some opinions in reaction to the declaration of Dan Patrick on June 26, 2026 of how the "separation of Church and State is not in the Constitution."

I wanted to affirm that I am a Christian who loves God and the wonderful freedoms we enjoy in this country. Separation of Church and State is one of them.

The reason why this country was sought by the pilgrims in 1620 was to escape the religious persecution they experience in England at that time. History is soiled with the blood of many a Christian when Church and State were united. Look that accounts of the slaughter of the Waldenses, Huganots, Anabaptists and others. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in which 30,000 people where killed across France because Church and State were united. These accounts and others only show the prevailing horrendous effect when Church and State come together. Our country was born from these dark times only to return to them. That would be a crying shame.

In the end we are to remember that Jesus is our King. Jesus Himself never built His Kingdom with political power. He declared to the Roman governor that "My kingdom is not of this world, if it were my servants would fight..." John 18:36. Instead, Jesus calls His followers to seek justice for the oppressed and fulfill the Great Commission through loving words and acts.

In closing we are to remember the words of 2 Peter 3:13 "Nevertheless we (All Christians in every age), according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Jesus is coming back to establish a kingdom that will never end. A kingdom where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." - Revelation 21:4

Thank you for time and patience. God bless you.

Thank you

**From:** Ayaana Shepherd <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Recommendation of Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 07:41:18 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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 Maimonides, 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*

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*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,*

*[THE UNDERSIGNED]*

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[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].

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[9] Matthew 22:21

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

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

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Ayaana Shepherd <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Recommendation of Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 07:51:09 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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.*

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I remain, Yours truly,

Ayaana Shepherd

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

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

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** AJ Romero <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comment on Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report Re: Separation of Church & State Un-Constitutionality

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 07:58:19 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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As you are reading hundreds of these emails, I will be direct and to the point.

Of course there is no direct statement in the U.S. Constitution of separation of church and state. It was a principle, a precept that the writers of the constitution implicitly believed in and thought not necessary to literally express. Religious persecution was a key reason the pilgrims left England to come to this land. Within the fundamental belief the Constitutional writers desired that a person can freely exercise their personal faith and freely engage in the public sphere, without prejudice or persecution. Without separation of church and state, there WILL be eventual prejudice and persecution.

The main idea I wish to get across is: You CANNOT further God's cause using Satan's methods. Ultimately forcing anyone to worship what they do not truly believe in, especially the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the Universe will lead to force, false worship, fear, and tyranny. God is our Creator who gave and gives us a choice. We can do no different in this earthly life or by human government.

By declaring the separation of church and state un-constitutional, it will lead to a narrowing and force of worship that is of the Satanic realm. Satan forces, God allows choice.

For the record, I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I pray your heart is searching for Truth and Freedom.

Warmest regards,

Audrey Romero

**From:** Allistra Cedenó- Clement <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State –Allistra Cedenó

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 08:04:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a Law-abiding 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 have built it to protect our faith, and it's the reason why religion has stayed strong in this beloved country. I beg you, Please keep church and state separate. we NEED to keep both of them free.!

Sincerely,

Allistra Cedenó- Clement

Dacula, GA

**From:** "M. Merino" <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 08:11:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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.*

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*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."*

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*M. Merino*

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

**From:** Scott Merino <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATIONS

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 08:15:45 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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*



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*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.*

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*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.*

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*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,*

*Merino*

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-UA>

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

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

[9] Matthew 22:21

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

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

**From:** Doug Blalock <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 08:19:50 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members,

I pray this finds you all well.

You have already received a detailed response from Pillar of Freedom.org which reflects my concerns regarding the current path our country is pursuing.

I agree with what was stated therein and now express concurrence with it.

Thank you for your time.

Doug Blalock

Kennesaw GA

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Thu Clark <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 08:42:36 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with " Pillar of Freedom " comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely

Thu Clark.

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

**From:** Jocelyn Beale <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Response to the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty released draft report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 08:54:27 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To whom it may concern:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Kind regards,  
-Jocelyn Beale

~~~~~  
"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." Jeremiah 17:7 KJV

**From:** Enrique Garcia <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public comment/religious liberty commission recommendation.

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 08:59:18 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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.*

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*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*

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*Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonides, 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.*

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*We remain, Yours truly,*

**From:** Wendy Roberts <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - (Wendy Roberts)

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 09:07:54 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendation of the Commission that would "build a bridge" between church and state. I believe this separation is very constitutional and is one of the key reasons that the USA has been such a great country. This was one of the reasons for the establishment of the USA in the beginning - religious freedom! (Please check your history!!) As a person of faith, I believe that the Ten Commandments were written in stone by the finger of God (see Ex 31:18). The last six commandments deal with our relationships between each other and the government has a right and indeed a duty to enforce these ideals, but the first four commandments concern our relationship with God and no man has any right to interfere with another man's convictions.

Please keep and strengthen the separation of church and state in America. We need to enforce the Johnson Amendment. We should NOT use government funds for religious activities or education. Please keep Americans free!

Sincerely,  
Wendy Roberts  
Port Charlotte, FL

**From:** Daniella Jones <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 09:08:36 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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*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.*

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*We remain, Yours truly,*

*Jona Fe Bucag*

[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>;

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

**From:** MARK TREGELLAS <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Report comments

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 09:20:26 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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The government has no authority to tell you what to believe, or how to worship, and the government lacks authority over religion. Religious liberty means liberty for ALL and not just those who are on the Christian side of the issue.

“Separation of church and state” might not specifically be quoted in the constitution but the concept fully exists.

-Kim

Citizen of the US

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** Mary Feak <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 09:27:24 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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As a concerned citizen, I was greatly disturbed by the Commission's draft report and appreciate the opportunity to voice objections. With that said, I totally agree with the "Pillar of Freedom's" detailed comments submitted by Attorney Jonathan Zirkle, dated July 6, 2026. Please consider implementing them. Also, prayerfully consider the implications the adoption of your recommendations would bring upon the American people and our society.

Thank you.

**From:** KarinB <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Report of Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 09:28:26 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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"I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them

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If the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer. Prayer, p. 73

**From:** David Manestar <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - David Manestar

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 09:32:28 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Commission Members:

I strongly urge you to reconsider your positions that you have put forth and implement the recommendations submitted by Pillar of Freedom.

My family came to the United States of America in the 1960s after escaping communism in Yugoslavia. We were part of a religious minority that worshipped on Saturday, a day that required school attendance. My father, a young boy at that time, was beaten by his teacher because of lack of attendance at school on Saturday. I share this as only an example of many of the injustices and indignities that my family suffered under religious persecution by the state.

Communism enforced the state religion of secularism after deeming all other religions as foolishness.

The Commissions recommendations, as put forth, places our government in the position of deciding which church it will support and advance through monetary support or legislation or executive order. This is no different than the communism that my family had to escape from.

All throughout the earth's history, every time religion and state have joined together, it has resulted in marginalization and then persecution of the minority religions . Even now we hear Christian Nationalists stating that Christians who worship on Saturday will have to change their beliefs or suffer for it (a simple YouTube search will verify this point).

Where will my family need to escape to next?

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. May God give you all wisdom and discernment in this matter.

Sincerely,  
David Manestar

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Trayka K <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - CHAPTER 14 - TRAYKA KOSTADINOVA

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 09:47:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To whom it may concern,

I'm immigrant from a previous communist country. I know what it is to be persecuted for my Christian faith. I don't want that here in America. I completely support these 12 proposals and I believe they will establish the religious freedom in America that everyone deserves.

Sincerely,  
Trayka Kostadinova

**From:** JIM BLUE <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Cc:** JIM BLUE <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Response

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 09:49:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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"I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them."

**From:** Bob Parrish <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church and State - Bob Parrish

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 10:02:50 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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**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,  
Bob Parrish  
McArthur, California

**From:** Jo A <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 10:16:26 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 Maimonides, 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,  
Joanna Archilla

**From:** linda lee <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State- Linda Lee

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 10:17:14 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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. The 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 DO NOT BUILD that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects the church far more than it constrains it.

Sincerely,  
Linda Lee  
Turlock, California

**From:** Donald Purdey <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Donald Purdey

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 10:17:53 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dearmembers of the Religious Liberty Commission

I was appaled to learn that the commission is considering to replace the seperation of church and state.

I will list three of my greatest concerns.

1. I object to using taxpayer's money to fund religious non-profit activities.

The consutition prohibits the funding of religious entities.

2. I object to funding relitious educationand religious clubs on public campuses for the same reasons.

3. I object to the repealing of the Johnson Admendment which restricts the church's ploitical activities.

The church's mission is to spread the gospel, not to get involved with politics.

Please don't remove the protection that comes with the seperation of church and state. It will corrupt the church and the government.

Thank you,

Donald Purdey  
Redlands, California

**From:** Trenton Frost <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter to the Department of Justice

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 10:18:04 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To the Department of Justice:

*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 it's 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 Maimonides, 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?*

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*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.” Where there is union of church and state, there has always been persecution.

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,

Oriana Frost

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <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. [Adams Papers Digital Edition - Massachusetts Historical Society](#)

**Adams Papers Digital Edition - Massachusetts  
Historical Society**

*“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” (Num. 6:24-26)*



**From:** Trenton Frost <[REDACTED] PII >  
**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter to the Department of Justice  
**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 10:21:47 -0400  
**Importance:** Normal

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- To the Department of Justice:

*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 it's 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.*

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*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.*

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*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.*

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*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.” Where there is union of church and state, there has always been persecution.*

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,

Oriana Frost

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPfx-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>

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” (Num. 6:24-26)

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- Or
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**From:** "jeanne lance (via Google Drive)" <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Responding.pdf

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 10:40:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

**Attachments:** Guide\_to\_Responding.pdf

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## jeanne lance attached an item



jeanne lance ([REDACTED] PII) has attached the following item:

"I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them."



Guide to Responding.pdf

Does this item look suspicious? [Report](#)

Google LLC, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA

You have received this email because [REDACTED] PII shared a file or folder located in Google Drive with you.





# PILLAR OF FREEDOM

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

## GUIDE TO COMMENTING ON THE DRAFT REPORT of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

### Executive Summary of this document:

1. **Make yourself familiar with the Report**

2. **Write a comment.**

If you don't have time, just write "I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them."

3. **Email your comments to [Redacted] PII by July 13, 2026, 5pm EDT.**

### Detailed Guide:

On Friday, June 26, 2026, the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty released its draft report, which President Trump accepted in the Oval Office. The report was the product of seven hearings, and included both basic summaries of the hearings and recommendations. At the beginning and end of the report there is an editors note that "for the benefit of the public, the draft will be open to public comment," until July 13, 2026.

There are many critical issues that should be of concern for citizens of the United States, as well as all the inhabitants of the world, as the United States commonly sets the standard for freedom that other

nations aspire to. **The most critical issue by far is the Commission's effort to weaken and dismantle the separation of church and state.**

The Commission's attempt is marked by making two primary types of recommendations that should alarm everyone. The first is the repeal of the Johnson Amendment which will further politicize America's churches, and the second is the expansion of funding of religious organizations engaging in religious activities. Both of these recommendations are counter to the separation of church and state as provided for by the Constitution.

In making its recommendations, the Commission relies upon faulty history. Feel free to read Pillar of Freedom's response which is at [pillaroffreedom.org](http://pillaroffreedom.org) that addresses the relevant American history and the recommendations that are of concern.

**You can make difference by filing your own comment.** Comments are to be sent by email by July 13. [assume 5pm Eastern Daylight Savings Time] The Department of Justice website states:

*Comments may be emailed to [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] The Commission has requested that the subject line use the following format:*

*PUBLIC COMMENT – [TOPIC OR CHAPTER NUMBER] – [NAME]*

*Please remember that public comments are open to public inspection. Do not include personal addresses or other sensitive personal information.*

For a complete record of the hearings, got to:

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

***The Executive Summary fails to mention some of the report's central recommendations.***

In drafting your comment, it is important that you use your own words. The best comments will be sincere and heartfelt. Issues you may wish to address in your comment could include:

1. Objections to funding religious non-profit activities.
2. Objections to funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses.
3. Objections to repealing the Johnson Amendment, which restricts church's political activities.
4. A request that the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced.

5. Objections to the special treatment given Jewish people and the state of Israel, and whether you desire complete neutrality in the government's relationship with religion.

Perhaps one of the best comments you could make would be to tell a story of your personal benefit from the separation of church and state, or perhaps religious persecution you may have experienced in a foreign country because there was no separation. Personal stories that would be good tell might include:

1. If your ancestors came to America to escape religious persecution. Many of us have ancestors who did that, whether to Pennsylvania, New York, Rhode Island, Delaware, or some of the other colonies, such as South Carolina which promised freedom of worship.
2. If you came to America to escape religious persecution that was the result of a union of church and state.
3. If you ever suffered religious persecution because in America because there was inadequate separation of church and state.
4. The history of your religious denominations fight for religious freedom and the separation of church and state.
5. If you ever were denied a visa or other right because of your religious beliefs.

When making your objections and telling your personal story, support the commission on key issues that you agree with them on. If you are a person of faith, express that. Let them know what your faith is.

If you are feeling ambitious, point out that the Commission's own conduct proves the need for separation of church and state. You can do so by familiarizing yourself with Carrie Prejean Boller — often referred to simply as Carrie Prejean, the former Miss California USA. Carrie Prejean was removed after the Commission's February 9, 2026 hearing on antisemitism. During that hearing, she pressed witnesses on whether criticism of Israel or anti-Zionism should be treated as antisemitism, asked whether opposition to Zionism made Catholics antisemitic, and questioned Israel's conduct in Gaza. Prejean also quoted 1 Thess 2:14-15, which stated that the Jews killed Jesus. This text is widely condemned as antisemitic, as it has been used as a rallying call to persecute the Jews in the past. Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, the Commission chair, announced her removal and said no commissioner had the right to "hijack a hearing" for a personal or political agenda. But this raises an interesting point. The report is full of rhetoric calling for the protection of religious expression in the workplace or in government activities, but when the very Commission calling for more religious expression in government finds the expression of one of its own members objectionable, it takes swift action against the offending member. This illustrates how uniting church and state inevitably leads to the state being

forced to decide religious doctrine. The easiest way to familiarize yourself with her side of the story is to listen to Tucker Carlson interview her on March 13, 2026. After understanding the facts, you can chastise the commission for what they did which by their own stated standard is an act of religious intolerance towards Prejean or you can chastise them for disproving their claim that religious expression in government should be protected. Better yet, chastise them for both.

Your goal is probably not to write a comprehensive critique of the Commissions report, but rather to make a pointed criticism or two, share a story of the importance of the separation of church and state, and let them know that you object to their report. Your second goal should be to get as many of your friends to do the same thing. Consider throwing a little party where each of you send a comment.

We would like to see your comments. Please send us a copy at [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]. By sending it to us, we can review it, and perhaps post it on our website as a model comment to inspire others.

It is important to stand up for our religious liberty rights. Religious liberty is the bedrock of all of your liberties. As Benjamin Franklin famously said, "We must all hang together, or most assuredly we will all hang separately."

### EXAMPLE RESPONSES

*Please change the wording of these emails so that the Commission will know that you are sending genuine response, and not merely copying other thoughts.*

Email to: [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]

**Subject:** PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – [Your Name]

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,

[Your Name]

[City, State]

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**Subject:** PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – [Your Name]

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,

[Your Name]

[City, State]

***Share this with everyone you know that might  
have an interest in our freedoms.***

***Please consider making a donation at:***

**[pillaroffreedom.org](http://pillaroffreedom.org)**

**From:** Karen Cooke <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 10:47:58 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE*

*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 Maimonides, 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,*

*Karen Cooke-Thomas*

*[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>;*

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

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

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Thomas Lowder <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Religious Liberty Commission Report-TJ Lowder

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 10:47:59 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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The separation of church and state IS a constitutional principle that ensures the vitality of both our religious liberty and representative government.

Accordingly, the Johnson Amendment protects houses of worship from partisan politicking and promotes fair play in our political campaigns—issues that should be important to all Americans.

**From:** Logan Bartusek <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT -- SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE --  
LOGAN BARTUSEK

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 10:58:38 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Thank you for your attention to the matter.

Logan Bartusek

Ooltewah, Tennessee

**From:** Zane Williams <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Recommendations of the Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 11:04:04 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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.

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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.

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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,

[THE UNDERSIGNED]

[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=pAUkMwIwYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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>

I agree with the above recommendations.

Sincerely,  
Zane C. Williams



**From:** Alan Mathieu <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 11:20:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Religious Liberty Committee:

I strongly oppose any combination of church and state! I am in complete agreement with the very well expressed reasons below, including the quotes from our founding fathers on the constitution and their understanding of its meaning. I trust you will give the writing below your most serious consideration. What you are deciding will lead to either freedom or oppression and persecution as was experienced in past history!

Sincerely,

Alan Edward Mathieu

*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 Maimonides, 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]*

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*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,*

*[THE UNDERSIGNED]*

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[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>;

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

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[9] Matthew 22:21

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

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

**From:** Keith Brogan <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Keith Brogan

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 11:30:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

Keith Brogan

Ooltewah, TN

**From:** Marie Cisne <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fwd: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 11:31:59 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Religious Liberty Committee:

I strongly oppose any combination of church and state! I am in complete agreement with the very well expressed reasons below, including the quotes from our founding fathers on the constitution and their understanding of its meaning. I trust you will give the writing below your most serious consideration. What you are deciding will lead to either freedom or oppression and persecution as was experienced in past history!

Sincerely,

Marie Mathieu

*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 Chief Justice John Marshall'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 Chief Justice Marshall, 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.*

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*We remain, Yours truly,*

*[THE UNDERSIGNED]*

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

**From:** Buddy Withers <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and state

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 11:45:23 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Respectfully to the RLC, I wholeheartedly agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments any pray fervently that our beloved Country will not lose our Religious Liberties by eliminating the separation of church and state. This is one of the main tenants that have kept our country strong and free from government overreach into our private choice of freedom of worship.

Very Sincerely Your,

Buddy J Withers

[REDACTED] PII

[REDACTED] PII

**From:** Geralda De Paula <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 11:58:24 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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.*

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*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 Maimonides, 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,*

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Marie Bartusek <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 11:59:31 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

**From:** Dawn <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:00:20 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Whom It May Concern;

I respectfully oppose the draft report of the Religious Liberty Commission.

The United States has long protected both the free exercise of religion and the prohibition on government establishment of religion. These principles work together to ensure that people of every faith, and those with no religious affiliation, enjoy equal freedom under the law. I am concerned that several recommendations in the draft would upset that balance by encouraging greater governmental alignment with particular religious viewpoints.

My greatest concern, among others, is the commission of the protection for conscientious objectors to war which have historically been protected in this country.

There is absolutely no reason why this report should focus on non-binary pronouns when the right to follow the commandment thou shalt not kill.

As a religious person who believes this commandment above all, I will never accept anything in this report as long as I am being forced to pay taxes for bombs, drones, nuclear weapons and more that are being used to kill other human beings, including innocent children, and polluting the earth.

As a religious person I see no more important issue than this. It is unconscionable that the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill has not been passed. It is absurd to be forced to pay to kill people ostensibly for "freedom" while the same government is taking freedom of religion away from select groups that don't fit their very specific and narrow agenda.

It is obvious that any government who refuses to pass legislation such as the Religious Freedom Tax Fund Bill while simultaneously attempting to make the recommendations in this draft report is biased and only putting forth their agenda rather than true religious freedom.

Religious liberty is strongest when the government neither favors nor disfavors any religion. A government that has the power to privilege one faith today could privilege a different faith tomorrow. Maintaining institutional neutrality protects the rights of all Americans.

I am also concerned that the report does not sufficiently reflect the diversity of religious and nonreligious perspectives in the United States. Public policy should account for the constitutional rights and equal dignity of people from every faith tradition as well as those who are not religious.

The Commission should reaffirm that the First Amendment protects both the free exercise of religion and limits on governmental establishment of religion. These constitutional safeguards have enabled a pluralistic society in which individuals and religious communities are free to practice their beliefs without government coercion or favoritism.

I urge the Commission to revise the report to better reflect America's religious diversity, constitutional traditions, and commitment to equal treatment under the law.





**From:** Community Hope <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT: Religious Liberty Commission Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:00:29 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear DOJ:

I oppose the draft report of the Religious Liberty Commission. The United States has long protected both the free exercise of religion and the prohibition on government establishment of religion. These principles work together to ensure that people of every faith, and those with no religious affiliation, enjoy equal freedom under the law. I am concerned that recommendations in the draft would upset that balance by encouraging greater governmental alignment with particular religious viewpoints. Religious liberty is strongest when the government neither favors nor disfavors any religion. A government that has the power to privilege one faith today could privilege a different faith tomorrow. Maintaining institutional neutrality protects the rights of all Americans.

I am also concerned that the report does not sufficiently reflect the diversity of religious and nonreligious perspectives in the United States. Public policy should account for the constitutional rights and equal dignity of people from every faith tradition as well as those who are not religious. All faiths, including no faith, atheists, and the liberal arms of all different faiths are afforded equal protection under the First Amendment. People who support the rights of trans and non-binary kids, teens, and adults are equally protected in their expression of their views as are those who oppose rights for these groups of people.

The Commission should reaffirm that the First Amendment protects both the free exercise of religion and limits on governmental establishment of religion. These constitutional safeguards have enabled a pluralistic society in which individuals and religious communities are free to practice their beliefs without government coercion or favoritism. Keep faith and religion out of government affairs, funding opportunities, and all the rest. Separation of church and state must continue.

I urge the Commission to revise the report to reflect America's religious diversity, constitutional traditions, and commitment to equal treatment under the law.

Also, those who oppose the use of federal taxes to pay for war and military operations to kill people should be allowed to practice their faith. Pass the Religious Peace Tax Fund bill in Congress!

Best regards,

Mks

**From:** Timothy Tillman <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:03:05 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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 Maimonides, 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,

Sincerely,

Timothy (Tim) Tillman

PII

PII

**From:** Cheryl Peterson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church & State

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:12:26 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them!

Cheryl Peterson

**From:** Aaron Pozo <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Keep Separation of Church & State

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:26:58 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I believe that the separation of church and state would destroy religious liberty in the United States. The Johnson amendment must be must be enforced to prevent religion from interfering with the state and vice versa. If that is removed there would be little in the way of a state sponsored religion. If there were a politicized religion what version of religion would that be? Evangelical, Lutheran, Baptist, Catholic? I believe government needs to remain completely neutral in relationship with religion. People came to America from Europe in the 1600's and 1700's for the opportunity to freely practice their religion without state or state sanctioned church persecution. Please don't repeat the mistakes from history that Europe made. Keep the wall between religion and the state so people can worship as their conscience dictates.

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them

**From:** Kelly Selah <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Kelly R. Crutchfield Jr.

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:30:58 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was deeply 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,

Kelly R. Crutchfield Jr.

Connelly Springs, NC



**From:** Cherie Marzano <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Cherie Marzano

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:36:44 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

What I have read in your recently released draft report concerning replacing the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge," is extremely alarming. Of significant alarm is the recommendation to repeal the Johnson Amendment, as well as the recommendation to expand government funding to religious organizations/activities. Both of these recommendations are counter to the separation of church and state as provided for by the Constitution. Our forefathers (yours and mine) and my personal ancestors who actually arrived in this land of freedom on the Mayflower in the year 1620, came here to escape the religious persecution they were subjected to in the old world. Since that time, many of our sons and daughters have given up their lives to protect the freedoms we all have come to cherish as the privilege of living as citizens in the USA. This so-called "bridge" that is being proposed will not strengthen the church, nor our country, but only eventually open the door to the tearing down of the religious freedoms we now hold dear, and inevitably lead to persecution of those who will not acquiesce to the state enforcement of religious doctrine.

Therefore, I wholeheartedly agree with the response which has been submitted to you by Pillar of Freedom.org, which addresses in detail the relevant American history and the recommendations that are of concern.

Sincerely,  
Cherie Marzano  
Dunlap, TN

**From:** Daniel Anderson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation Of Church and State - Daniel Jay Anderson

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:37:06 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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 secularist 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,

Daniel Jay Anderson  
OOLTEWAH TN  
Sent from my iPad

**From:** Virginia Mills <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Virginia Mills

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:37:24 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am not in favor of any statements being released by the government supporting a change in what the constitution already gives us—freedom to worship or not, without government involvement.

The government has plenty of other things to keep it busy.

Please don't use tax money, or any other money to invest in this committee for religious liberty. If someone has a problem, they need to take it to court just like they have 250 years.

As soon as you start dismantling a term, the concept under it begins to disintegrate. And once the concept of a country that separates religion from civil responsibility is destroyed, religious persecution of the majority towards minorities will happen. That's not American. That's not republican. I don't want it in my country.

Thank you,

Virginia Mills

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Melissa Oretade <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:42:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

**Inline-Images:** drawing\_2.png

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*To THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,*

*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, most of which I 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 citizen and a student of history, and as a Christian, 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. We 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 Maimonides, 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 were prosecuted under the justification of the censorship of misinformation, also.*

*The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. I 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 a follower of Jesus Christ, I am mindful of Our Lord's words that I must "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 I would enthusiastically support.*

*I remain, Yours truly,*

Handwritten signature or initials.

*Melissa Perez Oretade Ed.D.*



Sent from my iPhone

**From:** India Phillips <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – [Religious Liberty for All Americans] – [Phillips].

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:48:51 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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There is an over emphasis on the protection of specific named religious minorities, and the language used does not leave much room for interpretation to include other smaller religions. While Anti-semitism is a historical concern, they are not the only religious minority to have had fatal attacks at places of worship in the last few years.

My first concern is that the USA federal government will continue to show they are unable to give an unbiased response to religious minorities; the recent Department of War's recognized religious afflictions restructuring and the use of categorizing "Christians" with a label shows more about the DoW than they intended. I believe the response to remove the labeling at all was the correct maneuver but witnessing that made me more concerned about policy getting to designate labels and preferential treatment or exclusion.

My second concern is that the policy will be too inclusive to practices that are destructive to our Nation. Some political movements try to hide behind a religious label and apparent practices in order to be accepted.

A religion should not seek to replace or supercede the authority and governance of the Constitution of the United States of America and the rights outlined and protected therein. The citizens are the ones who can choose if a candidate's morals align with theirs sufficiently to deserve their individual vote.

The rights preserved in our foundational laws extend to all living in our land, no parallel society can exist and our structure survive; just as no policy should restrict the civic involvement of individuals based on religious affiliation we can not have an underbelly of secret tribunals and mobs.

The United States of America should be seeking out and preserving our religious liberty, but do not become the thing you hate in your attempt to destroy it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**From:** Autumn Ravenwood <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] In support of the separation of church and state

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:51:45 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to any effort that would weaken or eliminate the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state. As an American citizen, I believe this principle is fundamental to protecting both religious liberty and the freedoms guaranteed by the United States Constitution.

Although the exact phrase "separation of church and state" does not appear in the Constitution, the principle is firmly rooted in the First Amendment, which states:

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

These two clauses—the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause—work together to ensure that the government neither establishes nor favors a religion while protecting every person's right to practice their faith, or no faith at all.

This understanding has been recognized throughout American history. In 1802, President Thomas Jefferson described the First Amendment as building "a wall of separation between Church & State" in his letter to the Danbury Baptist Association. While Jefferson's letter is not itself law, it has long been cited as an important explanation of the principles embodied in the First Amendment.

The United States Supreme Court has repeatedly interpreted the First Amendment as limiting government involvement in religion. Although the Court's approach has evolved over time, it has consistently recognized that the government may not establish an official religion or coerce religious observance. These protections safeguard the rights of people of every faith, as well as those who hold no religious beliefs.

The separation of church and state does not restrict religious freedom; rather, it protects it. It prevents the government from favoring one religion over another, or religion over nonreligion, ensuring that all Americans are treated equally under the law. This principle has helped preserve religious diversity and freedom throughout our nation's history.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission not to abolish the separation of church and state and to continue defending the constitutional protections embodied in the First Amendment and to oppose any policies or actions that would undermine the government's religious neutrality. Preserving these constitutional safeguards protects the rights of all Americans and strengthens our democracy.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of my views.

Respectfully,

Autumn Ravenwood  
Berrien Springs, MI  
July 12, 2026

**From:** Maureen Morris <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Maureen Morris

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:56:32 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing to let you know that as a citizen and person of faith I am deeply troubled to read that the Commission wants to weaken the separation of church and state. This county was founded on civil and religious liberty, and this foundation has made our nation great. Please keep church and state separate.

Please enforce the Johnson Amendment. Tithes to the church are tax deductible and are to be used to spread the gospel, while political contributions are not. Do not politicize our churches.

Thank you for your time,

Maureen Morris  
Boron, CA

**From:** Antonio Flores <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 12:58:18 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To whom this may concern, I just read the Pillar of Faith response and I agree with it 100%. And I support keeping church and state separate. And the only ten commandments that should be out there are the ten commandments from the Bible. Thank you for your time these are my thoughts and hope you all have a great day. Thank you, and God Bless 🙏 Antonio Flores

**From:** Adrienne Byrd <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Urgent

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:01:13 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I do **not** agree with doing away with the separation of church and state.

*May the promises of Numbers 6:24-26 keep you and yours in peace.*

God's Blessings ✨ & Love 💜, Adrienne Byrd

**From:** Diane Berry <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:01:52 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I'm writing this letter in response to the possible bridge between Government and Christianity uniting in our country. I am a Christian but do not believe we are to bend the Constitution and agree with our founding fathers the importance of separation of church and state. Keep in mind the history of the past when this happened before. It leads to tyranny and persecution and takes away our freedom to worship as a choice not a force. Keep this matter in your prayers and give it careful consideration. Thank you, Mrs. Diane J Berry

**From:** jerry mcclung <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:07:21 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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[usdoj.gov](https://usdoj.gov)

*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 Maimonides, 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,*

*[THE UNDERSIGNED]*

[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=CMBiPIfx-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:** Sharon <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:07:31 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear USDOJ,

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom and their stance. Please implement them as they have spelt out in their statement.

Sharon Cho

**From:** Jeannie Marcoux <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comment for Removing Separation of church and state

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:08:06 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Hi,  
I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments.  
Jeannie Marcoux

Sent from my iPad

**From:** Hannah Kwon <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:09:09 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

**From:** "[REDACTED PII]" <[REDACTED PII]>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT to the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty's draft report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:10:41 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty,

I am a private citizen of the United States and the State of Washington. I wish to voice my comments regarding the draft report of the Commission.

I applaud the attempt to defend Religious Liberty. Our country was established by those who were fleeing religious intolerance, so this subject is important.

The report makes recommendations which would reduce the separation between church and state in our great country. The past 2,000 years of history have shown that whenever the government and the church have attempted to unite the result has always been the loss of freedom and persecution of minorities.

I have reviewed the comments submitted by Pillar of Freedom dated July 6, 2026. I agree with those comments. I urge you to implement the recommendations made in those comments.

May God bless the work of the Commission and may God bless the United States of America.

***Dan Weston***

"My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth." – Psalm 121:2 NKJV

**From:** Mark Rudebaugh <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:10:56 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Religious Liberty Committee Members

Thank you for your service in this committee. Will I don't have the ability to write like a lawyer, I do agree with Pillar of Freedom's letter to your committee (write by Jonathan Zirkle). And I hope you will read his letter about the history of religious freedom. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely  
Mark Rudebaugh



**From:** Eunice Fernandez <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church and State - Jose Fernandez

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:13:36 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillars of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,  
Jose A Fernandez  
Macon, GA

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Amanda Bauer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom!!!

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:30:49 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments! Please implement them!!! We need to maintain religious freedom in America or we will plummet this country into the dark ages where men dictated what people conscience was. This country was founded by people fleeing religious persecution. Gods ways are ways of freedom and not force.

**From:** Ken Davis <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:30:59 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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 Maimonides, 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,*

*Ken Davis*

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** "Allen, Carlene" <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:36:12 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the Pillars of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

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**From:** Amy Donato <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State.

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:36:27 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments.

Thank you,

Amy Donato  
Sent from my iPhone



**From:** Carlene Allen <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:41:12 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the Pillars of Freedom's response. Please implement them.

**From:** David and Daniela Giangrande <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:42:22 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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,

Daniela Giangrande, from California

**From:** Oksana Kotyrlo <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I agree with Pillar of Freedom Comments

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:44:04 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I AGREE WITH PILLAR OF FREEDOM COMMENTS

**From:** John Gulley <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Support Pillar of Freedom - John Gulley

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:44:26 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am writing to voice my objection to

- \* funding religious nonprofit activities,
- \* funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses,
- \* repealing the Johnson amendment, which restricts churches and political activities

I specifically request the Johnson amendment be fully enforced.

Many of our ancestors came to America to escape religious persecution, which was the result of union of Church and State in European countries. Let us not make the same mistake again.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

John Gulley.

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

**From:** Kelley Phillips <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:44:27 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments! Please implement them!!! We need to maintain religious freedom in America or we will plummet this country into the dark ages where men dictated what people conscience was. This country was founded by people fleeing religious persecution. Gods ways are ways of freedom and not force.

**From:** Deidre Jepson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:45:57 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Sent from my iPhone

I agree with pillar of freedom comments.

**From:** "Morrissey V.H.S." <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Morrissey Suci

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:46:39 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am a USA citizen and person of faith - a Christian. While it is commendable to study religious liberty and to seek to uphold it, yet to try to make a bridge between church and state and get rid of the wall of separation, or to claim that it was never there in our history, is a gross mistake, which European history - specifically that of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England - shows oh so well what horrific persecution and torture and death results from the combination of church and state. It was for this very reason that so many of our ancestors came to the USA, to escape religious persecution at the hands of a church/state combination in Europe!

Sadly, in the case of too many of the colonies, that horrific persecution was repeated by their lack of knowledge of what really preserves liberty of faith. Roger Williams and what became the state of Rhode Island showed a better way. I implore you to keep alive the heritage of Rhode Island and how the concepts of Roger Williams and James Madison and others, were enshrined in our Constitution in language such as the first amendment which states "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof". This cannot and will not be maintained if the separation of church and state is broken down or a bridge made between the two.

Now let me clarify - I am in no way talking about the extreme (and historically incorrect) version of separation of church and state which requires politicians to never speak in public about their personal faith or to not go to church and so forth. Personal faith of people in government is totally fine, and it is fine for them to express that when they make it clear that it is their personal convictions and not in any way an expression of their office or the law. Indeed, our country's founders did express their personal faith, and in this way yes there was not a touch-not-handle-not-speak-not separation between church and state.

But, and I emphasize BUT, state money cannot and must not be allowed to flow into private religious organizations OF ANY KIND because that is the definition of corruption. We know where that goes AND IT IS NOT GOOD!!! There should be, though, a way that those who homeschool or those who send their children to private school, should not be required to pay taxes for public school which they don't use. Yes. But there are ways to do this that do not require the government to fund private education.

I ask you these questions: when does centralized government ever do a better job of something than the private sector?? And, what is the purpose of the federal government according to the Constitution? It is a



very limited function, and health and education are not part of it. Those things are to be left to the States, not the federal government. The Trump Administration of all administrations knows that very well. Why then is there even any discussion about enlarging the federal government's reach and entangling more things with it? I am very disappointed and alarmed that there is even this discussion at all.

And, to favor any religion or denomination or religious organization over others by the government, violates the duty of the government to be impartial. It also opens the door to persecution and the violation of liberty of speech and the press and religious expression to those who don't happen to be part of the favored religious group, as all others WILL EVENTUALLY BECOME blacklisted in favor of the favored (history shows this - and don't think the US can outwit history....it WILL repeat itself if the same patterns and mistakes are repeated.....!!!).

Furthermore, I am in favor of the response sent in by Pillar of Freedom, which, by the way, I read AFTER I wrote the above - the above came straight from my own heart and study and faith. I will now quote this from Pillar of Freedom response to you, which I think is priceless: "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."

I will add this - you want to make America into a blood bath like Europe was for over 1000 years during what many refer to as the Dark Ages? Well then, go ahead with your recommendations. But if you want to MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, please stick with what really did make it great, one of the greatest being protection of the people from tyranny caused by civil and ecclesiastical combination!!! And please, do NOT go trying to rewrite our history to make it say what you want it to say (which it looks like you are doing). I am appalled at many of your recommendations. And I am a Christian, and a political conservative and health freedom advocate. Again, I beg you to take to heart and implement the response sent in by Pillar of Freedom, and the history therein too.

Praying for you all to do the right thing!

Morrissey Suci

**From:** Lori Gulley <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Support Pillar of Freedom - Lori Gulley

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:47:49 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am writing to voice my objection to

- \* funding religious nonprofit activities,
- \* funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses,
- \* repealing the Johnson amendment, which restricts churches and political activities

I specifically request the Johnson amendment be fully enforced.

Many of our ancestors came to America to escape religious persecution, which was the result of union of Church and State in European countries. Let us not make the same mistake again.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Lori Gulley

**From:** Annie Leon Guerrero <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]" <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Anniebern Peter

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:55:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:  
I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please  
implement them.  
Thank you.

Anniebern Peter

**From:** Danna Gesellchen <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Danna Gesellchen

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:55:32 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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. In the history of nations, when this “bridging” occurs, persecution follows.

That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the church free from oppression, persecution and government mandates.

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

Sincerely,  
Danna Gesellchen  
Closure for Jesus Ministry  
[closureforJesus.com](https://closureforJesus.com)  
Seale, AL/Goodrich, ND

--

"My heart is longing to see the Man, Who was despised and rejected, crowned and seated upon His throne. . . ."  
Upward look, pg. 78  
***2 Peter 3:12 Hastening the day!!***

**From:** Ken Davis <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:58:04 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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 Maimonides, 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.*

*While I am not the Author of this letter, I fully and totally agree with the sentiments expressed!*

*Ken Davis*

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** JOSEPH HUTCHINSON <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Liberty of conscience

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 13:59:34 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Jonathan Zirkle Pillar of Freedom  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Dylan Ward <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:05:28 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I stand by and agree with Jonathan Zirkle and pillar of freedom comments!!!

**From:** Mic <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:07:56 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To US Dept of Justice

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 Maimonides, 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,  
Michael B. McLaughlin

[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://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=dc1a49ed-b95620a2-dc1d6d08-74fe4868cd43-b8fbb700da4435e4&q=1&e=97fc2ba8-440e-46f8-958f-9d667ffdd044&u=https%3A%2F%2Ffreclaimthenet.org%2Fpope->

francis-calls-on-social-media-platforms-to-censor-more-misinformation;

[5] ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-UA> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAUkMwIWYB8>)

[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://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=413b397c-24775033-413c1d99-74fe4868cd43-5581f7100fd69b94&q=1&e=97fc2ba8-440e-46f8-958f-9d667ffdd044&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.masshist.org%2Fpublications%2Fadams-papers%2Findex.php%2Fview%2FPJA01dg2>

Mic McLaughlin

**From:** Melissa <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:10:31 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To the US Dept of Justice,

*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 Maimonides, 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]*

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*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.*

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*I remain, Yours truly,*

*Melissa S. McLaughlin*

[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=CMBiPIfx-UA>

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

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

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



**From:** Jennifer Kittilson <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Cc:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – [SEPERATION OF CHURCH AND STATE] –  
[JENNIFER KITTILSON]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:10:39 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

In my recent understanding of a 'proposed change' to the foundations of our free country here in the United States of America, I was most sad to hear...

Let me ask you: What does the word foundation mean to you? To me: it means solid, unmovable, unchangeable, and I also think of Cornerstone. **A FOUNDATION should NOT be moved or changed at any cost.**

It is a wonderful marker in our history that was unselfishly implemented with the intent of the heart of the United States of American people in mind. That intent from our founding fathers is for them (the American people) to live in a free state of mind and as a free body (individual & in groups) of the United States of America.

**As you know, our country's foundation is based from freedom. Please don't change this about our beautiful country. The proposed change on the Commission's effort to weaken and dismantle the separation of church and state will change our foundation of freedoms of the American people; not for the good of our beloved country.** History shows this. Time since has shown what freedom means here in the United States of America. Many have come here because of our firm foundation of freedom. Please don't change this! Our country is a beacon of hope for many others that want to experience that freedom.

God gave us free will for a reason. It was based on love. His foundation is love. For God is a gentleman. A gentleman does not force. True love is not forced upon us. It is freely given. We are given and have been given an opportunity here to be able to choose for ourselves and experience that freedom. **Please keep church and state separate.**

**PLEASE, WE ARE TO REMEMBER:** for many of our brothers and sisters have fought and died believing in & standing up for "the land of the free and home of the brave." They have died for our freedom. This is truth.

I do agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.  
Thank you for your time.

**GOD'S BLESSINGS TO ALL!**

Respectfully,  
Jennifer Kittilson  
Northport, Washington

**From:** Gayla Metzger <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presedential Commission on Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:12:32 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Concerning separation of church and state, I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comment. Please implement them.

Thank you.

Gayla Metzger  
Michigan

**From:** Ronald Metzger <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commisison on Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:15:32 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I do not agree with you undoing separation of church and state. I agree with Pillar of Freedom' comment.

Please implement them.

Thank you.

Ronald Metzger  
Michigan

**From:** dvqueen1 Queen <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:22:29 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Please keep church & state separated.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Marilyn Horton <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Uphold Pillar of Freedom comments

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:22:59 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** "Goldie R. Pyfrom" <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Total Agreement

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:27:18 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I totally agree with the Religious Liberty Commission's Report and position!!

Sent from my iPhone ~ G 🌹

**From:** hutch600 <hutch600@aol.com>

**To:** "RLC (OASG)" <RLC@usdoj.gov>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:27:30 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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July 12, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

Thank you.

Joy Hutchinson

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Verta Johnson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:28:29 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments, please implement them.



**From:** Kendy molano <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Religious Liberty Commission Recommendations

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:31:51 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To Whom It May Concern,

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.

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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.

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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.

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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,

Kendy Molano

**From:** Emily Harmeyer <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:33:57 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them. Separation of Church and State should always be upheld in order to have true freedom!!

Emily Harmeyer

**From:** Catherine <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I agree with the freedom comment - Separation of Church and State is vital.

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:34:08 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Peace & Blessings,

Cathy

Isaiah 55:8,9. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, and so are my ways higher than your ways , and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**From:** Oksana Kotyrlo <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: I agree with Pillar of Freedom Comments

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:34:16 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Please implement them

On Sunday, July 12, 2026 at 10:44:04 AM PDT, Oksana Kotyrlo <[REDACTED] PII > wrote:

I AGREE WITH PILLAR OF FREEDOM COMMENTS

**From:** Kristin McGuire <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:36:27 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Greetings!

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

Kristin R. McGuire  
Apopka, FL

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

**From:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:37:40 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Committee,

The idea of having a bridge between church and state is a horrible idea. Our country was founded on the principles of liberty of conscience. Roger Williams of Rhode Island was a prime example of enacting this freedom of conscience. Throughout history, when church and state have united, it leads to darkness and spiritual decline. All you have to do is look at countries that are ruled by religious authorities now to see that they are economically, very poor, they are suppressed, and live in fear (Afghanistan is a good example of this.). God made man to have freedom to choose whether or not people will obey him. As a person of faith, I'm happy God allows us freedom of choice.

I agree with the Pillars of Freedom comments made by Jonathan Zirkle. Please implement them and let freedom to worship, or not worship, God be someone's own personal choice. Church and the government need to be kept separate. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Dolly Tygret  
Sent from my iPhone



**From:** Cindy Reilley <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:50:05 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

After reading through the religious liberty draft report, I must agree with the "Pillar of Freedom response to this draft report. I am very troubled and concerned about the Commission's proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state.

I believe and opposed the public or government funding of religious non-profit activities on public campuses, such as religious clubs, schools, etc.. Instead, specific church or religious denominations, and it's members should pay for their own activities through private freely offered donation. Tax payers should not be obligated to pay those expenditures. Separation of church and state is the wall built by believers to keep the church **free**, not by secularists to **restrict** religion. History demonstrates that the blending of church and state is detrimental to both. The fact that there IS a Religious Liberty Commission formed, proves by their own conduct the need for separation of church and state. This uniting of church and state inevitably leads to the state being forced to decide religious doctrine.

I 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. This country was founded on No king and No Pope. A free country to escape persecution brutality, 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. That's how we keep both free. I ask you, please refrain from bridging the gap between church and state. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them !!

Respectfully,  
Cindy

**From:** Margie Broyer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT: Separation of Church and State--Roger Broyer

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:54:16 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,

Roger Broyer  
Farmington, Washington

**From:** J S <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – [Jen Sarmiento]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:57:05 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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**I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them!**

**From:** Margie Broyer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Marjorie Broyer

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 14:59:00 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Broyer  
Farmington, Washington

**From:** Beverly Kramer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:01:51 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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 Maimonides, 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,*

*Beverly Kramer*





**From:** Roger Kramer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:08:45 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Sent from my iPad

*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 Maimonides, 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*



**From:** "Nelson, Greg" <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:11:15 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Sirs:

I am writing this to object to the conclusion and direction of this report.

Roger Williams one of our country's founders and a great thinkers said "man has no power to make laws that bind men's conscience".

He also said forcing of conscience is soul rape. Our forefathers risked all to come to this land to enjoy full freedom. One of the main reasons was for religious freedom and freedom of conscience. Forcing someone to believe a certain way is against what our country was founded for and the true meaning of the constitution.

I believe only God can direct each individual's path and to get the State in any way involved is 100% against the way USA was founded and stands for and what our forefathers fought and died for..

The USA constitution guarantees freedom and Liberty of Conscience, the direction of this commission would surely erode these rights.

Any compromise or concessions would limit freedom.

No religion or church should have power or control over religious thought or observances and total sway to enforce laws that suit their objectives.

We need to love and respect all peoples and their right to believe as they see fit.

Greg Nelson

[REDACTED]

PII

**From:** Audrey Greenlaw <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: Disagree with Commission Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:18:49 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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,

Audrey Greenlaw

**From:** Melissa Watson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Melissa Watson

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:20:47 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was alarmed to understand that the Commission wants to have a bridge between Church and State instead of a wall of separation between Church and State. The history of countries that have church and state combined have shown the world the bloody mess that occurs when this takes place.

Religious Liberty is the greatest source of American strength.

I have been blessed as a citizen of the USA to enjoy Religious Freedom in this great country.

I kindly request that Church and State remain separate for everyone's freedom.

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments please implement them.

Sincerely,

Melissa Watson

Russellville, TN

**From:** Andy Ng <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission — Public Comment—Andy Ng

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:22:33 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear DOJ,

I agree with pillar of freedom's comments. Please implement them,

Sincerely yours,

Dr Andy Ng

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** Jim Roberts <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:26:06 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Sirs;

The Establishment Clause defined is the first of 16 words in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." It serves as the constitutional boundary for church and state, prohibiting the federal government from creating a national religion or favoring one religion over another.

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'm 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 a citizen and student of history, and as a Christian, I'm 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, it seems 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. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

It seems that the Committee may have 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 Maimonides, 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. The Department of Justice, in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state, should 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 all should be 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.”

Based on the above, and all due respect to the committee, I request 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.

Yours truly,

Jim Roberts



PII

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** Thelma Pombo <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillars of freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:26:41 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with separation of church and State please keep our constitution intact, these freedom is what our country was founded on. Furthermore, this is the reason why God has blessed our country so far.  
Sent from my iPhone

**From:** T H <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:34:05 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To who it may concern,

Thank you for taking the time to read my email. Please keep church and state separate. History has proven that when church and state form a partnership, oppression and persecution eventually follow for those in opposition to the decrees and laws that have been put forth from this union,

I want it to be made know that "I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them."

Kind regards,

Theresa Hollis, MA

**From:** Gabe Arruda <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:37:17 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*To whom it concerns,*

*I write to voice my concern and objections to the Religious Liberty Committee recommendations submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. My objection is with the first and ninth recommendations.*

*These recommendations ignore the clear warnings of the Founding Fathers had and spoke of in regard to the dangers of a union of church and state.*

*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."*

*This is a flawed view of the spirit and intent of the founding fathers, and they have many many statements attest to this. Every time Church and State united it has always resulted in the persecution of minority religious classes. Every time!*

*Religious persecution even occurred in the early decades of our own country with the persecution of the Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and others in some of the colonies. Founding fathers were well aware of this and we're seeking to avoid it.*

*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.*

*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.*

*Yours truly,*

*Gabriel Arruda*



**From:** Scott Edens <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT: Separation of Church and State, Scott Edens, McDonald, TN

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:38:00 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

As a person of faith, I believe that religious liberty is best protected when the government neither favors nor interferes with religion. For that reason, I respectfully oppose recommendations that would weaken the historic separation of church and state, including expanding government funding for religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.

I encourage the Commission to carefully consider the historical concerns outlined in the response prepared by Pillar of Freedom/Jonathan Zirkle, JD. His analysis provides important context on why separation of church and state has long served to protect both religious liberty and the independence of faith communities.

Please preserve the constitutional principles that have allowed people of all faiths, and those of no faith to worship according to conscience without government influence or political pressure.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Respectfully,

Scott Edens

[REDACTED] PII

**From:** Jack Pavlik <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:39:02 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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**From:** Scott Jones <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:39:31 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission:

After reading the religious liberty draft report, I agree with the Pillar of Freedom response. The checks and balances in the Constitution are necessary to deter corrupt political meddling with government funding of religious entities. Repealing the Johnson Amendment would be destructive to the Republic by encouraging the creation of religious Super-PACs with tremendous power and influence over government at the expense of minority representation.

Separation of church and state protects everyone's freedom. Mixing religion and government lets the state impose one faith on everyone, leading to discrimination and tyranny. Religion is a matter of personal conviction and conscience. Government must not infringe upon each person's right to their religious beliefs without interference. History proves the joining of church and state creates tyranny, oppression, coercion and persecution.

The prosperity and moral strength of America is built on the foundation of separation of church and state as written in the First Amendment: "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...*" This is a fundamental freedom of the Constitution. Tampering with it weakens the whole document. The principle of the separation of church and state was not established by a single letter from Thomas Jefferson but was introduced by Roger Williams in 1636 with the establishment of Rhode Island as a refuge for liberty of conscience. That is exactly how America was originally founded. My ancestors fled persecution and tyranny in Europe to be able to worship God freely and without interference from a state religion.

For all of the above reasons, I respectfully ask the Commission to review American history and withdraw or modify its recommendations. America will flourish when we maintain a complete separation of church and state.

Morality cannot be legislated or enforced. The Gospels are clear that a change of heart is required to truly change a person and bear the fruit of righteousness. It is impossible for state laws to enforce the change required in the heart.

Thank you for your time in reading my letter.

*Scott Jones* from West Virginia

**From:** Paul Zenk <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] separation of church n state

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:52:37 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them."

Paul Zenk

Paul Zenk

[REDACTED] PII

**From:** Jennifer Ortega <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT \_Separation of Church and State - Jennifer

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:56:25 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am a citizen of these United States and as such, I was disturbed to hear that the Commission wants to

replace the division between church and state. With due respect, that is against my freedom — as a person of faith, I find the idea alarming.

That division was not built by irreligious people to push religion down. It was built by believers to keep the

church free. By joining these two, it does not help the church; it opens the door for government funding

and political favors, then churches will compete for grants/funding and answering to political leaders instead of to God.

History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands, and it is a

disaster for both. Please do not merge the two together. Keep the separation. It protects the church far

greater than it restricts it.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ortega

Salem, MO

**From:** L M <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Emily McVay

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:57:48 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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July 12, 2026

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I support the American principle of the separation of church and state.

It is my understanding that the framers of the Constitution understood the importance of the separation of Church and State, and sought to guarantee freedom of religion. The Church should not dominate the State; likewise, the State should not dominate the Church. There should be a clear distinction between religious and civil authority.

Religious liberty involves answering to God and it should not involve the government creating an environment that may stifle religious freedom, impose beliefs on its citizens, establish a state religion, or thwart the authority and integrity of its various religious faiths.

God created us as free moral agents and we are to preserve our moral independence. The Bible is clear, Matthew 22:21 tells us to "...Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Additionally, I agree with another who said, "Please don't build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects the church far more than it constrains it."

Sincerely,  
Emily McVay  
Millington, TN

**From:** Nicole Jones <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Cc:** Nicole Jones <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Recommendations Of Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 15:59:14 -0400

**Importance:** High

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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 Maimonides, 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 has 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,  
Nicole Noa Jones*

***Blessings,***

***Nicole Noa Jones***

**"GOD CAN DO ANYTHING BUT FAIL"**

*"God has a reason for allowing things to happen. We may never understand His wisdom, but we must simply, trust His will. " Psalm 37:5*

**From:** Julie Magee <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:00:30 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the pillar of freedom comets. Please implement them

Sincerely  
Julie Magee

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

**From:** Debbie Bengé <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:08:52 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am writing to you today to reflect on a principle that stands as the bedrock of our democracy: the separation of church and state. Far from being a modern political talking point, this concept is the very shield that protects our collective liberty—a vital pillar of American freedom.

The brilliance of our nation's founding architecture lies in the understanding that true freedom of conscience can only exist when the government remains neutral on matters of faith. When the Framers of our Constitution drafted the First Amendment, they did not seek to suppress religion; rather, they sought to protect it. By erecting a wall between the altar and the statehouse, they ensured that no single faith could ever use the machinery of government to enforce its dogma, tax its neighbors, or dictate how others must live.

History has shown us, repeatedly and painfully, what happens when religion and state power become entangled. When the lines blur, faith is often corrupted by political ambition, and the state becomes an instrument of exclusion. The separation of church and state prevents this. It guarantees that a citizen's rights, protections, and standing before the law are never dependent upon their religious beliefs—or their choice to practice no religion at all.

This separation is what makes the Pillar of Freedom sturdy. True freedom means the right to search for truth, to worship according to the dictates of one's own heart, or to walk a secular path, entirely free from government coercion. It ensures that our public institutions—our schools, our courts, and our legislatures—belong equally to everyone.

Protecting this boundary is not an act of hostility toward faith; it is an act of profound respect for it. It allows a diverse tapestry of beliefs to flourish side-by-side in peace.

Let us stand firmly in defense of this vital boundary. By keeping the state out of the church and the church out of the state, we preserve the unique, enduring freedom that defines our nation.

Sincerely,

*Debbie E. Bengé*

[REDACTED]  
PII

**From:** Ken Thompson <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:14:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing in response to the separation of church & state. It is your God given right to have the separation of church & state. When ever there is a mixture of the two persecution always follows, history atests to that. We need not have this mixture to not only protect religious liberty but other freedoms as well. I agree with the stance that Pillar of Freedom takes on this matter as well.

Thank you  
Ken Thompson

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

**From:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:18:37 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As a citizen and a person of faith, I am deeply troubled by the Commission's proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge."

This wall was built by believers to keep the church free, not by secularists to restrict religion. A bridge opens the door for government funding and political influence, forcing churches to compete for grants and answer to politicians instead of to God. History demonstrates that the blending of church and state is detrimental to both.

I urge you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken this separation—specifically, using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment. When churches engage in partisan politics or accept government funding, they inherit political corruption. Separation protects faith, which is precisely why religion has remained strong in our country.

Please maintain the separation of church and state - that's how we keep both free.

Sincerely and very Respectfully,

Erik Lindgren

**From:** Ellen Starr <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:20:35 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments

**From:** Logan Bartusek <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT — SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE —  
LOGAN BARTUSEK

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:23:18 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I deeply admire and appreciate your work in assuring religious freedom across America. Maintaining religious freedom is a crucial and powerful work for our nation. Truly, religious liberty—the privilege and right to hold individual faith and practice without infringement—is a founding pillar of the United States.

Nonetheless, I see the need to address a critical component of the Commission's newly released draft report (with no less intent of keeping religion and religious liberty alive and well in our fair country). It is true, removing religion from America has led to, and will lead to, detrimental effects upon the nation. Ignorance and carelessness towards the eternal principles of right, held both in the Ten Commandments and all of God's inspired word, is a reproach to any nation. However, attaching a religion, even Christianity, to the central government is a step towards destroying, not flourishing, religious freedom for Americans.

I sympathize with Americans nationwide who had "separation of church and state" twisted on them to deny their faith and practice. And I understand the concern to uphold justice and equity for God's oppressed people. God's people have been brutally treated, and efforts should be taken to support the faith and endurance of brothers and sisters in Christ amidst their trials and persecutions. Although we know Christianity to be the right religion, it is not Christlike to force Christianity upon others through the avenue of legislative power. Making dissenters comply and follow along with any religion established in the government (including Christianity) denies the very essence of religious freedom, which the United States stands for. Whether Christianity, Buddhism, Atheism, or even my own religion, Seventh-Day Adventism, etc., coercing men and women to believe the same way another does eliminates religious freedom, especially when the government selects and establishes a religion, whether objectively right or wrong. As the Constitution says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

History has shown the disastrous result of merging church and state together. During the Dark Ages, around 50 million Christians were killed by the Roman Catholic Church—the state, Rome, merged with Catholicism, the church. Later, in England, the Anglican church punished dissenters toward the nationally recognized religion. Even early America had measures in place to oppose fellow pilgrims who held a differing faith. On the contrary, our Founding Fathers recognized the significance of keeping a national religion separate from the government in order to avoid the persecution witnessed in Europe. As history clearly shows persecution as the fruits of church-state alliance, the same results are bound to occur when church and state is revived. Although started with good intentions, power will become corrupt, and persecution will commence against some minority of people. The events outlined in history are given for our admonition, and the same events will occur again if we are not careful to learn from history (1 Corinthians 10:11; Ecclesiastes 1:9, 3:15). Among the 31,000 Christian denominations that currently exist, doctrinal disagreements inevitably exist. And when any form of Christianity is attached to the state, other Christians are marginalized and persecuted.

Instead of this, Jesus had said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). Surely, the government is ordained to uphold law and duty between man and man; if it were not so, the world would be in anarchy, chaos, and utter ruin.



At the same time, the government must not force upon, and act as conscience on, man's relationship to God. God grants every man freedom of choice to choose whom he will worship (Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21). Although having power and authority to do so, Jesus Christ, nor the Father, has denied man's freedom to choose and live according to the dictates of his own conscience. When Samaria rejected the Son of God, James and John urged Jesus to punish the Samaritans with consuming fire from heaven. Jesus "rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" (Luke 9:52-55).

Please, I pray, seriously consider what I have written here. I would also suggest reading Heritage and Hope Ministries' letter as well. If I am incorrect on these views, please show me from the Bible and history. I do not want to deceive, and I want to follow truth in all aspects. I desire the temporal and eternal well-being of all souls.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Logan Bartusek  
Ooltewah, Tennessee

**From:** Dotti Clark <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:23:44 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I totally agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them even if Ben Carson feels differently.

Respectfully,

Dotti Clark

"I already won the lottery ... I was born in America, and I know the Lord" ... Ben Carson

**From:** karen.clancy <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Response to the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission - Karen Clancy

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:25:47 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*I am respectfully requesting that you read these statements thoughtfully. Thank you for your consideration.*

## Statement to the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Subject:** The Historical and Constitutional Foundation of the Separation of Church and State

The Framers of the United States Constitution designed the separation of church and state to protect both religious freedom and governance. This principle was not born out of hostility toward religion, but out of a deep historical understanding of the dangers of state-sanctioned faith.

### Protection from European Religious Warfare

**Historical Conflict:** The founders were acutely aware of centuries of European bloodshed caused by mixing government and religion.

- **National Harmony:** They sought to prevent the United States from fracturing into sectarian conflicts.
- **Civic Peace:** Ensuring the state remained neutral prevented any single denomination from using government power to oppress others.

### Safeguarding the Integrity of Religion

- **Corruption of Faith:** Thinkers like James Madison argued that government financial support inevitably corrupts religious institutions.
- **Purity of Belief:** Religious devotion remains authentic only when it is voluntary, not coerced by law.
- **Freedom of Conscience:** True religious liberty requires that citizens be free to worship—or not worship—according to their own conscience.

### Ensuring the Autonomy of Government

- **Secular Governance:** Thomas Jefferson famously noted that a neighbor's religious beliefs neither "picks my pocket nor breaks my leg."
- **Rational Lawmaking:** Government decisions must be based on the common good and civic reason, rather than theological disputes.
- **Inclusive Citizenship:** The Framers banned religious tests for public office in Article VI to ensure public service belongs to all citizens.

## **Conclusion**

The separation of church and state is a foundational shield. It ensures the government cannot dictate how citizens pray, and no religious group can dictate how citizens live. Preserving this boundary is essential to maintaining true religious liberty for all Americans.

**"I am in full agreement with the Pillar of Freedom's Comments. Please Implement them."**

**Kind regards,**

**Karen Clancy**

**From:** Mildreth easter <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:26:00 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom.

**From:** Leslie Caza <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:26:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

I believe we need to keep a clear separation of church and state including monetary funding of religious activities.

Sincerely,  
Leslie Caza

**From:** adrian small <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Objections to the Commission's draft report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:28:34 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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.

Adrian Small

Do something kind for someone today without being asked!



**From:** "Jeff & Nancy Riedesel" <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter to the Department of Justice RE:

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:28:40 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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 Maimonides, 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,*

*Nancy Riedesel*

Nancy Riedesel

PII

**From:** Alissa <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:33:10 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission:

After reading the religious liberty draft report, I agree with the Pillar of Freedom response. The checks and balances in the Constitution are necessary to deter corrupt political meddling with government funding of religious entities. Repealing the Johnson Amendment would be destructive to the Republic by encouraging the creation of religious Super-PACs with tremendous power and influence over government at the expense of minority representation.

Separation of church and state protects everyone's freedom. Mixing religion and government lets the state impose one faith on everyone, leading to discrimination and tyranny. Religion is a matter of personal conviction and conscience. Government must not infringe upon each person's right to their religious beliefs without interference. History proves the joining of church and state creates tyranny, oppression, coercion and persecution.

The prosperity and moral strength of America is built on the foundation of separation of church and state as written in the First Amendment: "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...*" This is a fundamental freedom of the Constitution. Tampering with it weakens the whole document. The principle of the separation of church and state was not established by a single letter from Thomas Jefferson but was introduced by Roger Williams in 1636 with the establishment of Rhode Island as a refuge for liberty of conscience. That is exactly how America was originally founded. My ancestors fled persecution and tyranny in England to be able to worship God freely and without interference from a state religion.

For all of the above reasons, I respectfully ask the Commission to review American history and withdraw or modify its recommendations. America will flourish when we maintain a complete separation of church and state.

Morality cannot be legislated or enforced. The Gospels are clear that a change of heart that is required to truly change a person and bear the fruit of righteousness. It is impossible for state laws to enforce the change required in the heart.

Thank you for your time in reading my letter.

*Alissa Jones* from West Virginia

**From:** Jim Clifford <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:33:17 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Hello,

This is to let you know that I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments. I believe there should be separation of church and state in the USA.

James Clifford  
Rocklin, California

**From:** Gloria Wilson <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Cc:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State - Gloria

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:33:59 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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OBJECTION TO RLC REPORT  
REGARDING SEPARATION  
OF CHURCH AND STATE

Dear Government Religious Liberty Commission,

**I OBJECT TO THE RLC REPORT THAT STATES SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL.** This is not true. The 1st amendment declares that government interference in religious matters is prohibited. The RLC report recommends steps that will eliminate freedom altogether and give full control to the government.

**I OBJECT TO GOVERNMENT CONTROLLING CHURCHES AND CHURCHES CONTROLLING GOVERNMENT.** One of the most flagrant instances of overreach is regarding government lies for the purpose of control and implementation of COVID 19 restrictions and treatment. An even greater travesty of justice was the mandate for the COVID so-called vaccination. **Members of churches were denied a religious exemption** which resulted in loss of jobs, homes, health and life itself. Church members' God-given rights for freedom of conscience and choosing to follow safe health practices, were totally violated by the government. Our government violated religious liberty by pressuring church leaders and compelling them to promote the vaccines and all the government mandates, including termination, if the members didn't comply. **THIS IS STRONG EVIDENCE THAT THE COMBINATION OF CHURCH AND STATE RUINS LIVES, which is unconstitutional. THIS IS NOT RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.**

**MY DAD FOUGHT IN WWII to prevent Nazi dictatorship from coming to the U.S.** The Nazi regime took children and turned them against God. Nazi politics is what comes with combining church and state. If combining church and state were a good thing, there wouldn't be so many people of other countries immigrating to our country. Some friends of mine came from Communist Russia for freedom. How disappointed they were to see the loss of freedom regarding COVID. **They said it is what Communism is like.**

THE SUCCESS OF OUR COUNTRY IS DIRECTLY RELATED to the Biblically-prophesied separation of church and state in the USA, and comes with God's blessing. This protects people of all faiths or lack of faith. Forcing outward behavior does NOT bring GOD'S blessing. What about Christian Schools? **I ALSO WANT CONTINUED RELIGIOUS LIBERTY FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS.**

**I ALSO REQUEST THAT THE JOHNSON AMMENDMENT BE CONTINUED AND FULLY ENFORCED.**

Sincerely,

Gloria Wilson, Oregon

**From:** Joyce Skolnik <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Objection to Recommendation #9, "Repeal the Johnson Amendment"

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:35:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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."

Sincerely,  
Joyce Skolnik

[REDACTED] PII  
Auburn ME

Sent from my iPad



**From:** Amanda Meseraull <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:35:33 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To whom it may concern,

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,

Amanda Meseraull

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Melissa Litchfield <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] freedom act

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:36:41 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Sent from my iPhone **I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments.**

**From:**

PII

**To:** "RLC (OASG)" <PII>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:38:27 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please  
implement them.

Best regards,

Concerned U.S. citizen

**From:** Ronnie's iPhone <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation 🏠❤️ and 🇺🇸

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:39:04 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To the believers of the White House Religious Liberty Commission:

Jesus Christ separated forever civil government from his religion when he said, "My kingdom is not of this world," and, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Cesar's, and unto God the things which are God's." George Bancroft, the historian of the United States, says: "No one thought of vindicating religion for the conscience of the individual, till a voice in Judea, breaking day for the greatest epoch in the life of humanity, by establishing a pure, spiritual, and universal religion for all mankind, enjoined to render to Caesar only that which is Caesar's. The rule was upheld during the infancy of the gospel for all men." "The new Nation when it came to establish a government for the United States refused to treat faith as a matter to be regulated by a corporate body, or having a headship in a monarch or a State. Vindicating the right of individuality even in religion, and in religion above all, the new Nation dared to set the example of accepting in its relations to God the principle first divinely ordained of God in Judea." The United States Constitution as it is, upon the subject of religion, is in exact harmony with the principles and the word of Jesus Christ. Therefore, any effort to change that Constitution, respecting religion, even though it be professedly done in behalf of Christianity, is directly opposed to the word of Jesus Christ.

AMS August 14, 1889, page 229.5. A.T. Jones

Yours Truly,

Ronnie Whalon  
Texas

**From:** Marianne McCuen <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] the separation of church and state.

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:39:24 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

Americans should be free to worship freely on any day of the week.

**From:** Diane McDougald <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillars of Freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:39:35 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with pillars of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

**From:** Rod Ondricek <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:40:04 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

Rod Ondricek

**From:** Natalie P <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillars of Freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:40:17 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillars of Freedom comments. Please implement them!

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)



**From:** Adriana Kassay <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Adriana Peralta Kassay

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:44:27 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I write to you today with a profound sense of urgency and heartfelt concern. I respectfully plead with you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the historic separation of church and state, particularly those that would permit government funding of religious activities and repeal the Johnson Amendment.

Our nation's enduring commitment to religious liberty is one of its greatest achievements. It has protected the God-given right of every individual to worship according to the dictates of conscience without government interference, coercion, or favoritism. This freedom has allowed people of every faith—and those of no faith—to live peacefully according to their convictions.

James Madison, often called the Father of the Constitution, warned that “Religion and Government will both exist in greater purity, the less they are mixed together.” History has repeatedly proven the wisdom of those words. Whenever government becomes entangled with religion, both institutions suffer. Government gains influence over matters of faith, while religion loses the independence and moral authority that come only from being free of political power.

True faith cannot be created, sustained, or strengthened through government funding or government favor. It flourishes only when it is freely chosen. Likewise, parents must remain free to worship and educate their children according to the dictates of conscience rather than the mandates of government.

These freedoms are not merely traditions—they are foundational principles upon which our nation was established. They have protected Americans for generations and remain essential to preserving liberty for generations yet to come.

I respectfully urge you to reject any recommendations that would blur the constitutional line between church and state. Please uphold the principles that have long protected both religious liberty and the independence of religion itself.

I also wholeheartedly support the comments submitted by Pillar of Freedom and respectfully ask that you carefully consider and implement their recommendations.

Thank you for your service and for your careful consideration of this critically important matter. I sincerely pray that your decisions will help preserve the precious gift of religious liberty that has distinguished our nation since its founding.

Respectfully,

Adriana Peralta Kassay  
Mayer, Arizona

**From:** Steven Caza <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:47:35 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am a religious person and am concerned about this new document. There should continue to be a separation between church and state. Please do not use government monies to fund religious activities.

I agree with the statement sent to you by the Pillar of Freedom.org organization. Please read and consider their response.

Respectfully,  
Steven Caza

**From:** Sue Lundquist <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom comments

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:47:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Diane Mcdougald <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comments

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:50:40 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Diane Mcdougald

Huger, South Carolina

**From:** Carla Morris <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:51:00 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*To: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE*

*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 Maimonides, 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 if 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.*

*Praying you consider our request!*

*We remain, Yours truly,*

*Carla Morris and Family*

*Sent from my iPhone*



**From:** "Lynette Zapara" <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:51:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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"I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them."

Lynette Zapara

**From:** Bryan Jepson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:53:21 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

Bryan Jepson

**From:** Jane Keller <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] July 13

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:54:54 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am opposed to government interfering with peaceful, caring people. We are a "Free Nation". Founded for freedom of a person's

Choices....so long as they are not harmful to others.

This has been a God centered nation....that's the reason for founding it!!!

"Freedom of Choice "

(But....do no harm to others

**From:** Sherron Neal-Putman <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Religious Liberty Commission Recommendations

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:56:15 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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.*

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*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*

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*We remain, Yours truly,*

References:

- [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=CMBiPIfx-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>

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We remain, Yours truly,

[THE UNDERSIGNED]

[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=pAUkMwIWyB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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>

Sincerely,  
Sherron Neal-Putman

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 2 Corinthians 4:8-10

If unity could be secured only by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference, and even war. GC P. 45

Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain. Psalm 127:1  
National Security without God is no security at all.

**From:** Andrew Larson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 16:59:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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

I am a Christian, a bible student, and a student of world history. I believe in the Bible and the Bible alone. Given that position, I strongly believe that "the separation of Church and state," though not explicitly stated in those words within our constitution, is a fundamental element of the American culture and a foundational point our founding fathers (Believers and unbelievers alike) agreed upon. The original colonists fled the persecution and tyranny of a world where Church and state were fully united in Europe. If the Church unites with the state to compel a certain religious view upon the great nation of The United States of America, I strongly believe this will lead to a dark and deadly age in America.

I pray that this commission will take my, and many other Christian brothers' and sisters,' concerns seriously. It is a dangerous road to take the wall of separation between Church and state and turn it into a bridge. I have read both this Commission's statements and the statements of "Pillar of Freedom" and I agree and would lend my voice in the same objection that Pillar of Freedom has voiced.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Andrew Larson

**From:** Anita Tompkins <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Religious Liberty Report - Anita Tompkins

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:01:27 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Anita Tompkins

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Nancy Beaver <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State-Nancy Beaver

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:02:23 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I wholeheartedly agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

I am writing you as a citizen of the United States 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 I am against the repealing the Johnson Amendment' also.

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 is bad for the church and the country alike. Separation is not a secular idea; people of faith build it to protect faith, and it is the reason religion has stayed strong here. Please keep church and state separate. That is how we keep both of them free.

Sincerely,

*Nancy Beaver*  
*Resident of Michigan, USA*

**From:** Charlotte Powers <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom by Jonathon Zirkle

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:02:33 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

**From:** Gerald Reynolds <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Private comment on the draft report of the Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:03:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I write as a private individual, a loyal citizen of this great country, interested in and concerned for its greatest good. I do not write on behalf of any body, public or private, but am only expressing my own thoughts.

This report has only recently come to my attention, and today is said to be the last day to respond to it. Time does not permit a full reading of the report or any thorough analysis of it. I write rather about the broad, general tenor of some things that have long concerned me, and still do, in the state's relationship to religion, which I would hope the final report will address in a positive and helpful way.

Religion, by its nature, is a private matter, between oneself and one's God or Supreme Being. As such, it has no business meddling with state governance, nor does the state have any business dictating or regulating matters of religious belief. History has always shown that when either the church or the state seeks to control the other, trouble ensues. Our founding fathers lived these experiences and specifically wrote our founding documents to ensure that this would not happen in this country. That has been the genius of our constitution, in particular. While the expression "wall of separation between church and state" does not occur in that document, it was clearly the intent of the language in it to create such a separation. The draft report appears to be asking to eliminate that separation. I see this as a danger that I urge be dropped from the final report.

For many years in this country the attitude of the state toward religious expression and practice in public settings has been militantly secular. While the state claims neutrality, its actions have been inimical and hostile toward both individuals and bodies that have sought to live and practice in harmony with their faith. A number of such cases were interviewed in compiling the report. The report concludes, correctly, that this should not be the stance of the state. But it tends toward the opposite extreme, asking the state to support faith in public practice in various ways. True neutrality would neither overtly support nor actively suppress such practice. That is the stance our constitution requires, and the report, in its final draft, ought to be faithful to that. The state ought to recognize that genuine religion, actively practiced, makes good citizens, and it should be happy to accommodate that without actively favoring it, or one expression of it over another.

There has been a growing push for the state to officially declare this country a Christian nation, meaning that it supports the Christian religion--or some form of it--in preference to other religions. This country was not founded as a Christian nation, though it has historically been a nation with a Christian majority population.

PII

Article 11 of the 1797 Treaty of Peace and Friendship explicitly states that the "Government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion". The tenor of the draft Religious Liberty Commission report leans in the same direction as the Heritage Foundation report, in favor of adopting an explicitly Christian stance, or one preferentially favorable to Christianity, as the official state policy. This would effectively deny religious liberty in its truest sense to non-Christian religions and to those claiming no religion at all. As already stated, such a policy is neither religiously neutral nor in harmony with our constitution.

These considerations suggest that, contrary to what the report calls for, the Johnson amendment be retained. The church has no business, as a body, promoting, campaigning for, or raising funds for any political candidate. It may be proper to discuss policy as it relates to church dogma, but what the Johnson amendment forbids a faithful church should not attempt.

The report calls for the DOJ to back litigation supporting the states in encouraging or requiring the public display of the Ten Commandments in schools and other public places. This is overt favoritism toward the Christian religion, and is potentially offensive to other religions and secular individuals. While the principles embodied in numbers six to nine of those commandments are universally recognized as being within the proper power of the state to legislate and to regulate, requiring the public display of the document or explicit instruction in its content, by law, runs contrary to our constitution.

While I have not seen in the report a discussion of the teaching of origins, whether evolution or creation or intelligent design, in the public schools, what ought to be there, if anything, is a formally neutral position, requiring an evenhanded treatment of each as an unprovable matter of faith, based on interpretation of evidence, which is what they are.

Respectfully,

Gerald Reynolds



**From:** Jeffrey Powers <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom by Jonathon Zirkle

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:04:20 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Laura Davis <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church and State - Laura Davis

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:05:19 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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July 12, 2026

Via Electronic Mail to [REDACTED] PII

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 Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing as a concerned citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. Please do not build a bridge between church and state.

Sincerely,  
Laura Davis  
Priest River, Idaho

**From:** Muja Mosby <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:05:58 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I am writing to express my opposition to the revised Religious Liberty Bill. I believe that decisions about faith and worship belong to individuals, not the government. One of our nation's fundamental principles is the freedom for every person to practice their religion according to their own conscience, without government direction or interference.

I respectfully ask that you oppose this legislation and instead support policies that protect the constitutional right to religious freedom for all people. Regardless of one's faith or beliefs, every individual should be free to choose how they worship.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your consideration of my views. I appreciate your commitment to representing the people of our community.

Sincerely,

Muja Mosby

**From:** Sonia Torres Rivera <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:08:15 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Sent from my iPhone

I have read and agree with the Pillar Of Freedom Response to the Religious Liberty Commission Report.

**From:** David Cooper <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - David Cooper

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:20:25 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am concerned when I hear that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge."

If this would happen it would be a disaster for the country. We only have to look to history and the dark ages to see that both church and state were corrupted by the union and freedom became non-existent in the old world, thus necessitating the creation of this great country in the new world, based on the foundation of religious freedom, where each person can worship in line with their own conscience before God. There should be no heavy handed support of the state to favor one or a few religions. Also the church should not put a stranglehold on the government.

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please read and implement them. Thanks!

David Cooper  
Paradise, California

**From:** Desirae Bach <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:27:39 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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 it's 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 Maimonides, 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,



- [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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** Sunjay Holloway <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment- Separation from Church and State

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:27:53 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I strongly oppose what the Religious Liberty Commission is proposing and support the Pillar of Freedom's perspective. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibits the passing or creation of any law that establishes a religious body and directly impedes an individual's right to practice whichever religion they see fit. We need to stick with that clear separation of church and state.

Sincerely,

Thomas Holloway  
Atlanta, GA

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Catherine Annell Roley <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:34:07 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with the pillar of freedom comments.  
Catherine Annell Roley

**From:** Diana R <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Keep church & state separate!

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:36:19 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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KEEP CHURCH & STATE SEPARATE!

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

1. Objections to funding religious non-profit activities.
2. Objections to funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses.
3. Objections to repealing the Johnson Amendment, which restricts church's political activities.
4. A request that the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced.

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PillarofFreedom.org | [REDACTED] PII 5. Objections to the special treatment given Jewish people and the state of Israel, and whether you desire complete neutrality in the government's relationship with religion.

**From:** pat kirstein <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public comment-Separation of Church and State, Bill & Trish Kirstein

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:38:38 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission: We agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them. Our religious freedom depends on separation of church and state. We especially request that the Johnson Amendment be enforced, NOT repealed.

Sincerely, Bill and Trish Kirstein

Avon Park, Florida

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Ray Dickinson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:39:56 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

**Inline-Images:** ATT00001.png

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Commission submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. Having informed ourselves of its contents and heard arguments in support and against them, we join others who have expressed concern about the recommendations of the Commission during this consultation, with additional observations based on our own perspective.

We are mindful of the Commission's labors, which resulted in the 12 recommendations [1] released June 26, certain of which we agree with. However, as US citizens and devout Christians, we write to voice our concerns and objections to certain other of the Commission's recommendations, 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 the same.

The first recommendation of the Commission is 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 Commission's recommendations on the same day, Commission 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]

This, of course, contradicts the historical Supreme Court decisions that have referenced Thomas Jefferson's 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists where the phrase was first used [4], in their interpretation of the constitution. As citizens, students of history, and Christians, we are alarmed lest the flawed and unconstitutional view of the Chair of the Commission 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.

It was clearly Jefferson's personal belief that the principle of the separation of church and state, which Dan Patrick claims has no constitutional basis, is in fact 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." [5]

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, and the Supreme Court's historical interpretations, 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. The history of our own faith, who submit this protest, has also included persecutions of imprisonment and chain gangs in late 19<sup>th</sup> century America, simply for attempting to freely exercise their Sabbatarian religious faith—a fact that vice chair Dr. Ben Carson should especially be familiar with.

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 influential 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.

Tyndale is but one example among many who suffered varying degrees of persecution, proportional to the influence and determination of the predominant established religion. 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 that inevitably unfolded in the absence of that separating wall between church and state.

We stand in support of those who were persecuted in our own day, as referenced in the Commission's report, on account of their religious conviction regarding the COVID-19 vaccinations. This was a sad time of governmental overreach, interfering with the free exercise of religion for many law-abiding citizens by imposing undue restrictions on them, as though their beliefs rendered them second-class citizens. However, the answer to governmental overreach and disregard of the Establishment Clause, is not to reinterpret the Clause, but to enforce its historical interpretation. It is a fallacy to frame the separation of church and state as an attack against religious faith. And it is a further fallacy to argue that this attack is to be overcome by empowering religion with the state. They misuse it who invoke the Establishment Clause as an attack against those who choose to live according to their religious faith. Let their misuse be corrected rather than vilifying that good thing which they misuse.

With foresight gained from the study of such history, we can clearly see the deleterious results when established religion influences the strong arm of government toward its own biases, and when the government ignores the provisions of the Establishment Clause and oversteps the boundary into the free exercise of religion according to one's conscience. The Establishment Clause is a two-edged sword: it not only protects people of minority faith from persecutorial overreach of influential religion, but it also protects all citizens, regardless of their faith, from government-imposed mandates on matters of conscience. We therefore object to the recommendation of the Commission that the Johnson Amendment be removed.

Respectfully, we strongly urge the Department of Justice to consider the rich history of persecution resulting from the undue familiarity between church and state in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

Furthermore, we are concerned that the Commission 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 in America, for example, are dependent to a large degree upon the separation of church and state. 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 Commission makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonides, 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, which provides a pattern for what that union produces. 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 have no doubt that the censorship of Galileo, Kepler, Milton, and others was prosecuted under the justification of the censorship of misinformation, also. However, it is education rather than censorship that will overcome falsehood in a society where speech and press coverage are not restricted by religious or political influence.

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. [6] Given its consistent voice, the papal union between church and state is no model to inform any policy relating to free speech for any freedom loving society. 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.”

Yet while the disproportionate representation of Roman Catholics on the Commission presents a real concern regarding how their church’s historical persecutorial use of the powers afforded from the union of church and state may guide them in the same direction, the Roman Church was not alone in this persecution. 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. [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]

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. An 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 Commission’s report.** The evident lack of thoroughness with which the Commission has drawn its conclusions in not considering the harmful potential of their recommendations is alarming. Much could be said regarding the problems inherent in recommendation 4 as well, which has great potential for abuse, especially if recommendations 1 and/or 9 are adopted.

Rather, let the report be educated by convening 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, since a well-rounded education dispels doubt and suspicion, and supports wise decisions.

Yours truly,



Ray and Yormary Dickinson,  
Dalton, GA

[1] <https://www.justice.gov/.../president-trumps-religious...>

[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].



[3] <https://www.chron.com/.../dan-patrick-church-state...>

[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.

[4] [https://reclaimthenet.org/pope-francis-calls-on-social...;](https://reclaimthenet.org/pope-francis-calls-on-social...)

[5] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-UA>

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

[9] Matthew 22:21

**From:** Petra Dotson <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Do Not Abolish Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:39:59 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To Whom it May Concern,

Please maintain the separation of church and state in our country. What has made this country great is our opportunity to choose whether or not we follow Christ. This is invaluable to both Christians and non-Christians.

Jesus never forced anyone to follow him. "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me."" This is the pattern we should follow as Christians and can only be done by keeping church and state separate in matters of conscience.

As a devout Christian, I stand for the continued separation of church and state.

*Petra Dotson*

**Petra Dotson**

**From:** Laurel Esselbach <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT on Separation of Church & State -- Laurel Esselbach

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:41:14 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Keep personal religious freedoms flourishing! As a person of deep Christian faith, I urge you to:

--NOT allow funding to religious organizations for ANY non-profit function including education, clubs.

-- KEEP the Johnson Amendment IN PLACE to continue restrictions for religious organizations to be involved in political campaigns or funding to function through/by/with any religious organization.

--To give NO special treatment/privileges to any other country for any reason, including the State of Israel.

--Implement the recommendations sent you by "Pillar of Freedom"

Early European immigrants to The Colonies fled from church-state unions. These unions were the very driving forces used to persecute, imprison and murder honest faith-filled people, including practicing Jews and The Protestant Reformers.

The Puritans effectively ran a church-state government. They give a contemptible example to follow, forcing people to behave according to their religion and belief system.

We need to maintain William Penn's philosophy, which has caused people and religious organizations -- as well as the entire country -- to flourish through personal freedom for 100s of years in the USA.

Thank you.

Laurel Esselbach

Graham, WA

**From:** Jamie Lamming <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Pillar of freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:41:34 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of freedoms comments, please implement them!

**From:** David Hinrichs <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State -David Hinrichs

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:41:49 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Thank you, David

**From:** Elizabeth Peterson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:42:54 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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 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 Maimonides, 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 IF 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,  
Kenneth and Elizabeth Peterson



**From:** Rachel Trent <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public comment - Separation of church and state - Rachel Tyler

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:44:38 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments with regards to the constitution being founded on a separation of church and state.

History has demonstrated when church and state are brought together there is dire oppression of the people.

**From:** DAVID MORIKONE <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:47:08 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.  
From a very concerned citizen

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**From:** Katherine Lewis <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comments - Recommendations to Religious Liberty Commission - Katherine Lewis

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:48:39 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*Dear Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Dr. Carson, and the members of the 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 Maimonides, 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 also agree with Pillar of Freedom's Statement submitted by Jonathan Zirkle, JD.*

We remain, Yours truly,

Katherine Lewis

[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=CMBiPifx-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:** Kathie Ludwig <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Kathie VC Ludwig

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:51:10 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty:

I am very concerned about what is happening in our country to undermine liberty of conscience. Jonathan Zirkle, JD, President of Pillar of Freedom, has written a trustworthy set of Comments to your Draft Report. Alexander Bowen of Heritage and Hope Ministries has also published an informed response to your Report on the video "Establishment of the Religious Liberty Commission." I strongly urge you to implement their recommendations.

Respectfully,

Kathie VC Ludwig

**From:** Cheryl Swanson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Response to the recommendations of the Commission on Religious Liberty

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:54:35 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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July, 12, 2026

**Subject:** PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Cheryl J. Swanson

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission: I am a citizen of the United States of America and I am a Christian. I am asking you to reconsider the recommendations you made in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state. We do not need a bridge; we need a wall between church and state.

The reason many of our ancestors fled Europe and came to the United States of America was because of the religious persecution they were experiencing in their home countries. This was due to religion being control by the state/church. Here in drafting our constitution the founders thoughtfully set up the wall between church and state, which has for the most part given us the religious freedoms we enjoy today.

I believe the recommendations you have made – especially using government money to fund religious activities and the recommendations which would repeal the Johnson Amendment would become a big step in overriding a person's religious rights.

For this reason I believe the Johnson Amendment is important to keep in place with no bill or added statement which could alter its current reach. In other words I request the ***Johnson Amendment*** be fully enforced.

When churches take government money it blurs the lines of actual control. I have an example from the educational field. I am a religious person, and I have directed a program in a university and have seen in the educational realm, how accepting government money has bound our educational institutions to ideas and platforms which I do not agree with but which they are required to follow because of the money they have directly or indirectly received from the government.

When churches take government money they becomes involved in partisan politics, and all the corruption and competition that comes along with it is almost impossible to avoid.

When my great grandparents were alive and blue laws were being pushed there WAS persecution in this country as a result of individuals claiming their religious rights. That is not the case right now but if this recommendation is accepted, we could quickly see a resurgence of individuals in government, commerce etc. controlling and over-ruling the religious rights of individuals, who sincerely hold beliefs differing from the controlling bodies.

I also do not agree with the recommendations supporting special treatment for the Jews or Israel, over any other religious body, country or organization. All peoples should be treated equally and fairly.

Sincerely,

Cheryl J. Swanson



**From:** Sharon Munroe <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State - Sharon 'Roe

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 17:55:37 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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## Pillar of Freedom

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

7/12/2026

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

I am writing to support the wall of separation of church and state as this guarantees the framework for freedom of religion. As a student of history and bible prophecy, I have learned that when the state and religion come together/ it has always been not only oppression, pressure but also persecution.

Our Heavenly Father does not require force to serve Him. Our Heavenly Father does not require the civil power to be in control of His people/the church, nor does He require the Church to be in control of the state/civil power. Our Heavenly Father is God all by Himself. and always will be regardless of human laws and policies.

We can only have and enjoy full freedom , both religious and civil when there is complete separation of church and state.

Sincerely,  
Sharon 'Roe  
Maryland

**From:** nina roberts <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:00:43 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Sirs;

The Establishment Clause defined is the first of 16 words in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." It serves as the constitutional boundary for church and state, prohibiting the federal government from creating a national religion or favoring one religion over another.

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'm 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 citizen and student of history, and as a Christian, I'm 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, it seems 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. I 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.

It seems that the Committee may have 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 Maimonides, 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] 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. The Department of Justice, in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state, should 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 all should be 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.”

Based on the above, and all due respect to the committee, I request 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.

Yours truly,

Nina Roberts

[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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** Julie Shurley <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:14:46 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Commission presented to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. [1] I have long believed that one of America's greatest blessings has been its commitment to protecting both the free exercise of religion and the liberty of conscience. It is because I value both of these freedoms so deeply that I feel compelled to submit these comments. I appreciate the considerable time and effort invested by the Commission in preparing its report, and I recognize that several of its recommendations address important concerns. However, I must express my serious reservations regarding Recommendations 1 and 9, as well as what appears to be an inadequate consideration of the historical and constitutional reasons the Founders insisted upon maintaining a clear separation between the institutions of church and state.

Recommendation 1 urges the Department of Justice to issue guidance on what it describes as the "proper understanding" of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state. On the day the report was released, however, Commission Chair Dan Patrick publicly asserted that the separation of church and state "is not in the Constitution" and that the phrase itself "has no constitutional basis." [2]

As both a Christian and a student of American history, I find these statements deeply concerning. If the Commission's understanding of the Establishment Clause reflects the public position expressed by its Chair, then I believe its proposed guidance rests upon a flawed interpretation of our constitutional heritage. Such guidance would not clarify the Establishment Clause but risk obscuring the very principles it was designed to protect.

The historical record speaks clearly. James Madison—widely recognized as the "Father of the Constitution" and the principal architect of the First Amendment's religion clauses—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." [3]

Madison's words leave little doubt that he believed the Constitution itself established a meaningful separation between religion and civil government. Given his central role in drafting the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, his understanding deserves substantial weight. It is difficult to imagine a more authoritative interpreter of the Establishment Clause than the man principally responsible for its creation.

The Founders did not adopt these principles in a historical vacuum. They were well acquainted with the consequences of religious establishments. Many had witnessed, or were intimately familiar with, the persecution of Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and other religious minorities throughout the American colonies. They knew of imprisonments, public whippings, ear croppings, banishments, and even executions carried out by governments acting in concert with established churches. Their commitment to religious liberty was born not merely from political philosophy but from painful historical experience.

The lessons of history extend well beyond the American colonies. Throughout Europe, countless men and women suffered persecution because religious and civil authority were united in the same hands. One of the most notable examples is William Tyndale, whose translation of the Bible into English helped transform the English-speaking world. Today many take for granted the ability to read Scripture in their own language, yet Tyndale paid for that conviction with his life.

Tyndale was not condemned by secular authorities hostile to religion. Rather, he was pursued by a system in which ecclesiastical and civil power worked together to suppress religious dissent and control access to Scripture. The same union of church and state that restricted the translation and distribution of the Bible forced him into exile and ultimately brought about his execution. His story stands as a sobering reminder of the dangers that arise when government is enlisted to enforce religious authority.

For this reason, I respectfully urge the Department of Justice to carefully consider the historical experiences that led many early Americans to embrace religious liberty and reject religious establishments. William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, endured repeated imprisonment in England because of his religious convictions. The colony he later established became a refuge for those seeking freedom of conscience and protection from religious coercion. The significance of Penn's legacy lies in the fact that those from whom people sought refuge were often not opponents of religion, but rather those who wielded religious authority through the power of the state.

The same lesson can be seen in the experience of Roger Williams, founder of Rhode Island. Williams argued that civil government had no authority to compel matters of conscience or enforce the first table of the Ten Commandments. For expressing such views, he faced persecution and banishment. Yet the principles he championed would later become foundational to the American understanding of religious liberty.

Likewise, the Department should not overlook the story of Obadiah Holmes, the five-times great-grandfather of President Abraham Lincoln. Holmes was publicly whipped in Massachusetts for the offense of religious dissent. His punishment was not administered by atheists or opponents of religion, but by those who believed that religious conformity should be enforced through civil authority. His suffering remains a powerful illustration of what can occur when government assumes jurisdiction over matters of faith.

These examples are not isolated incidents. They form part of a larger historical pattern that profoundly influenced the Founding generation. The separation of church and state was not adopted because Americans were hostile to religion. Rather, it was embraced because too many had witnessed the consequences of granting religious institutions civil power or allowing government to dictate matters of conscience. Any public guidance concerning the Establishment Clause should take these historical realities into full account.

I am also concerned that the Committee's report gives insufficient attention to the relationship between the separation of church and state and the other freedoms protected by the First Amendment. Religious liberty does not stand alone. The freedoms of speech, the press, conscience, and open inquiry have flourished in America because civil government has not been permitted to enforce religious orthodoxy.

History demonstrates what occurs when those protections are absent. For centuries, the Roman Catholic Church maintained the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, a list of books deemed forbidden. Works placed on the Index were subject to confiscation, and those who possessed or circulated them could face severe penalties. This was not merely censorship by a religious institution; it was censorship enforced through the cooperation of ecclesiastical and civil authority.

Many of history's greatest thinkers experienced the consequences of this system. Figures such as Galileo, Johannes Kepler, John Milton, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Moses Maimonides, John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham, David Hume, Edward Gibbon, and countless others encountered suppression, condemnation, or restrictions because prevailing religious authorities exercised influence through civil power. While their circumstances differed, together they illustrate a recurring pattern: when government becomes the instrument of religious authority, intellectual freedom and freedom of conscience inevitably suffer.

For this reason, I respectfully encourage the Department of Justice to consider not only the historical record but also the continuing importance of protecting free expression from religious or ideological coercion. Calls by contemporary religious leaders for greater regulation of speech or increased censorship on the internet should be evaluated with the lessons of history firmly in mind. Throughout history, restrictions on speech have frequently been defended as necessary to suppress dangerous error or misinformation. The arguments may change from one generation to another, but the temptation to silence dissent through governmental power remains remarkably consistent.



Nor was the misuse of civil authority limited to one religious tradition. The tragic execution of Michael Servetus in Geneva under the influence of John Calvin demonstrates that Protestants, no less than Catholics, were capable of employing the machinery of the state to suppress theological disagreement. Servetus was executed because religious and civil authority had become intertwined. His death serves as another reminder that whenever government is empowered to determine matters of religious truth, both liberty and justice are placed in jeopardy.

These episodes are not recounted to condemn one denomination or another, but to emphasize a principle that history repeatedly confirms: whenever church and state become united, both institutions are corrupted. Religion loses its voluntary character, government exceeds its proper authority, and individual liberty is diminished. Those are precisely the dangers the Founders sought to prevent through the protections embodied in the First Amendment.

Given this history, I respectfully ask how the Department of Justice can hope to provide authoritative guidance regarding the "proper understanding" of the Establishment Clause if that guidance is informed by a report that gives so little attention to the historical reasons the Establishment Clause exists. The principle of separating church and state did not arise from hostility toward religion. It arose from centuries of experience demonstrating the danger of permitting civil government to exercise authority over matters of faith or allowing religious institutions to wield the power of the state.

Much of the public discussion surrounding this issue focuses on Thomas Jefferson's famous reference to a "wall of separation between Church & State" in his 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptist Association. Too often, however, only the phrase itself is remembered while the surrounding context is overlooked.

Jefferson did not describe the wall of separation as his own novel political theory. Rather, he understood it to be the constitutional effect of the First Amendment. In his letter he 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." [4]

Jefferson's point deserves careful consideration. He did not argue that religion should be excluded from public life, nor did he suggest that faith should have no influence upon the moral convictions of citizens. Instead, he affirmed that matters of worship and conscience belong ultimately between the individual and God, while the authority of civil government extends to actions within its legitimate jurisdiction—not to compelling religious belief or practice. It was this constitutional principle that he believed had erected the "wall of separation."

James Madison expressed the same concern in equally compelling terms. In his *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*, he warned:

"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." [5]

Madison's warning remains remarkably relevant. He understood that liberty is rarely lost all at once. Rather, it is often diminished incrementally as well-intentioned exceptions gradually become accepted precedents. His counsel was not to wait until religious liberty had been substantially eroded, but to guard the principle from its earliest encroachments.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Department of Justice to approach Recommendation 1 with great caution. Any official guidance concerning the Establishment Clause should be firmly grounded in the historical understanding of those who framed the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and in the hard lessons of history that led them to protect both religion and government from the corrupting influence of their union.

Finally, I respectfully object to Recommendation 9, which calls for the repeal of the Johnson Amendment.

My concern is not rooted in a desire to silence religious voices in the public square. Christians, like all citizens, should be free to speak, advocate, and participate in public life according to their convictions. Rather, my concern is that removing this longstanding safeguard would further blur the distinction between the mission of the church and the role of the civil government—a distinction that has served both institutions well throughout our nation's history.

As a follower of Jesus Christ, I am mindful of His instruction to "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). In these words, Christ articulated a principle that has profoundly shaped the Christian understanding of the proper relationship between religious and civil authority. Government has legitimate responsibilities, and so does the church. When each remains within its proper sphere, both are strengthened. When either seeks to dominate the other, both are diminished.

James Madison recognized this truth when he observed:

"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." [6]

History has repeatedly vindicated Madison's observation. Churches are at their strongest when their influence is earned through conviction rather than political privilege. Likewise, government best protects the liberty of all citizens when it neither favors nor depends upon religious institutions for political support.

If the Johnson Amendment were repealed, the temptation would inevitably grow for religious organizations to become increasingly identified with political parties and candidates. Some religious leaders would feel pressure to exchange institutional influence, endorsements, or congregational loyalty for legislative or political favors. Politicians, in turn, would naturally seek to cultivate ecclesiastical endorsements in pursuit of electoral success. Such a relationship would not strengthen either institution; it would invite the very entanglement the Founders sought to prevent.

John Adams recognized this danger long before he became the nation's second President. In his *Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law*, he warned against systems that combined religious and civil authority. [7] James Madison likewise concluded from history that "In the Papal System, Government and Religion are in a manner consolidated, & that is found to be the worst of Governments." These observations were not expressions of hostility toward religion. They reflected an understanding, forged through centuries of historical experience, that liberty suffers whenever ecclesiastical and civil power become united.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Department of Justice not to adopt Recommendations 1 and 9 as presently proposed.

Instead, I strongly support the Commission's recommendation that the Department convene a public hearing, with opportunities for both written and oral testimony, to conduct a more comprehensive examination of the history of religious liberty, the Establishment Clause, and the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state. Such a study would allow historians, constitutional scholars, religious leaders, and members of the public to contribute meaningfully to a subject of enduring national importance.

Thank you for considering these comments. I offer them with sincere respect for the Commission's work and with a deep conviction that preserving both religious liberty and the proper separation of church and state remains essential to protecting the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie & Harry Shurley

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- [1] <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/president-trumps-religious-liberty-commission-delivers-historic-report-draft>
- [2] <https://www.chron.com/politics/article/dan-patrick-church-state-constitution-viral-22323383.php>
- [3] <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.
- [4] James Madison, *Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments*
- [5] James Madison, Letter to Robert Walsh, March 2, 1819.
- [6] James Madison, *Detached Memoranda*, ca. 1817–1832, *Founders Online*, National Archives.
- [7] John Adams, *Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law*, 1765. <https://www.masshist.org/publications/adams-papers/index.php/view/PJA01dg2>

**From:** Taya Gyorkey <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Taya Gyorkey

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:15:32 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing to note my deep concern for the recommendations in your report that will break down the wall of separation between church and state.

“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

Thank you so much for your consideration of this serious matter,

Taya Gyorkey

Cookeville, Tennessee

**From:** Melinda Caton <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – [SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE] –  
[MELINDA HARRIS]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:16:30 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To Whom It May Concern,

Law is defined as a rule of action. Civil law represents the supreme power of the State, regulating the actions of men, and restricting them from doing wrong under penalty of punishment. The good of society and the safety of man require that the law be respected. All enlightened law in this country was founded on the law of Jehovah (Ten commandments), given on Mount Sinai. America has flourished as a free nation since it was founded by legislating **only** the principles of the second table (Commandments 5-10; **man's duty to man**) and leaving man free to worship (Commandments 1-4) according to the dictates of his conscience.

Being the principles of the first table (Commandments 1-4; **man's duty to God**) were never legislated in this country and must never be legislated by civil law; as doing so would remove individual freedom of conscience to worship God freely and strikes directly against our U. S. Constitution, and as history testifies, will ultimately lead to religious persecution.

The principles of God's law must be kept before the people as everlasting and inexorable as the character of God himself but each individual must be free to worship God freely.

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; therefore, I do not agree with uniting church and state; they must remain separate. (please see The Great Controversy for Biblical prophecy regarding this most important subject- <https://iwillstanduponmywatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/GC1911.pdf> )

I also object to the repealing of the Johnson Amendment, which restricts the church's political activities and believe that the Johnson Amendment should be fully enforced.

I also object to funding religious non-profit activities and funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses.

Let's not tear down the wall of separation, but continue to respect individual freedom of choice as did our forefathers.

Sincerely,

Melinda Harris

"Force is the last resort of every false religion."

[IWillStandUponMyWatch.com](https://iwillstanduponmywatch.com)

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**Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the sabbath day\***, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 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: 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. *[This is God speaking the 4th Commandment of the 10 Commandments (Ex 20:1-17), \* known today as SATURDAY]*

**John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.** *[This is Jesus speaking]*

**Rev 22:14 Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.**

**From:** Sharlene <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:18:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Hello,

As a Christian, and as a citizen of these USA. I agree with the comments in Pillar of, Freedom's recent letter to you. Please implement them and thus uphold our God-given inalienable right to freedom of conscience.

Sincerely

Sharlene Olivier

**From:** Dawn Johnson <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** [REDACTED] PII

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Recommendations of religious liberty commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:18:34 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

*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 Maimonides, 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]

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*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.*

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*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,*

*Bill and Dawn Johnson*

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[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].

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[4] <https://reclaimthenet.org/pope-francis-calls-on-social-media-platforms-to-censor-more-misinformation;>

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[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:** Helen Hibbing <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comment Re: Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:19:45 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,

Helen Hibbing

**From:** Melissa Johnson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:19:49 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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.

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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.

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We remain, Yours truly,

[THE UNDERSIGNED]

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

**From:** breanna denny <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment Separation of Church and State Breanna Denny

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:25:49 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of Religious Liberty Comission,

I am a Seventh Day Advenitist Christian who keeps the Bible Sabbath of the Seventh Day (Saturday). I do not support the combining of church and state and agree with the ideas put forth by Pillar of Freedom. I ask for their comments to be both considered and implemented. Keeping church and state separated, allows for the ability to worship freely without the influence of governmental control, leading to possible corruption of the church. God has blessed us to have this Freedom that we may worship Him without restriction, limitations, or a dictator. Please do not allow that freedom to be taken away from us as it has been our God given gift of free will to worship as we choose.

God Does Not Force The Will, Neither Should We !

Sincerely,  
Breanna Denny



**From:** Collette Rhoads <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment Re:The Draft Report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:28:54 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am a Christian and I do not agree with the Commission's effort to weaken and dismantle the separation of church and state. The Commission is incorrect in its understanding of history. The Pillar of Freedom's response to the Commission's Draft Report on Religious Liberty has addressed and corrected the erroneous information contained in the report. I totally agree with the Pillar of Freedom's response.

It is not appropriate for government to fund religious non-profit activities.

It is not appropriate for government to fund religious education and religious clubs on private campuses.

I do not want the Johnson Amendment to be repealed.

I am requesting that the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced.

I do not agree with the special treatment given to Jewish people and the state of Israel. There should be complete neutrality in the government's relationship with religion.

I believe God providentially prepared the United States to serve as a secure haven of religious and civil liberty...freedom from the political and religious persecution of the Old World. I want to see this country, the United States of America, remain a land of freedom...freedom to worship according to the dictates of conscience and not be ruled by political or religiously influenced laws and regulations.

Church and state must remain separate.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Commission'sR Draft Report On Religious Liberty.

Collette Rhoads  
Sacramento, CA  
USA

Sent from my iPad

**From:** KELLY KINSELY <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comments to Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:30:15 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

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.*

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*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 the religious establishment. 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.*

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*We remain, Yours truly,*

*Kelly A. Kinsley, M.D.*

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[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:** "MOMCOM Mind Over Matter& Christ Over Mind" <[REDACTED]>

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public comment Separation of Church and State Milton Weathers

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:30:18 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of Religious Liberty Commission, please reconsider removing the "wall" between church and state. I agree with the ideas put forth by Pillar of Freedom and i ask for their comments to be implemented. I do believe that history repeats itself and in other nations in the past who united government with religion, persecution of minority religious groups were inevitable. If any religious body has the power and authority of the government behind it, they can start forcing their beliefs and doctrines on other religious groups that do not believe alike. In History Rome literally killed thousands of people who did not agree with their doctrines. Rome was able to do this because church and state were united. There was a time when even kings obeyed religious leaders such as the Bishop of Rome. The church at that time used the government authority to imprison and even kill those who did not comply. Egypt and Babylon were also nations who united church and state and attempted to force the consciences of the people in a similar way as Rome did. America is blessed because our founding fathers understood that for a nation to be ruled under God, church and state had to be separate. Even God does not force any man to do His bidding but He operates from the service of pure love. If church and state are united or even a "bridge" is formed between the two, eventually the people of God will serve God out of government mandate and not out of Love which is the only motive acceptable to God. John 16:2 shows us that we may think we are doing God's service even though we may actually not be. I know that America needs Jesus. We need people of genuine faith and love but this is not something we can control by legislation. We must study prophecy and all of God's Holy Word and make sure we are not found on the wrong side of the matter. We don't want to be fighting against God like Saul in Acts 9:5. Sincere In heart but sincerely wrong. We must trust God to save America and to turn the hearts of the children(we the people) back unto the Father( God) Luke 1:17. We cannot do the Work of the Holy Spirit. We must keep government money, state affairs and all things political separate from church, religion and all matters of faith. This is my prayer and my plea. I thank you all for an opportunity to speak freely. I thank God for this great country and the religious freedoms we have enjoyed these 250 years. I pray that God will give you all wisdom and discernment in these matters and all matters pertaining to righteousness for leading this great country, America. The world will follow us ( the U.S.). I pray this all in Jesus name!

Sincerely Milton Weathers

**From:** VIVIAN HERNANDEZ <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:31:51 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree 100% with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

Vivian Hernandez

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** L W <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:40:04 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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*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 Maimonides, 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,*

*Lee Welch*

- [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=pAUkMwIWYB8>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMBiPIfx-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:** "J. North" <[REDACTED]>

**To:** "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Separation of Church and State (J. North)

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:42:34 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (Matthew 22:21)

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I appreciate the Commission's stated commitment to protecting religious liberty and the free exercise of faith. Religious freedom is a foundational American principle and a core value cherished by so many Americans. Indeed, there have been many people worldwide who have historically championed liberty of conscience for all people—believers and nonbelievers alike. However, I respectfully disagree with several aspects of the Commission's 2026 report and its recommendations. The report was issued following hearings on religious liberty in education, healthcare, the military, parental rights, and faith-based institutions, and it recommends a range of federal actions intended to strengthen religious freedom protections.

As a Christian, my concerns do not arise from opposition to religion in public life, but rather from a conviction that genuine religious liberty depends upon maintaining a clear separation between church and state. History repeatedly demonstrates that when government becomes closely aligned with particular religious perspectives, minority faith groups often suffer unintended consequences. Those who lived through some of these traumatic experiences understand this lesson deeply far too well.

While I support protecting individuals from religious discrimination, I am concerned that portions of the report appear to blur the distinction between protecting religious exercise and promoting religion through government influence. Religious liberty is strongest when government neither favors nor disfavors any faith tradition. The role of government should be to safeguard freedom of conscience equally, again equally, for Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, atheists, and all others; not to elevate one religious viewpoint above another.

I am particularly sensitive to recommendations that could increase the entanglement of religious institutions with political power. The report recommends actions such as repealing the Johnson Amendment and expanding governmental mechanisms focused on religious advocacy. While these proposals are presented as protections for religious liberty, they could inadvertently or deliberately weaken the independence of religious organizations by drawing them further into partisan and political activity. The prophetic and moral voice of the church is strongest when it remains independent of state power.

I'm sure you all recognize that religious liberty includes the rights of minorities whose beliefs may differ from those of the majority. Any policy framework that primarily reflects the concerns of dominant religious groups must be carefully examined to ensure that it does not diminish protections for those with less political influence. True religious liberty is measured not by how well the majority is protected, but by how securely the rights of minorities are preserved.

Furthermore, many Christian organizations have long warned against governmental involvement in matters of worship and religious observance. A clear and concise understanding of Scriptures affirms that faith must always be a matter of personal conviction rather than legal or political pressure. Even well-intentioned efforts to encourage religious values can become problematic if they create conditions where conscience rights are compromised.

Recent events in the (United States, Nicaragua, China, and India [details below]) demonstrate that threats to religious liberty arise under very different political systems and ideologies. The common denominator is the expansion of governmental authority into matters of conscience. Scripture teaches that worship must always be voluntary (Joshua 24:15) and that ultimate allegiance belongs to God rather than the state (Acts 5:29 - see also Daniel 3, Matthew 22:21, and Revelation 13). History and current events alike demonstrate that whenever government acquires power to determine acceptable belief, worship, or religious practice, the liberties of minority faiths are eventually threatened. Consequently, any effort to strengthen religious liberty must avoid increasing governmental influence over religion or religious influence over government.

Therefore, while I commend the Commission's desire to address legitimate instances of religious discrimination, I urge policymakers to pursue solutions that reinforce constitutional protections for all citizens, preserve the separation of church and state, and safeguard the rights of religious minorities. Religious liberty flourishes not when government advances religion, but when government protects every individual's God-given freedom to believe, worship, or abstain according to conscience.

As a Christian walking hand in hand with many others inside and outside the United States, we remain committed to the principle expressed by religious liberty pioneers, "freedom of conscience and religious liberty for all people, regardless of their faith". Finally, I agree with "Pillar of Freedom's" comments and strongly urge you to please implement them.

Respectfully,  
J. North  
Baltimore, Maryland

FYI  
[Historical Examples of Problems Caused by Church-State Union](#)

1. The Edict of Thessalonica (A.D. 380) - Date: February 27, 380
2. Medieval Inquisition (Beginning A.D. 1184) - Date: 1184 (Pope Lucius III's decree Ad Abolendam)
3. The Execution of Michael Servetus - Date: October 27, 1553  
Servetus was executed in Geneva for theological beliefs considered heretical.
4. Puritan Massachusetts - Dates: 1630s–1690s
5. The Salem Witch Trials - Date: 1692

## More Recent Examples

### United States

#### 1. Religious Accommodation Conflicts in Schools (2024–2025)

- (<https://www.cathstan.org/us-world/supreme-court-terms-major-decisions-set-stage-for-more-on-religious-liberty>)
- ([https://religiousfreedominstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Cases-and-Trends-Implicating-Religious-Liberty-in-the-United-States\\_-\\_Submission-to-the-Religious-Liberty-Commission-FINAL.pdf](https://religiousfreedominstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Cases-and-Trends-Implicating-Religious-Liberty-in-the-United-States_-_Submission-to-the-Religious-Liberty-Commission-FINAL.pdf))

#### 2. Employment and Conscience Rights

- (<https://www.usccb.org/resources/2025-annual-report-state-religious-liberty-united-states>)

### Nicaragua

#### Ongoing Government Crackdown on Religious Communities (2018–Present)

- (<https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024%20Nicaragua%20Country%20Update.pdf>)
- (<https://www.uscifr.gov/news-room/releases-statements/uscifr-releases-new-report-religious-freedom-nicaragua>)[6]([https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/624521\\_NICARAGUA-2024-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/624521_NICARAGUA-2024-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf))

### China

#### Restrictions on Muslims, Christians, Tibetans, and Other Religious Groups

- (<https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/China%202025%20USCIRF%20Annual%20Report.pdf>)
- (<https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2025-09/2025%20Factsheet%20China%27s%20Persecution%20of%20Religious%20Leaders.pdf>)
- (<https://www.uygurnews.com/uscifr-report-2025-highlights-china-as-major-religious-freedom-violator/>)[8]()

### India

#### Anti-Conversion Laws and Religious Minorities (2024–2026)

- (<https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/India%202025%20USCIRF%20Annual%20Report.pdf>)
- (<https://eclj.org/religious-freedom/un/anti-conversion-laws-and-persecution-of-christians-in-india?lng=en>)

**From:** Diana Wildermuth <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PCRL Draft Report comment

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 18:48:21 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear members of the Religious Liberty Committee,

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution provides freedom of religion. It states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."

This is the law and principle that led to President Thomas Jefferson coining the phrase a "wall of separation between Church and State" in a letter he wrote on January 1, 1802 to the Danbury Baptist Association of Connecticut.

It has been highly deceptive for both legislators and church pastors to tell those that they are to protect and lead that the Constitution doesn't provide for the separation of Church and State just because that actual phrase isn't in the Constitution. The principle is.

Our founding fathers saw the inherent dangers of a government supported church and made provision for that not to happen in America. While government has the right and obligation to provide for protection of its citizens in issues pertaining to them such as physical harm and theft, the government has no business in legislating the faith and practice of the faith of a person. It is God's business to draw a person into a loving and obedient relationship, not government. It is a church void of the power of God's Spirit that needs a government to legislate its policies. Let the churches of America repent and seek the Lord while He may be found. Does the church need government to do its business of spreading the good news of our loving heavenly Father? God forbid. When the church is converted and the glory of the Lord emanates from it, the world will flock to them.

In summary, it is a faithless church that calls on civil government to do its work. I encourage you legislators to faithfully do the job you've been elected to do. Don't meddle in God's business. In addition, I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,  
Diana Wildermuth

**From:** Linde Zimmer <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Linde Zimmer

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:12:23 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear members of the Religious Liberty Committee,

I support keeping church and state completely separate! I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Thank you,  
Linde Zimmer

**From:** Rachel Smith <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State- Rachel Smith

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:12:37 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty,

I want to start by saying that I fully agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. I am a fellow Christian and believer in Religious Liberty. I agree with many of the aspects of what your committee stands for and believe there are many good things that can come out of fighting for christian morals and beliefs in a world where those are declining so rapidly. Thank you for seeking to do this.

However, I do not agree with creating a bridge between church and state in our country and in any country for that matter. Our ancestors came to this land seeking refuge from the persecution of the dark ages when they were murdered for reading scripture and implementing it according to their conscience. A right I feel every person in this world has the right to live by. The foundation of God's throne is His Law, The Ten Commandments. The foundation of The Ten Commandments is Love, for we know that God is Love and desires His followers to give their loyalty from a heart of love and not of force. Lastly, the foundation of Love is Freedom of Choice, as love that is forced is not actually love but fear or bondage.

I am especially objecting to our government funding religious non-profit activities and religious education or clubs on public campuses. There are many interpretations of the scriptures and I fear that only popular christian interpretations of the bible would be taught and shared, whether or not they are true. We know that just because the majority believe in something does not necessarily mean that it is the truth. Only 8 people were saved from the flood in Noah's day and the Jews misunderstood the work of their own Messiah, our Lord Jesus and crucified Him.

My prayer is that our country will not move forward down a path toward dictating what Freedom of Religion means. Each man is created equal and should have the freedom to worship according to his own conscience, whether that is Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, etc. I would love to see everyone turn to Jesus and accept His salvation because I believe, "He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life" but, I do not believe that can be done by force or coercion.

Thank you for your time. I pray blessings over each of you and your families.

With love,

Rachel Smith



**From:** Zachary Smith <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Church and State separation Zachary Smith

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:18:05 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I stand with Pillar of Freedom. We must retain the separation of church & State that we may not return to the Dark ages. Persecution is not the way to bring morality back to our beloved country. Uniting church and state will without a doubt divide the country that was founded on freedom, the freedom to choose. To choose whom they serve. God or Mammon.

Jesus never forced himself on anyone. He led the people to the water and let them decide if they would drink. I truly believe that God raised up this country not so that we could be the best in the world, but so His people could have the freedom to study His word and know Him for their selves. (This is Eternal Life, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you thou hast sent John 17:3 ). This commission is doing many good things that I can definitely stand behind and I really appreciate your hard work and dedication. I am praying for you all and Know that our almighty God will guide your decision and future works.

God Bless,

Zachary Smith

**From:** LaVee Hummel <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State- LaVee Hummel

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:20:38 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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.

In our Bill of Rights, Amendment 1: 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 peaceable to assemble, and to petition the Government for redress of grievances.

“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

Thank you,  
LaVee Hummel  
Roseburg, Oregon

**From:** Erik Hall <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – [Your Name]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:30:21 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Regarding religious liberty and the separation of the state and the church. I strongly support and approve of the concept

As an American it is a fundamental element of the nation and it's founding. As a Christian it is vital in the daily life. Government interference in religion in any form or fashion ultimately corrupts both. It is of extreme importance for the health of the nation religious institutions and organizations remain free of government interference. Any change to this dynamic alters the form any function of these institutions, perverting there purpose. Freedom must maintain. I stand in agreement with Pillars Of Freedom on this and the other issues raised in the report. Government funding should not be used in any way to fund any religious activities no matter how insignificant. Religious institutions must remain free from even the slightest hint of government oversight. As to the repeal of the Johnson Amendment I strongly object to this, and desire it to be fully enforced. While directing to the establishment clause of the first amendment to the US Constitution. Lastly, no religious group, Jewish or otherwise should be given any special treatment or consideration. Neither should the state of Israel be given such attention. An America without religious liberty is certainly not the same country. And would remove a cornerstone of the nations' ideals. For these institutions and the nation as a whole to prosper they must remain independent of each other. Interference would lead to catastrophe. The freedom and ability to practice my religious beliefs is something I hold very dear to my heart.

**From:** K\_miller <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State-Katherine Miller

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:31:21 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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July 12, 2026

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

My family and I are in agreement with the Pillar of Freedom response letter for Religious Freedom, Freedom of Conscience, and Separation of Church and State.

I am a person of faith. Religion is personal and should remain personal. Never should anyone be coerced into believing a certain way.

The beauty of America is founded on freedom of Religion. It is truly what makes this country beautiful. As the words ring out in the National Anthem, "...O'er the land of the free...", I shudder at the thought of church and state uniting, which will inevitably lead to coercion and force.

I urge you to reconsider. Thank you.

**From:** Guirlene Thomas <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:34:11 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I denial this decision. I do not agree with this decision.

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**From:** Cindy Peterson <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:36:05 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with pillar of freedom  
Cynthia Peterson

**From:** Yvonne Ramos <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment to the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report and my request for you not to repeal the Johnson Amendment and activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment. or using government money to fund religious activities.

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:37:44 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I have been blessed with the protections our constitution have afforded me because of the wall that separates church and state. I stand with Pillar Of Freedom's comments saving our protections of freedom and upholding the Johnson Amendment. Roger Williams, too, was America's earliest defender of separating church and state because of a desire to protect religious freedoms for everyone.

The wall of separation wasn't defended by secularists but by christians who came to the shores of America to escape governmental theocracy -where freedom of conscience is denied and replaced by the "common good" which our forefathers who fled to our shores to escape because millions of christians were murdered for their religious convictions.

So, I am requesting that you uphold the freedoms we have shared under the Johnson Amendment of our constitution where we read Congress not making no law respecting an establishment of religion, or the free exercise thereof. And, also, please repeal the governmental funding for political causes in worship groups that would open the door for churches to compete for funds and answering to politicians instead to to God. This would allow the religious majority to rule over minority religious groups, and that would not be fair to minority religious groups. Please protect our pulpits from this political manipulation that would open the door to government interference.

Already in our country our religious freedoms are denied when it comes to requesting the Sabbath of the fourth commandment off at work because the tradition of the majority honor the First day of the week - Sunday-which violates the free exercise thereof for Seventh-day adventists, where Sabbath keepers were fired or prevented from being hired. Since, historically our religious liberty is a defining principle that sets America separate from other countries I view this freedom of conscious as a core value of the protections established in our Constitution.

Sincerely,

Lee Raymos  
Chicago, Illinois

**From:** Dave Allemand <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State - Dave Allemand

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:42:42 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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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.

And in the case of Carrie Prejean being removed from the commission after the February 2026 hearing on antisemitism proves the need for separation of church and state. The report is full of rhetoric calling for the protection of religious expression in the workplace or in government activities, but when the very Commission calling for more religious expression in the government finds the expression of one of its own members objectionable, it takes swift action against the offending member. This illustrates how uniting church and state inevitably leads to the state being forced to decide religious doctrine.

Sincerely,  
Dave Allemand  
Georgetown, TN.



**From:** Susan Chacon <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] I agree with Pillar of Freedom's Comments

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:42:51 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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I agree with Pillar of Freedom's Comments. Please implement them.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Josiah <[REDACTED] PII >

**To:** "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agree with Pillars of Freedom's Comments

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:43:03 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear members of the Religious Liberty Committee,

As a citizen of the United States of America and a student of church history, I am writing to express my concerns with your recent statements on the wall of separation of church and state being replaced with a bridge, as well as my concerns with using government money for non-profit religious activities. History repeatedly shows that when churches become closely aligned with state power, the rights of religious dissenters are often diminished, leading to their persecution.

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Thank you,

**From:** Michael Cole <[REDACTED] PII >

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

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report - Michael Cole

**Date:** Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:51:52 -0400

**Importance:** Normal

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

My ancestors came to this continent in 1620/21 on the Mayflower where they were not allowed to have a copy of the King James Bible on the ship; they had to have with them the Geneva Bible because "King James had been the one to "authorize" the new bible of 1611. The first settlers of the Plymouth Colony brought with them their own faults and methods of persecution as they were fleeing from the persecutions of Church and Kings in Europe. In the early days, if someone failed to attend church on "Sunday" they were put in the stocks for punishment, ostracized and many other forms of punishment. BUT, they managed to work all that out through the efforts of people like Roger Williams. By the time the colonists were framing the constitution, what they wrote was the separation of church and state "in principle." It really is possible to live a life with Christian "principals" without there being a law that forces you to worship in any particular way. NO ONE has the right to tell a person who, what, or how how they should worship. The bible tells us God created man with the RIGHT to choose. It is for that reason the framers of the constitution said, IN THE CONSTITUTION, that the government will pass NO LAWS governing religion. The first four of the ten commandments provide our right to worship who, what, where, and when we worship. It really isn't ANYONE else's business. The other six commandments provide for our relationship with others. It is that portion of the law the government has a right to legislate because it deals with how we interact with others. Those others have their rights and it is not up to anyone to infringe on the rights of others. If I want to kneel down and say a prayer, that is my business. If I want to stop someone else from kneeling down, I don't have that right and should be stopped because that other person has the same right as I do. The government does NOT have the right to stop either one of us from kneeling down but the do have the right to prevent me from interfering with anyone else. In the realm of robbery, murder, and all the other issues dealing with interaction with others, the government needs to legislate laws governing that interaction. Just because the word "separation of church and state" are not in the constitution, the "principal" is there and as Pillar of Freedom pointed out, many, many presidents recognized that. Look at history, I don't know of any church led government that didn't persecute it's people and leave them in poverty.

Another issue is the use of tax dollars for religious schools. I believe it would be far better to use our tax dollars to actually improve our public schools so they actually educate our kids instead of indoctrinating them and leaving them useless and unable to contribute to society. Religious schools should be funded by the denomination they teach. I can see a tax deduction allowance but I do not believe tax dollars should fund them.

The Johnson Amendment should be FULLY enforced. As Pillar of Freedom pointed out, the removal of this amendment would make political activism rampant in many of our churches but making the political funding tax deductible. This is exactly what the amendment was intended to prevent.

In closing I want to stress that the loss of the the "principal" of separation of church and state will lead to laws preventing people from choosing who, when, where, and what to worship and put the "government" in a position where they can dictate that people worship on Sunday. Sunday IS NOT the biblical Sabbath and any careful study of the bible will always prove this. The DICTATE of Sunday observance WILL force people who keep the seventh day Sabbath from worshipping on GOD's appointed day. THIS is exactly what the framers of our constitution intended to prevent.

How about the government find for ALL the people and not just those with their own agenda, Remember, IF the government "dictates" a day of rest, it just becomes a "Christian Dictatorship."