From: Antonio Monteiro <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:52:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

In Europe, the persecution of the martyrs is well documented. Today we take the Bible for granted but forget that William Tyndale was executed for translating the Bible into the English language, not

by atheists but by religious bigots. It was a union of church and state that suppressed speech and the freedom of the press in England. It was a union of church and state that prohibited the work of translation of the Bible, which changed the world. It was a union of church and state that necessitated his flight to Europe. It was a union of church and state that killed him.

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

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

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

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

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

The reference to the wall of separation between church and state is not only mentioned by President Thomas Jefferson in the letter to the Danbury Baptists, which, of course, it is. [6] What is often left

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Antonio Monteiro

[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

Sent from my iPhone

From: Peggy Otterstrom <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:56:42 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Long before 1776, people came to these shores to escape religious persecution. The countries they came from had state-sponsered churches and as a result the persecution was very hard. Unfortunately, the same persecution was brought here.
We already have religious freedom in the United States of America. Why then, is this movement so strong and in favor of only one group? I beg you all to think very carefully about the path you are contemplating following. We see all throughout history the terrible results of churches running the governments of the world and the incredible persecution which is the inevitable outcome of this sort of arrangement. The churches in this country have always had the freedom to make their own rules and dogmas.

Thank you all for the opportunity to express my views and concern.

Peggy Otterstrom

PegE

From: Allen Snarr <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 19:57:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Lillian V. Snarr

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was very upset to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, that is exactly counter to my beliefs — 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.

Lillian V. Snarr,

Canyonville, Oregon

From: Sandra <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:02:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

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]

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 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.

The Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of John Milton and Maimonedes, 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.

We 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 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 have neglected to 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?

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." [5] 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, and politicians, are to be kept separate in the American system of politics, as the Constitution requires.

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 in the form of legislation provide the religionists desire. This is corruption that has been documented for centuries. We request they thoroughly study the effects of the union of church and state in world history, including that of the United States.

John Adams, second president of the United States wrote, 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. [6]

We 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 support.

Yours truly,

S.S. Bishop Family

[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] Matthew 22:21
[6] https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.htm

From: Pamela Shurtliff <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:05:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission ,

I request you protect religious liberty for everyone . Please keep the wall of separation between church and state. I agree with Pillar of Freedoms comments. Please implement them.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Lynn Stevens <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment- Recommendations of religious liberty commission (Separation of Church and State) – Lynn Stevens
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:07:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

I respectfully request that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee. I request that the Committee 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.

Personally as a christian, I am grateful for the religious freedom this country brings to all citizens of all faiths/beliefs (**by NOT legislating the first 4 commandments** of man's duty to God), while yet the civil law protects citizens from harm/danger from others (**BY legislating the last 6 commandments** of man's duty to mankind). I have read many stories of what has happened in other countries when the government tries to regulate by law the first 4 commandments, and it always leads to religious persecution instead of religious freedom.

Let us keep America great and the land of the free!

Sincerely from a loyal USA citizen,
Lynn Stevens
Wilburton, OK

From: "Steven D. Hokett" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:13:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Steven D. Hokett, DDS, MCR
[redacted]

From: Dennis <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:16:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”
God has blessed our country because we have no Kings or Popes telling us what to believe or how to worship or what "day" to worship on.
Sincerely; Dennis

From: Dawn Moffit <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Vote
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:17:51 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Department of Justice,

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

Sincerely,
Dawn Moffit

From: Steven & Sheree Huckabaa <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Cc: Steven & Sheree Huckabaa <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on Separation of Church and State and Others
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:18:57 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Rresponse_to_The_Presidential_Commission_for_Religious_Liberty_draft_report.docx

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I am writing in response to The Presidential Commission for Religious Liberty draft report. Specifically, in it, there is the strongest suggestion that separation of church and state is un-American and unconstitutional. I wholeheartedly disagree. Its principle is a foundational pillar of this country from its beginning and until today in protecting rights of the people, specifically the minority.

The three-page summary to President Trump contains many egregious examples of threats to religious liberty and its believers as well as its natural broadening to all persons of faith and non-faith. We live in a country privileged for the freedom of expression, of religion, of the press, and a host of other vital unalienable rights which are afforded to all. This is not just a concept or yearning but a belief rooted in our founding documents and abided by the good citizens of this great country for more than 250 years.

As a retired member of the United States Air Force and a faithful believer in that all rights are granted to us from our Creator. I take this opportunity to provide a response to many parts of the aforementioned draft report.

Kindly find below and in attached responses as appropriate,.

1. I am for retaining the true spirit of our religious liberties as protected by the First Amendment. It is true “separation of church and state” is not found in the U.S. Constitution. However, the history of our blessed country attests to adherence to its God-given principle for which a rich blessing from God has poured out upon all people of this great country. An effort allowing the mingling of church-craft and state-craft will most assuredly, as long-established by past world history and the early formation of this country, result in repression of rights, liberties and pursuit of happiness of the minority by the majority. We find the act of separation as a dutiful observance by our Lord when He says, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s, and unto God the things which be God’s.” (Luke 20:20) In this statement we find the religious leaders, seemingly well intended, as the pursuers of impiety and malice. An attempt to amalgamate “church” and “state” which have been commonly and distinctly separate in this country, for reason beyond faith and duty, will so blur the lines of church-craft and state-craft that future history will prove it a colossal mistake with no return. In closing for this response, separation of church and state is not just an unassailable constitutional principle that embodies the faithful spirit of this nation and its citizens but the self-same spirit of its necessity is rooted in the honest act extending “Liberty of Conscience” to all persons (the religious, non-religious and foreigners).

2. A repeal of the Johnson Amendment will no longer protect houses and places of worship from the inevitable partisan politicking and will unavoidably lead to disregarding our Lord’s admonition when He said, “It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.” (Matt. 21:13) Politics and money changing in a place of worship are contrary to the spirit of Scripture. The act of “buying and selling” of campaigns is a public affair and should remain in the public arena.

3. Public taxes should be used to fund public schools or single parent-lead home schools and not private schools. This includes church schools.

4. Public schools should be forums only for preparing students for adult life in a world of conflicting agendas and not for pushing doctrines of faith, like compelling the posting of the Ten Commandments or pushing official prayer regardless of the faith. These types of religious activities are part of a benefit for attending a private school and home school

.

5. Institutions receiving public funds should not be allowed to discriminate against individuals but instead should treat all people fairly and equally, including the right-to-work states. If current law does not afford discriminatory protection for all people it becomes incumbent upon Congress to pursue changes to law protecting rights of all, both citizens and foreigners.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond.

Steven W. Huckabaa

PII

July 12, 2026

U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

RE: Public Comment on Separation of Church and State and Other

To: United States Department of Justice
Honorable Religious Liberty Commission Members

I am writing in response to The Presidential Commission for Religious Liberty draft report. Specifically, in it, there is the strongest suggestion that separation of church and state is un-American and unconstitutional. I wholeheartedly disagree. Its principle is a foundational pillar of this country from its beginning and until today in protecting the people, specifically the minority.

The three-page summary provided to President Trump contains many egregious examples of threats to religious liberty and its believers as well as its natural broadening to all persons of faith and non-faith. We live in a country privileged for the freedom of expression, of religion, of the press, and a host of other vital unalienable rights which are afforded to all. This is not just a concept or yearning but a belief rooted in our founding documents and abided by the good citizens of this great country for more than 250 years.

As a retired member of the United States Air Force and a faithful believer in that all rights are granted to us from our Creator, I take this opportunity to provide a response to many parts of the aforementioned draft report.

Kindly find below responses as appropriate:

1. I am for retaining the true spirit of our religious liberties as protected by the First Amendment. It is true "separation of church and state" is not found in the U.S. Constitution. However, the history of our blessed country attests to adherence to its God-given principle for which a rich blessing from God has poured out upon all people of this great country. An effort allowing the mingling of church-craft and state-craft will most assuredly, as long-established by past world history and the early formation of this country, result in repression of rights, liberties and pursuit of happiness of the minority by the majority. We find the act of separation as a dutiful observance by our Lord when He says, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's." (Luke 20:20) In this statement we find the religious leaders, seemingly well intended, as the pursuers of impiety and malice. An attempt to amalgamate "church" and "state" which have been commonly and distinctly separate in this country, for reason beyond faith and duty, will so blur the lines of church-craft and state-craft that future history will prove it a colossal mistake with no return. In closing for this response, separation of church and state is not just an unassailable constitutional principle that embodies the faithful spirit of this nation and its citizens but the self-same spirit of its necessity

is rooted in the honest act extending “Liberty of Conscience” to all persons (the religious, non-religious and foreigners).

2. A repeal of the Johnson Amendment will no longer protect houses and places of worship from the inevitable partisan politicking and will unavoidably lead to disregarding our Lord’s admonition when He said, “It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.” (Matt. 21:13) Politics and money changing in a place of worship are contrary to the spirit of Scripture. The act of “buying and selling” of campaigns is a public affair and should remain in the public arena.

3. Public taxes should be used to fund public schools or single parent-lead home schools and not private schools. This includes church schools.

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5. Institutions receiving public funds should not be allowed to discriminate against individuals but instead should treat all people fairly and equally, including the right-to-work states. If current law does not afford discriminatory protection for all people it becomes incumbent upon Congress to pursue changes to law protecting rights of all, both citizens and foreigners.

Thank you for this opportunity to respond.

Steven W. Huckabaa

PII

From: Lisa Gordon <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Pillar of Freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:19:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern,

My name is Lisa N. Gordon. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. Thank you.

From: cj hassell <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:21:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Ashlynn Burks <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:25:40 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

We agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments,

Please implement them.

Thankyou,

Brandon and April Burks

From: Robert Ruskamp <[redacted]>
To: Religious Liberty Commission <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Robert Ruskamp
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:25:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

Religious Liberty Commission members, -
I am profoundly disappointed in the Religious Liberty Commission draft report. The report is totally biased toward questionable measures to protect the rights of believers with practically no attention to equal rights for non-believers.
Much of what is given in the report as justification for injecting religion into public life is based on what amounts to fluff. The general attitude seems to be: If it makes me feel good, then I have the right to impose it on anyone else.
The report is totally biased to favor religion over non-religion, despite the fact that almost 30% of all Americans have no religious affiliation, or desire any. The report does give some mention to non-Christian religions, but not to non-believers.
The report also promotes the false idea that it is not possible to have morals unless one has religion. This is simply not the case. There are very many people (including myself) who live perfectly normal and responsible lives without any religious affiliation.
The idea that religion, specifically Christianity, should be promoted as a national tradition is also misleading. It would be as though it were to be made mandatory in classrooms for students to recite baseball scores or gridiron (i.e. American) football results, whether they have any interest in these activities or not.
As to persecution for practicing religion in public, the report makes no mention of the fact that non-believers are even more likely to be harassed for not playing along with religious coercion. For instance, not standing for the Pledge of Allegiance (one nation under God, which was added as an afterthought), or not bowing ones head in public prayer, is more often than not likely to result in derision by believers.
One could make better use of taxpayer funds and government resources in view of the many real issues and problems that currently confront the country, rather than wasting government effort and taxpayer money on the numerous dubious recommendations described in this report.
The true spirit of the Free Exercise Clause is supposed to guarantee freedom of expression to non-believers as well as believers. The report does not explicitly acknowledge the rights of non-believers at all, though it does make some allowance for minority faiths. Also, Free Exercise includes the right not to be coerced into participation in religious activities.
Protolyzing, such as mandatory bible readings in public schools, should under no circumstances be a government-sponsored, or taxpayer-funded, activity since this clearly violates the Establishment Clause by entangling government with religion.
Of course, every American has the right to pray, worship, or speak about their faith freely. However, this does not give the government the right to sponsor religious practices or observances or use its authority and resources to promote one faith over others, or faith over non-belief.
In conclusion, this report is biased in the extreme, and promotes recommendations that are unethical, unnecessary, and in some cases downright unconstitutional.
I therefore highly recommend that you withdraw the report draft in order to respect the First Amendment rights of all Americans, whether religious or otherwise.
Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Most Sincerely, -
Robert Ruskamp
Secular Taxpayer

From: Mayette Pierce <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - M. Pierce
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:25:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

The separation of church and state is very important because if there is no separation, religious freedom and liberty of conscience will be in danger and there will be no turning back. I also agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

I hope and pray that the members of this Commission will consider our requests. God bless you all!

Jesus is coming soon!!!

Sincerely,

Marietta Pierce

West Palm Beach, FL

From: Pamela Shurtliff <[redacted]>

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

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject Religious Liberty Commission, separation of church and state Dear Religious Liberty Commission, I request you protect religious liberty for everyone. Please keep the wall of separation between church and state. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. [redacted]

Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:25:56 -0400

Importance: Normal

Sincerely, pamela shurtliff
US Citizen
Roy utah
Sent from my iPhone

From: Carolyn Maxwell <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Carolyn Maxwell
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:29:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

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,
Carolyn Maxwell
Berrien Springs, MI

From: Brenda Donovan <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:30:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Brenda Donovan

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~~~~~~!~~~~~~!~~~~~~

We are living in a time when God is gathering His people. Maranatha!
The Lord is coming!!! We hear the footsteps of an approaching God.

And a comfort to all those who mourn
Is the song of His glorious returning
Rising up on the wings of the dawn!
~~~~~~

From: Susan Stilwell <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:33:55 -0400
Importance: Normal

Greetings,

We respectfully 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.

We remain, Yours truly,

Charles Stilwell
Susan Stilwell

From: terry eastwood <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:35:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Sincerely, Terry Eastwood
Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: kaylee eastwood <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:35:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Sincerely, Kaylee Eastwood

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Anna Brown Lane <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom support
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:36:57 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern;
I realize I have passed the 5:00 p.m. deadline, but I think my opinion still matters. I would appreciate it if you would take it into account.
I heartily agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.
Anna Brown

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Antoinette Fisher <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT on Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:43:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission

I want to express my great, great concern over the Commission's proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge."

This wall was built by God Fearing people to keep the church free, and to allow ALL people Complete Freedom as God has designed.
Faith, beliefs, Religion or no religion is a very is a private and personal matter and is not for anyone, or any government to choose for ANYONE else!
God has given each freedom to pursue their own faith/religion or none at all. There should not ever be a government established, coerced universal
faith, religious practice or tradition of any kind. **History has shown the terrible Persecution, brutality, terrible suffering upon people**
in every way that happens when government denies liberty of conscience and gets involved with religion!
PLEASE Do not repeat this terrible history for the American people!
Our founding fathers fled Europe for this exact cause.

Please uphold separation of church and state. It has been one of the great Pillars of our beautiful and FREE Country!!

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

--

Antoinette Fisher

From: s karavanic <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Establishment Clause – Shirley Karavanic
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:44:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing as a citizen who believes religious liberty is the most vital liberty we have, and who asks this Commission not to join church and state in any way, however small it may seem. Religion has faced real hostility in this country, and the answer is not to enlist government on its behalf, but to keep the two spheres separate, as our founders intended.

Consider first what happens even when a law on religion favors your own faith. Any such law must define which religion it favors, and that definition necessarily includes some believers while excluding others — and even the included no longer practice freely, but by permission of a legislature that can change its mind tomorrow. Barton Jones made this point to a Senate committee in the plainest terms: it is impossible to frame a law on the subject of religion that will not prohibit the free exercise of religion. He went further, warning believers that no man can ever safely consent to legislation favoring the faith he professes, because in doing so he resigns his own right to change his mind if he later becomes convinced some other view is nearer the truth. That is the quiet danger in every faith-based carve-out this Commission might be tempted to recommend: it locks today's believer into today's creed, enforced by tomorrow's government.

Second, there is no generic religion for government to adopt, and no neutral text for it to endorse. Even the Ten Commandments, often held up as common ground, are numbered and translated differently by Protestants and Catholics, so a mandated display must quietly choose a side. J. H. Waggoner asked the question no advocate of religious legislation has ever answered: there are several hundred religions professedly based on the Bible, so which shall be enforced as the true one, and whose shall be suppressed? He warned that what results is not the Bible but somebody's construction of the Bible, resting on human judgment rather than the word of God. Congress's own 1830 committee saw this clearly, warning that any such decision by the legislature would be a legislative decision of a religious controversy, suited perhaps to a church council but incompatible with a republican legislature that exists for political and not religious purposes.

Third, this separation was not an accident of history or a modern invention layered onto the Constitution — it was deliberate design, and it was pressed for by the churches themselves, not by skeptics. Madison told the Virginia ratifying convention that there is not a shadow of right in the general government to intermeddle with religion, and that its least interference would be a flagrant usurpation. In the Memorial and Remonstrance he explained why the founders objected to establishment at its very first appearance, however small it seemed: they saw all the consequences in the principle, and they avoided the consequences by denying the principle. That is exactly the caution I am asking this Commission to exercise now.

Protect free exercise for all, and keep the state out of the business of religion. The two commitments stand or fall together.
Thank you.

Respectfully,
Shirley Karavanic

From: Patty Milliner <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission, Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:44:40 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I request you protect religious liberty for everyone. Please keep the wall of separation between church and state.

Religious liberty is not hostility toward religion; it is one of the strongest safeguards for religion in a free society. Our nation is strongest when it protects the rights of all people to worship—or not worship—according to conscience.

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

Thank you for your consideration.
Respectfully,
Patricia Milliner

Sent from my iPhone

From: Rena Jones <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Citizen Response to: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:45:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from

the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

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

We respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee and that it adopt the recommendation to 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,

R. Marsjones RN

From: Julie Mann <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:47:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

As a lifelong Christian I have ever been proud of the fact that our wonderful country, the United States of America, has always been a nation of freedom. Freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, freedom to choose how one wants to believe and to live.

Faith and how we choose to believe, and live that belief, is a very personal and private matter. We must follow our consciences as we are guided by our Heavenly Father. He alone should have access to our religious choices as He is a partner with us in those choices.

Government and religion do not mix well. All one has to do is look back through history to see the end result of a mixture of church and state. It was always very controlling and ended with persecution when people did not follow the prescribed way of believing and worshipping. Countries are littered with the graves and ashes of those murdered for their beliefs.

The separation of church and state is in our constitution. It is in documents written by some of the framers. They saw firsthand the results of church and state combining. They wanted to make certain that it never happened in this beautiful new country. My forefathers fled the European continent to gain the freedom of religion that was not allowed there. They were willing to go through privation, hunger, and many dangers to flee from persecution and certain death at the hands of those in the church who were linked with the state.

Why would you destroy all that they work to hard for? Why? It makes no sense. This country is a ight in the darkness. People want to come here. Why do they want to come? Freedom. Freedom to live without fear. Freedom to believe as they choose.

I ask you, as I close this short letter, to please look at the history of church and state combinations and the horrific results of those unions. History repeats itself. Please don't let that happen here. Let freedom continue to ring.

We simply must maintain complete separation of church and state.

Sincerely,

Julie Mann

From: Jerry Jones <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom recommendations
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:48:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Gerald A Jones

[redacted]

From: Gary Belhomme <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Objection to Religious Liberty Committee Recommendations 1 and 9 – Gary Belhomme
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:52:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on the Religious Liberty Committee's recommendations submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While I appreciate the Committee's work and agree with some of its recommendations, I object to its first and ninth recommendations [1]. This objection arises from the Founding Fathers' warnings about the dangers of a union between church and state, and from the lessons of history that counsel against such a union.

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 that 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 student of history and as a Christian, I find the Committee Chair's statement deeply troubling. In my view, his understanding of the "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" should not influence, much less guide, the Department of Justice. If the Committee shares that view, I respectfully submit that its understanding is improper.

James Madison, Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, directly contradicts 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." Madison's words go to the heart of the constitutional question. As the principal author of the Establishment Clause, his authority on this subject should carry decisive weight.

Certainly, the Founding Fathers were aware of the persecution of Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and others in some of the colonies. They knew the history of ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and elsewhere.

In Europe, the persecution of martyrs is well documented. As a Christian, I cannot read that history casually. William Tyndale was executed for translating the Bible into English—not by atheists, but by religious bigots. It was a union of church and state that suppressed speech and freedom of the press in England. It was a union of church and state that prohibited the translation of the Bible, a work that changed the world. It was a union of church and state that forced Tyndale to flee to Europe. It was a union of church and state that killed him.

I respectfully ask the Department of Justice to consider the history of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania and an early Founding Father, who was repeatedly jailed in England for his religious

faith. His experience shows that religious liberty has often needed protection not from unbelief, but from religious power joined to civil authority. The same is true of Roger Williams, founder of Rhode Island, who was ordered arrested for declaring that the civil magistrate cannot enforce the first table of the Decalogue. I also ask the Committee to consider 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 am also concerned that the Committee neglected the impact of the separation of church and state on other First Amendment rights. I value free speech and freedom of the press not merely as abstract doctrines, but as safeguards for conscience, inquiry, and public accountability. Before the First Amendment, the Roman Catholic Church maintained, for centuries, a list of banned books known as the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. Those books were subject to confiscation, and possession of them could result in punishment for the owner.

Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention in this context of the censorship of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, David Hume and Edward Gibbon, and many others, all at the behest of the Roman Papacy, which is itself a union of church and state. I also ask the Department of Justice to consider the repeated modern calls from the papal power today for censorship of the internet and suppression of free speech, contrary to the First Amendment. [4] I have no doubt that the censorship of Galileo, Kepler, Milton, and others was likewise justified as the censorship of misinformation.

The Roman Catholic Church was not alone in such persecution. I ask the Department of Justice to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against 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. This history is not remote to me; it is a warning. I am concerned by the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

Therefore, I respectfully ask what proper guidance the Department of Justice can provide on the "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" if its work is shaped by a Committee, and by a Committee Chair, that have not fully analyzed why the United States codified the disestablishment of church and state in the First Amendment. I ask this as a matter of conscience and constitutional fidelity.

The reference to the wall of separation between church and state is not only found in President Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists, though it is certainly found there. [6] What is often omitted from the narrative is that Jefferson personally believed the principle of the separation of church and state was codified in the Constitution. In that letter, 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 Committee's recommendation 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] That teaching has shaped my understanding of the separation of church and state. What belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. Religionists

ambitious for civil power, and politicians ambitious for their endorsement, must therefore be kept separate in the American political system, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state corrupts both.

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] I believe he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, I fear that religionists seeking civil power will offer votes and congregational dollars for political favours, and politicians may reciprocate through legislation.

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 government was a union of the two. [11] Madison likewise stated that, "In the Papal System, Government and Religion are in a manner consolidated, & that is found to be the worst of Governments."

I therefore respectfully request that the Department of Justice decline to adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee. I further ask that it adopt recommendation 1 insofar as it calls for a public hearing, with written and oral submissions from the public, to study more fully the separation of church and state in history and in American history. I would strongly support such a study.

I remain, Yours truly,

Gary Belhomme

[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: jrjnk jrjnk <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – On the Separation of Church and State - Justin Robinson
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:54:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Commission's recommendations that would weaken the longstanding separation of church and state. I respectfully urge the Commission to reconsider its proposals, particularly those advocating greater government involvement with religion and the repeal of the Johnson Amendment.

The separation of church and state is not hostile to religion. It is one of the greatest protections religion has ever had. America's founders understood that when government gains influence over religious institutions, both faith and government are diminished. Churches become entangled with political power, public funding, and partisan interests, while government is inevitably forced to decide which religious beliefs deserve protection and which do not.

For that reason, I strongly request that the Johnson Amendment remain fully intact and be vigorously enforced. Religious organizations should not become extensions of political campaigns, nor should tax-exempt status be used to subsidize partisan political activity. Preserving this safeguard protects both our democratic institutions and the integrity of religious communities.

I also object to any recommendation or policy that grants special treatment to any particular religion, religious community, or foreign nation based upon religion. I completely object to the special treatment given to Jewish people and the state of Israel. The State of Israel should not receive preferential treatment because of religious considerations. I believe our government should maintain complete neutrality toward all religions, favoring none and discriminating against none. Equal treatment under the law is one of the fundamental principles of our constitutional system.

My own family's history reinforces these convictions. My ancestors came to America seeking freedom from religious persecution, and I am a Mayflower descendant. The lesson they passed down is that liberty is best preserved when government neither advances nor suppresses religion. That principle has served our nation well for centuries.

Ironically, the Commission's own recent actions demonstrate why this separation remains essential. Following the Commission's February 9, 2026 hearing on antisemitism, Commissioner Carrie Prejean was removed after questioning witnesses about whether criticism of Israel or opposition to Zionism should automatically be considered antisemitism, asking whether opposition to Zionism made Catholics antisemitic, questioning Israel's conduct in Gaza, and quoting a passage from 1 Thessalonians 2:14-15. Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick stated that no commissioner had the right to "hijack a hearing" for a personal or political agenda.

Regardless of one's opinion of Commissioner Prejean's statements, the Commission's response exposes a fundamental contradiction in its own recommendations. Throughout its report, the Commission argues that religious expression should receive greater protection within government and public institutions. Yet when one of its own commissioners expressed religious views that others found objectionable, the Commission responded not by defending her expression but by removing her from her position.

By the Commission's own stated principles, this appears to be an act of religious intolerance rather than a defense of religious liberty. If religious expression is to be protected in government, that protection cannot depend on whether those in power approve of the particular religious beliefs being expressed. Otherwise, government inevitably becomes the arbiter of acceptable theology, deciding which interpretations of scripture may be voiced and which must be punished.

This is precisely why the separation of church and state remains indispensable. Whenever religion and government become intertwined, government must eventually determine which religious doctrines are acceptable, which religious speech is permissible, and which believers deserve protection. That is not religious liberty—it is government management of religion.

The Constitution wisely avoids this outcome by requiring governmental neutrality toward religion. It protects every person's freedom to worship according to conscience while preventing government from favoring, funding, promoting, or policing religious belief.

I respectfully ask the Commission to reject recommendations that would weaken these constitutional protections. Please preserve the separation of church and state, support the continued enforcement of the Johnson Amendment, and reaffirm that our government should remain neutral toward all religions and all religious viewpoints. That neutrality protects believers and nonbelievers alike and remains one of America's greatest safeguards for religious freedom.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Justin Robinson

From: Dirk Fisher <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:54:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

With deep Concern, as an AMERICAN; with the greatest desire to continue to live in FREE AMERICA,

PLEASE:
Please uphold separation of church and state. It must remain one of the great Pillars of the United States of AMERICA!!

I am in complete agreement with the "Pillar of Freedom's" comments. Please implement them!!

Dirk Fisher

From: Cathy Parker <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment: presidential commission on religious liberty draft report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 20:56:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

The separation of church and state in our constitution is one of the greatest achievements in our constitution. I agree with the pillars of freedom statement. Please implement them. Our freedom to worship is in jeopardy with the proposed changes. I object to funding religious non profit activities. I object to funding religion based education. We need to keep the separation of church and state as written in our constitution. Thank you.

From: Priscilla Costa <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:02:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments!
Priscilla Costa.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: tony leeseberg <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT –on Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:03:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

Presidential Commission of Religious Liberty
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Room 5706
Washington, DC 20530

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. It is critical to keep the Johnson Amendment and not decrease its effect on policy and intertwining Church and State with politics.

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,

Tony Leeseberg

Dayton, TN [redacted]

From: Sienna Perrin <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Sienna Perrin
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:12:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I love the freedoms we are privileged to have in the United States. Please retain the separation of church and state. This separation keeps the government from influencing churches, and churches from having the power to force their beliefs on others. In history the uniting of a church and state always resulted in religious persecution, and it will be no different in the United States. In America we do not know what true religious persecution is, unlike the Christians in Nigeria and China and many other places around the world who are being murdered for what they believe. We have many freedoms and liberties in our country for which I'm very thankful. Making a bridge between church and state will lead to an erosion of these religious liberties. Please keep the separation of churches and state, and do not repeal the Johnson amendment. Thank you for reading my comment!
Sienna Perrin
Pullman, Michigan

From: Kristina Johnson <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-Separation of Church and State-Kristina Johnson
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:15:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am a person of faith and deeply concerned by the religious liberty report draft. My father's family came from Germany in the 1700's to escape religious persecution and settled in Pennsylvania. I truly believe in the separation of church and state, as doing away with the Johnson Amendment would corrupt our churches as they would compete in political activities. Therefore, I agree the Johnson Amendment should stay enforce. As I also agree with Pillar of Freedom in their response to this draft report.

Sincerely,
Kristina Johnson

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From: Trent L <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Trent Logan
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:17:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I have always loved my country, the United States of America. I was born in July, and was proud to have my birthday so close to the birthday of our nation! My mom's birthday was shortly after mine, so I also was proud of that commonality that we shared with Independence Day! I remember getting a candle-making kit for my birthday when I was a kid, and pouring a candle in the shape of the Liberty Bell! Philadelphia Hall was one of the places my bride and I went to on our honeymoon more than 30 years ago, and we were delighted to see the Liberty Bell in person! We also went to Valley Forge, Washington DC, and were blessed by recounting the great people who did so much to make our country what it is today!

Those who are not American often do not understand why Americans fly our flag with such enthusiasm. **The reason is simple: the flag is not just a representation of the governing power that rules over us, but is first and foremost a representation of the precious LIBERTY our country stands for!**

For me, as a Christian, by far the most precious of our liberties is the liberty of conscience: the freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, rather than according to the dictates of someone else.

Along with this commission, I have been greatly distressed by the challenges threatening this liberty, many of which have been addressed by this commission. I am glad that you are doing something about it, and I pray that God will bless and guide as you seek to rescue this country, and also that God will help you as you seek to avoid unwise moves.

An area where I have concern is regarding what appears to be a disavowal of the phrase, "wall of separation between church and state." It is true that the radical left has tragically weaponized this phrase and given it a very different meaning than Roger Williams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, or any of our founders, ever ascribed to it. **Reading Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists, it is obvious that to him, it clearly meant nothing more nor less than exactly what is stated in the establishment and free exercise clauses of the first amendment.** Buried within, your document speaks very briefly to that, calling it a "belabored metaphor." I understand your intent, but while I think we would certainly agree it has become a seriously *misused* metaphor by many, I cannot agree that it is a "belabored metaphor."

Unfortunately, I fear that this commission is in danger of allowing the radical left to redefine what the phrase meant, and rather than rejecting the redefinition, they are in danger of rejecting the phrase itself. **For this commission to acquiesce to this redefinition would be a most unfortunate triumph to the radical secularists.** A much wiser course would be to restore the original intent to this expression--<u>a wall between ecclesiastical power and civil power</u>--and not, as the radical left would have us to believe--a wall between religious people and public life. (See the letter by Pillar of Freedom's President, Jonathan Zirkle, to the commission dated July 6, 2026).

In "Appendix A: Know Your Rights FAQ", point 1, is the perfect opportunity to reclaim the phrase for what it was *really* intended to mean, and I humbly suggest that this should be made ***prominent*** to the American people! **Rather than highlighting that "The phrase 'wall of separation between church and state' does not appear in the First Amendment...", we should seize this opportunity to reclaim the phrase, and to educate the public what the "wall of separation" actually meant to the founders of this nation! I believe**

this is one of the most significant things we can do to take back our nation! I respectfully encourage a rewording of this portion of the document to accomplish this purpose.

I've heard it stated by well-meaning Christians that the religious liberty guaranteed in the first amendment was meant to protect the churches from the state, and not the state from the churches. **However, one doesn't have to dig deep into history at all to recognize that the state that is not protected from ecclesiastical control will in turn exert power over the consciences and lives of those who disagree with the ecclesiastical power that has been allowed to bear sway over the state.** The pages of history are drenched in the blood of martyrs who were slain because they did not espouse the religion that held sway over the state.

I respectfully encourage you to study deeper into the history of the expression, "wall of separation between church and state." **This powerfully descriptive metaphor had a much greater influence on the founding principles of this nation than is commonly supposed and should not be disavowed and buried, but rather reclaimed and given the proper understanding and dignity it deserves.** A proper understanding and appreciation of this phrase, which is an incisive encapsulation of the religious liberty guaranteed in the first amendment, will help protect this country from the tyranny of both the radical secularists and despotic religion. Study the noble life of Roger Williams, who may well have been one of the strongest proponents of religious liberty the world has known! He conceived of the metaphor of a wall of separation between the church and the state and used the expression in a reply to John Cotton in 1644 (long before Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists), which was reproduced and expanded upon in his *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience*. A brief and largely forgotten history of the phrase and its prominence in the thinking of the founders of this country is given in Zirkle's letter cited earlier. I also encourage you to look into the book, *The Great Controversy,* by E. G. White, and read the chapter, "The Pilgrim Fathers." It is imperative that we understand the pricelessness of religious liberty in the context of modern attacks against this liberty today, largely by radical secularists, and also in the context of those over the ages who--despite the proclamations of secular and religious despots--sacrificed their comfort and their lives to obey God rather than man.

Only when we understood these things, and the history behind why the establishment and free-exercise clauses were the *first* to be included in the bill of rights, can we not only more fully understand the intent and *zeal* our founders had towards their incorporation in the founding principles of our country, but also to better be able to protect and defend this precious liberty for the good of everyone. **The “wall” metaphor, properly understood, succinctly encapsulates this meaning.**

Let's reclaim this metaphor and restore it to its proper meaning and place!

Sincerely,

Trent Logan
Loma Linda, California

"For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee." Isaiah 54:10

From: Chris Pack <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:18:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Committee,

I am very concerned about the plan to destroy religious liberty by taking away the protection of separation of church and state. It does state in the constitution that government shall not impose any legislation to regulate religious beliefs. This will be a disaster for our country if the government tries to legislate morals and to take away our God given rights to choose how we worship and serve the God of the Universe. Please prayerfully think about what you are trying to do with this legislation. Religious liberty was the whole reason this country was founded because of the pilgrims wanting to escape from churches being governed by the government instead of freedom of conscience. Than you for hearing my concerns. Sincerely, Mrs. Chris Pack

From: Elizabeth Cooper <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:21:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom it may concern,

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

Elizabeth Cooper
Troutville, VA
USA

From: Darrel and Melinda Harris <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – [SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE] – [DARREL HARRIS]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:28:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

After reading a good portion of the religious liberty draft report I have to agree with the Pillar of Freedom's response to this draft report.

I urge the Department to preserve the constitutional principle that protects both religious liberty and civil government by maintaining separation between church and state and to retain the Johnson Amendment, which helps preserve both the integrity of religious institutions and the independence of government.

Sincerely,

Darrel Harris

--
Habakkuk's Tables – Firm Truth to Stand Upon (iwillstanduponmywatch.com)

From: Ann-Marie Scott <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:32:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee and that it adopt recommendation 1 of the Committee that it convene a public hearing, with written and oral submissions from the public, to more comprehensively study the

question of the separation of church and state in history, and in American history in particular, a study which we would enthusiastically support.

We remain, Yours truly,

Ann-Marie

[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: Sarah Roman-Bentivegna <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Sarah Bentivegna
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:32:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

The foundation of the United States was built on the principle of separating church and state and I wish this remains the same so that we can keep our religious freedom.

Sarah Bentivegna
Rapidan, VA

From: Teresa Arocho <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:35:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

Esteemed religious liberty commission;
I value the protections that are in the US constitution concerning when and how to worship.i am a US citizen and am very proud of our history of religious liberty.Our Protestant foundations are being weakened by those who think they are improving our culture but this progressives is not what they think.”hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” 1 Corinthians 1:20
Teresa Arocho
Thank you
Sent from my iPhone

From: Emily Villeda <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:35:25 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Sirs:

This is to express my strong support, as a citizen of the United States of America and a Christian who values the religious liberty we enjoy under the First Amendment of our Constitution, for maintaining the separation between church and state. I support the stand taken by Jonathan Zirkle of Pillar of Freedom in regards to this issue, and I ask that you carefully consider the liberties being threatened at this time and please cast your vote for upholding the liberty of conscience we have long enjoyed. I beg you, do not allow any pressure, any interest, to stop you from defending one of our most treasured liberties.

Thank you.

Emily Rockwell Villeda

[redacted]

From: Alicia B <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State is God given and the foundation of the USA.
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:42:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the religious liberty commission:

Separation of church and state is why the pilgrims came to America. This country was founded and based on these beliefs to avoid religious persecution.

This will happen if we allow government to control or dictate religious beliefs.

The government has to stay neutral and I agree with Pillar of Freedom.

I urge you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken this separation especially using money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson amendment.

Let's keep America Free by separation of church and state.

Thank you for your time,
ALICIA

From: Jennifer Young <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State –jennifer young
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:42:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I adamantly opposed to the public or government funding of religious non-profit activities on public campuses, such as religious (universal or unique) clubs, schools.

I also believe religion is a private and personal matter and is not one size fits all. A person should be free to pursue (any) faith or no faith, but there should not be a state established coerced universal faith, religious practice or tradition.

Please uphold separation of church and state. It was a good idea then, and it still is a good idea. We are a free men and women with one Authority, God. Government has no authority in the churches affairs.

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

Thank you for your time in reading my letter.

Jennifer Young
columbia, tennessee
[redacted]

From: Audrey Stovall <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:44:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

I support this effort as stated below:

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL:

[redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice "issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state." [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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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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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 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

Please follow and like us:

Audrey Stovall

From: John Kohl <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Keep the wall
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:46:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

The wall that keeps government out of religion has fostered unprecedented freedom of religion and is the backbone of free worship throughout this country.
An envy of the world. A pillar of freedom.
We need to uphold and strengthen these safeguards to keep the right to worship or not strong and free from any government interference. We don't need government money or corruption which follows. Believers willingly donating to their church is all we need. STOP!
Do everything to strengthen this separation as the founders and even over 100 years before the founding Roger Miller well understood!

From the heart of John Kohl a proud American worshipper!

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: HodAck <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY Commission - Public Comment - Separation of Church and State by Ms Louis
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:47:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I write to raise my concerns and present reasons for my oppositon to the Commission Report. I have made my points as concise as possible with headings for ease of reference, and have provided citations where relevant.

I first wish to make a biblical and constitutional case against the union of church and state.

The union of church and state has never produced genuine Christianity. History shows that it has repeatedly produced religious persecution, corruption, coercion, and the suppression of conscience.

God never forces worship. Satan does.

Throughout Scripture, God appeals to the heart. He teaches, invites, convicts, and warns—but He never compels worship through civil law. True worship is an act of love and faith, not obedience enforced by government (John 18:36; Matthew 22:21; Romans 14:5, 12, 23 KJV).

Christ drew a clear line when He declared:

> "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (Matthew 22:21)

He refused political office (John 6:15), refused to settle civil disputes (Luke 12:13–14), and plainly said:

> "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36)

If Christ Himself refused to establish His kingdom through political power, why should His followers seek to do what He refused?

The Bible warns against religious government when Israel demanded a king "like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8). God declared:

> "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." (1 Samuel 8:7)

God intended Israel to be governed by Him alone. Their desire to combine religion with earthly political power ultimately led to division, apostasy, persecution, and captivity. The lesson is clear: whenever God's people depend upon civil power to accomplish God's work, spiritual decline follows.

In scripture, Daniel foretold there would be a religious power that would change God's law and he warned of a religious power that would:

> "think to change times and laws." (Daniel 7:25)

Many Protestant Reformers, and later Seventh-day Adventists, have identified this prophecy with the medieval papal system, pointing to its claim to have transferred the solemnity of worship from the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday through ecclesiastical authority rather than biblical command.

The Fourth Commandment specifically concerns both **time** and **God's law**:

> "The seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God." (Exodus 20:8–11)

There is no verse in Scripture that changes the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week.

You may ask why the separation of church and state matters today for protestant Christians. Well, we see current efforts to strengthen cooperation between church and state as more than simply promoting morality.

We believe it lays the legal and political foundation for future religious legislation—including compulsory Sunday observance—which would directly affect those who continue to keep the biblical seventh-day Sabbath.

Should one nation successfully legislate religious observance, it could establish a precedent that other nations may follow, gradually eroding religious liberty around the world.

Whether one agrees with this prophetic interpretation or not, history shows that once governments assume authority over worship, freedom of conscience is inevitably threatened.

In my view, the greatest threat is not Sunday Itself—It is compulsory worship. The issue is not whether someone worships on Sunday.

Millions of sincere Christians worship on Sunday out of conviction.

Nor is the issue whether someone worships on Saturday. The issue is whether the government has any authority whatsoever to legislate worship.

Today it may compel Sunday. Tomorrow it could compel Saturday. The principle is exactly the same.

Government has no God-given authority to determine when, where, or how anyone must worship.

I would oppose legislation enforcing Sunday observance. I would equally oppose legislation enforcing Saturday Sabbath observance.

Worship belongs entirely to the individual conscience under God—not to Parliament, Congress, presidents, courts, or kings.

The freedom of conscience is a God-given right and every person must be free to worship God according to the dictates of his or her own conscience.

That freedom includes:

* the freedom to worship on the biblical seventh-day Sabbath,
* the freedom to worship on Sunday,
* the freedom to worship on another day,
* and even the freedom not to worship at all.

God desires willing obedience—not forced compliance. Civil government exists to protect life, liberty, and justice—not to regulate worship.

America's founders understood this principle. The First Amendment declares:

> "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Article VI further provides:

> "No religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States."

Thomas Jefferson later described these protections as creating "a wall of separation between Church & State."

This principle protects every citizen—Christian, Jew, Muslim, atheist, or anyone else—from having another person's religion imposed through civil law.

Bible prophecy warns against enforced worship in Revelation 13 which describes a future time when political authority will be used to enforce worship and punish those who refuse.

Again, the final issue is not simply which day people worship. It is whether worship is freely offered to God or compelled by civil authority. Forced worship is not true worship. It is a denial of the very freedom that God Himself grants every human being.

The bottom line is that the church has a divine mission. The state has a civil mission. When the church uses the power of the state to enforce religious practice, both institutions are corrupted.

I feel that the greatest protection for Christianity is not a Christian government.

It is a government that protects the God-given liberty of every person to worship—or not worship—according to conscience.

Religious liberty is not an enemy of Christianity. It is one of Christianity's greatest safeguards. When conscience is free, faith can be genuine. When worship is compelled, both religion and liberty are lost.

Please, I urge you to reconsider ratifying this report and abandon it in line with the current constitutional rights.

Sincerely,

Ms Louis
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

From: Casey Bolick <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:48:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

On Friday June 26, 2026 the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty releases a draft report which President Trump accepted in the Oval Office. I was informed that comments regarding the 'Separation of Church and State' matter were being accepted until July 13, 2026.

Here is my stance:

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

From: Tammy Smith <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:55:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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I agree with the above letter,

We remain, Yours truly,

Tamara J. Smith, MAINE

Sent from my iPad

From: Steps to Christ Ministry <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Recommendations of the Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 21:59:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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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,

Benjamin S. Brown

[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: Eva Sheets <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:01:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 12, 2026
Via Electronic Mail to [redacted]

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

Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

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

The principle of the separation of church and state is found in the First Amendment of the Constitution by the Free Exercise Clause and the Establishment Clause
"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."
Without the wall of separation of church and state there would be no religious freedom and liberty of conscience. Liberty of conscience is rooted in Christ's love for humanity. Liberty of conscience is central to the very character of our Creator.
I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. Please keep church and state separate.
Thank you.
Sincerely,
Eva Sheets

From: Nancy DeGrie <ndegrie@gmail.com>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <RLC@usdoj.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:03:55 -0400
Importance: Normal

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation

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

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

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

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

Prohibitorum. The books were subject to confiscation, and the possession of them resulted in the punishment of the owner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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]

[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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[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, Dissert

From: Kevin Peterson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:05:02 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with pillar of freedom

From: JOANNE CARLSON <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:05:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Joanne Carlson
Paradise, CA

From: Sofiya Ryzak <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:16:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While 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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We remain, Yours truly,

Sofiya Ryzak

[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: audrey stewart <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:18:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

I disagree that the seperation of church and state was not meant to be a part of the Constitution. I believe it's one of the pillars of this country and one of the things that has made this country great. Many people found a refuge here seeking religious freedom, and fleeing religious persecution
Please, let's not forget the past.

During the dark ages,under the unification of church and state, when Catholicism, was the state religion, dissenters were persecuted. History has a terrible habit of repeating itself. Unification of church and state can easily become a matter of trampling on the consciences of some in order to uphold the religious dogmas of the majority. I'd like to end with a statement from Jesus which states Jesus view on the joining of church and state. Matthew 22:21 Render therefore unto Caesar, the things which are Caesar's (government) and unto God the things that are God's (religion). Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in responding to this commission.

From: Carolyn Hearn <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT--Religious Liberty Commission and Wall of Separation
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:20:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission:

Please rethink your conclusion that the wall of separation between church and state, so long an important component of United States history, is in error. That wall is part of the reason many of our early forefathers settled in America, and it is part of what has made us great as a nation. History has shown that when government and religion interfere with each other, both are diminished in strength. Fraud and corruption occur as leaders are elected based on their religion, true or pretended. Citizens are treated unequally due to their various convictions. Religion, including Christianity, becomes reduced to nothing more than a cultural identify, as we see has happened in much of Europe. This would be a sad and terrible thing to happen to our great nation. We hope you will not repeat this error that so many countries have made.

Sincerely,

Carolyn and Jeffrey Hearn

From: M <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Malcolm Neely
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:22:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was troubled to learn that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between Church and State with a “bridge”. With all respect that is exactly backwards — also as a Man of faith, I find the idea alarming.

That wall was not built by secularist to keep religion down. It was built by Believers like me 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, to force Churches to compete for grants and answering to politicians instead of GOD. History is clear about what happens when Church and State join together, and it is not good for either one of them.

Please don’t build that Bridge, keep the wall up to protect the Church and not to restrain it.

Malcolm Neely
Knoxville, Tennessee

From: Linda Spady <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support of separating Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:27:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

Thank you for the efforts you have put into the commission.
I'm grateful that you support individuals not being punished for practicing their religion.

The experiment of mixing religion in government in our world is one reason our country was founded based on religious freedom, even though there were mandated, religious tests, and some early colonies.

Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world.

Please keep a healthy wall of separation between Church and State, so we do not become a Christian, Muslim, Hindu, atheistic, or any other mandated, religious belief country. The heart cannot be legislative and love never forces.

Only God has the right to tell people what to believe.

Sincerely yours,
Linda Spady

From: Emily Whitcomb <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:31:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedoms comments , please implement them.

Emily Saladino
Sent from my iPhone

From: Michael Daugherty <7mdturbo@gmail.com>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <RLC@usdoj.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:32:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Thank You,

Michael Daugherty

From: cindy j <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:35:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

I believe it's in the best interest of our Republic to maintain the separation of church and state, for many reasons.

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. Please keep religious liberty separate from the government.

Cindy Johnson **E**

The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26

From: Deborah Serrano <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment -- Separation of Church and State -- Deborah Serrano
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:38:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Separation of church and state is what has made America great from the start. People from other countries flocked here to escape religious persecution from their home countries. They came by droves to this country to practice the dictates of their conscience. Separation of church and state form the basis of and is embedded deep within our very constitution, even if it is not worded exactly as such in the document. The first amendment further protects religious freedom and the dictates of one's conscience.

I firmly agree with, support, and echo Pillar of Freedom's response, as well as the individual statements made by Alex Bowen and James Bowen from Heritage and Hope Ministries. Their reasons for keeping a wall of separation between church and state are reasonable and sound. The accurate history of the United States of America in their strong insistence on the separation of church and state throughout the centuries is provided in detail in each of these men's responses. They masterfully and correctly paint the picture of how much the wall separating church and state was the foundation of our constitution, and how it has continued to be the hallmark of America, making it one of the greatest nations on earth. No other country enjoys the freedoms that America offers, due, in large part, to it respecting the dictates of its citizens' conscience.

Please refer to the statements made by Pillar of Freedom and Heritage and Hope Ministries, for they mirror my own. Please implement their recommendations, for they are reasonable, sound, and backed by the Bible Itself. Jesus loves us too much to force us to love Him, for that would not be love at all. Christ does not want robots serving Him, but rather free thinking individuals who love and worship Him on their own accord and of their own free will, not because they have too, but because they choose to and want to. Satan is the adversary and accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10, 1-17) who wants to micromanage and force all to worship him and follow his dictates (Rev. 14:8-11; Rev. 17-18; 20). Jesus, however, offers freedom to all, even the freedom to reject Him, should we choose (Josh. 24:15; Matt. 11:28-30; John 3; 17). Those who go to heaven will be their by their own free choice. Those not in heaven will likewise not be there by their own free choice (Matt. 25; Rev. 20; 14:6-12; 18:1-5).

So in a nutshell, please keep America great by fortifying its wall of separation of church and state, not tearing it down and building a bridge between the two. Thank you so very much!

Sincerely and respectfully,

Deborah Serrano

From: Lorraine Howerton <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:38:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As Protestant Christians we agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments concerning the draft report. Please implement them.

Sincerely,

Gerald and Lorraine Howerton
Baker City, Oregon

From: Janice T <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:48:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

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, Issued June 2026

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

I'm writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider and change the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state.

I object to the Religious Liberty Commission Report's dismissal and denigration of the metaphor of the "wall of separation between church and state." The wall of separation between church and state DOES exist in our U.S. Constitution. Although those particular words are not used, the concept of the wall of separation of church and state is memorialized and established in the First Amendment by the *Free Exercise Clause and the Establishment Clause*, as follows: "***Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."*** U.S. Const. amend. I, cl. 1.

That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the church free.

The purpose of these two clauses set forth in the First Amendment is to keep separate church and state, so that the two are not mingled by a "bridge" or otherwise. Religious freedom and liberty of conscience cannot exist without this separation of church and state. Liberty of conscience is the fundamental right of an individual to follow their own moral and religious beliefs without coercion, interference, or punishment from the government or society. The separation of church and state is vitally and critically important to preserve and protect every individual person's freedom to think, believe, and act according to one's own inner convictions, even if those beliefs differ from the majority or state authority. It is vital to protect every individual from coercion, in order that no one is forced to act against their conscience, nor penalized for their sincere beliefs.

The preservation of the separation between church and state is vital to avoid state or government's preference of one religion over another, in order that **all** people can enjoy the freedom to think, believe, and act according to one's own inner convictions, even if those beliefs differ from the majority or state authority.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission to:

1. Reconsider, retract and redraft its report;

2. Reject any interpretation of the U.S. Constitution that diminishes, dismisses or denigrates the historic separation of church and state, and maintain proper boundaries between the state and government authority and matters of conscience, to preserve liberty of conscience;

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(s) far more than it constrains it.

Janice Thiel

Fountain Hills, AZ

From: Kat Kingsley <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:51:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,
I write to express my concern regarding the importance of preserving the constitutional principle of religious liberty in the United States.
The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides two equally important protections: it prohibits the government from establishing a religion while also protecting every individual's right to freely exercise their faith. It states:
"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."
These protections have served as the cornerstone of American liberty since our nation's founding. They ensure that no citizen is compelled to support, participate in, or adhere to any particular religion, while simultaneously safeguarding the freedom of every person to worship—or not worship—according to the dictates of their own conscience.
Although the phrase "separation of church and state" does not appear in the Constitution itself, the principle has long been recognized as a safeguard against government interference in matters of religion. This concept protects both religious institutions from government control and government from becoming an instrument of religious authority.
Our nation welcomes people of many faiths, as well as those of no religious affiliation. The Constitution provides equal protection to all, ensuring that government neither favors nor discriminates against any religion.
Public officials, like all citizens, are free to hold and express their religious beliefs. However, when acting in their official capacity, they are obligated to uphold the Constitution and govern in a manner that respects the rights of every American.
Protecting religious liberty does not require removing religion from public life. Rather, it requires that the government remain neutral in matters of faith so that every individual may freely live according to their beliefs without coercion or preferential treatment by the state.
The enduring strength of our republic lies in its commitment to liberty of conscience. Preserving these constitutional principles ensures that Americans of every faith—and those with none—continue to enjoy the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Statement
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:52:29 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Silvy Ririhena

From: Elizabeth Clarke <[redacted]>
To: [redacted], I C <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillars Of Freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:53:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the Pillars of Freedom Comment. Please implement them.

Elizabeth Clarke

From: joey nwachukwu <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] UPHOLD SEPARATTION OF CHURCH AND STATE PRINCIPLES IN AMERICA.
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:53:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

To All Concerned,

I am writing to express my full support for the comments and responses provided by Pillar of Freedom. I strongly recommend that these be implemented immediately to further the separation of church and state.

Sincerely,

Nwachukwu, Joseph E.
[redacted]

From: jerome CANAMA <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Cc: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State- J. Canama
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:54:29 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

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

I am a naturalized citizen from the Philippines where Roman Catholicism is the religion of about 60 to 80% of the population. In that country the government is heavily influenced by the Catholic faith and a lot of times promulgating and enforcing its doctrines and dogmas. For example, Philippines is one of the few countries if not the only country without Divorce laws. This is because the Catholic Faith is strongly against it. They influence the lawmakers so much that Divorce law is never passed in the Congress. The result is not pretty. In that country you find a lot of Filipinos living together with somebody who are not their spouses because there is no divorce laws. It affects the family structure so much and has been a burden in the society. In addition to that, even if there is no Divorce laws, but there is a law permitting annulment of marriages. But in reality it takes about $4,000 to $8,000 to go through that process. Majority of the Filipinos dont have that kind of money, so only the rich basically can afford to annul their marriages. This is just one of the many examples that I can think of if the government would bridge church and state.

The wall of separation of church and state state wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the church free. It was built by our founding fathers who experienced first hand religious persecutions that happened in Europe where church and state are very close to each other. 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. We already experienced that- and we call that The Dark Ages when during hundreds of years there was only one show in town- The Roman Catholic Church and its teachings, dogmas and beliefs.

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

Respectfully yours,

Jerome Canama
Pittsburg, California

From: Shelley Aitchison <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I agree with PILLAR OF FREEDOM
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:56:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

'I agree with PILLAR OF FREEDOM'S comments, please implement them.

From: Leo Campbell <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:56:55 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

We agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.
We also agree with Heritage and Hope Ministry's comments.
Please implement them.

Sincerely yours,
Leo and Ruth Campbell

From: Laurina Mundall <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Letter
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:57:36 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Religious_Freedom_Letter.docx

Please find attached a letter for the Religious Liberty Commission.
Thank you.
Sincerely,
Laurina Mundall
Spokane, WA

July 12, 2026

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,

I respectfully submit this letter out of my 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,

Laurina Mundall

Spokane, Washington

From: Keilani Stowell <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of church and state - Keilani Tremper
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 22:59:42 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the religious liberty commission: I'm writing as a citizen of the United States of America to reconsider the recommendations in your report to bridge church and state. Separating church and state was built by believers to keep religion free. History is clear about when church and state join hands, and it's not good.
Please don't build that bridge. Keep them separate. That's why America propers. It's the reason why religion has stayed strong here. They are both free being separate.

Sincerely,
Keilani Tremper
Dunlap, TN

From: Karen Lavelle <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment – Religious Liberty Commission Report – Darlene Bessey
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:00:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the religious liberty commission:

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

Darlene Bessey

From: Jeannette Brooks <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Comments
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:04:10 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Reiner Kremer <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Establishment Clause – Justin Kremer
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:04:40 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing to comment on the Commission's draft report. I respectfully urge you to defend both religion clauses of the First Amendment — no establishment, and free exercise — with equal vigor. We are not a theocracy. My reasons are these:

America has already run the experiment of sincere majorities enforcing religion — Salem in 1692, and Tennessee in 1892, where Sabbath-keeping farmers were jailed and marched in a chain gang for quietly working on Sunday. As B. O. Flower wrote, "A nation can sometimes afford to err on the side of mercy, but no nation can afford to be unjust to her lowliest citizen."

History has run this experiment, from Constantine's Sunday law of A.D. 321 to the Inquisition. Jones's warning holds: "If the first step be taken, the last step is then as certainly taken; for the last step is in the first." Refuse the principle that government may define religious duty, and the consequences never arrive.

The founding generation's own Congress already examined this question. The reports of Richard M. Johnson's committees, adopted in 1829 and 1830, declared: "It is not in the legitimate province of the legislature to determine what religion is true or what false. Our government is a civil and not a religious institution." I ask the Commission to align its report with that precedent.

Separation was the founders' deliberate design, urged on them by the churches themselves. Madison told the Virginia ratifying convention: "There is not a shadow of right in the general government to intermeddle with religion. Its least interference with it would be a most flagrant usurpation." I ask the Commission to honor that design, not explain it away.

Protect free exercise for all, and keep the state out of the business of religion. The two commitments stand or fall together.

Respectfully,
Justin Kremer
Franktown, CO

From: Susan Thompson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State - Susan Thompson
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:18:52 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission ,

I have read the comments/email from Pillars of Freedom and I agree with what was written. Please implement them.

Sincerely,
A concerned citizen of the USA,

Susan Thompson
Washington State

From: Donald Kissinger <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:19:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sent from my iPhone

Separation of church and state is what keeps our country running strong. We don't need to be completely influenced. By the way the government wants us to run or act or to do we need to do what is on our conscience and our way to serve God
Donald Kissinger

From: Glinda Scott <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment: Draft Report of the Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:23:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission Members:

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

Thank You!

Sincerely,
Glinda Scott

From: Vivian Bouit <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:25:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Department of Justice,

I appeal to you to maintain the separation of church and state, as upheld by our forefathers. It has been a safeguard to our society and to the freedom of conscious of our citizens. Government has no inherent right to coerce in religious matters. Those things that pertain to the first table of the law (the first 4 commandments) are sacred between God and man and must never be legislated. God gave us a frontal lobe to reason and to make a choice to worship Him or not. The Cross testifies to how important it is to God that we all have free will.

Respectfully,

Vivian Bouit

From: Marisol <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Draft Report
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:27:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

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 and its obviously insufficient consideration of the warnings of the Founding Fathers of the dangers of a union of church and state or the many lessons of history regarding same.

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

As citizens and 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.

We have no doubt that the censorship of Galileo, Kepler, Milton, and others was prosecuted under the justification of the censorship of misinformation.

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.

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."

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

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." 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. 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,

Marisol Avila

Sent from my iPad

From: Bob Lenk <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – ANTISEMITISM – Robert Lenk
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:27:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

As a Jewish American and a child of holocaust survivors, I agree that antisemitism is a significant problem in our nation. Unfortunately, I see several major problems with the way the draft report approaches it:

1. There is tremendous confusion in our society about the relationship between criticism of the government of Israel and antisemitism. People are driven into two conflicting beliefs, either (a) that there is never any connection at all, or (b) that any criticism of Israel - or even more extremely that any support of Palestinian people - is by definition antisemitic. Of course, neither of these extremes is correct. It is impossible to properly address antisemitism in 2026 without developing an understanding of these dynamics. There is legitimate criticism of the Israeli government for its policies toward the Palestinian people, and for numerous other things. The right to express such criticism is essential. At the same time, the stereotypes, attitudes, and tropes of antisemitism are deeply rooted and pervasive in our society, and criticisms of Israel frequently include those stereotypes, attitudes, and tropes. Promotion of the two extreme narratives tends to increase polarization of our society, and actually fuels antisemitism as people perceive a dynamic of "crying wolf". I would love to see the Commission develop an understanding of these dynamics among its members and the general population. Unfortunately I see no such effort. Given the context that the current administration has erred strongly on the side of camp (b) - attacking, arresting, and deporting people who advocate for the rights of Palestinians - this report cannot be permitted to go forward with this glaring omission.
2. While antisemitism is a unique and ancient form of discrimination, Jews are not the only religious/ethnic group who are regularly targeted in our society. The lack of any mention in the draft report of Islamophobia is another glaring omission.
3. The Jewish population of the U.S. is very diverse. However, the Jewish membership of the commission seems to be drawn from a very narrow slice of the population. That is almost certain to skew the analysis of this issue.

From: Roger Bautista <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>, Roger Bautista <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Roger Bautista
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:28:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am familiar with the Draft Report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission. I wholly believe that the separation of church and state is best for our nation. Therefore, I object to funding religious non-profit activities and funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses. I also object to repealing the Johnson Amendment but rather support that it be fully enforced.

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

Sincerely,

Roger Bautista

From: D Fromthesea <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Draft Report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commision - Donna Dumar
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:32:15 -0400
Importance: Normal
Inline-Images: image.png

July 12, 2026

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty
US Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Room 5706

Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

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

The United States of America, founded two-hundred and fifty years ago, has long been a model of religious liberty and freedom of conscience. The original colonists left their European homes to avoid the tyranny of the amalgamation of church and state that characterized most European countries. While many of them re-established that tyranny on a smaller scale in their individual colonies, Roger Williams founded Providence on the principles of freedom of conscience and the separation of church and state. Thankfully, the principles of Rhode Island were the ones that animated our founding fathers, who bequeathed to us a country where the state has no power to mandate religious practice nor favor one religion over another. The God of the Bible has given all people liberty of conscience to freely worship Him or not. No coerced worship is pleasing to Him. While the state should protect the freedom of the individual to practice his religion, it should in no way promote a particular religion, whether it be Christianity or atheism or any other religious belief system. Instead, it should govern wisely, applying the principles of the US Constitution, including the foundational idea that church and state must remain separate and distinct. Preserving our democratic system and the individual freedoms it is based on is more important than any perceived religious or partisan gain.

The US Constitution guarantees the fundamental tenet of freedom of conscience. We need to avoid anything that might reduce the strength of this freedom. Therefore, I strongly oppose the Commission Report's suggestion to clarify “the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state.” In its hearings the Commission made clear that the public should be instructed that “there is no separation of church and state,” divulging what that “proper understanding” is from its point of view. Unfortunately, the Commission’s report is out of touch with solid historical scholarship. The historical explanations in the public comments of the American Historical Association, Pillar of Freedom, and Heritage and Hope Ministries give ample evidence of the errors in the Commission’s Draft Report.

We need men and women of character in our political system, many of whom will be people of faith. Nonetheless, we should not allow established religion to confound the pulpit and the political rally. Jesus Himself stated the principle that the church and the state had different domains when he told his disciples to give to Caesar what was Caesar’s and to God what was God’s. Furthermore, Jesus stayed conspicuously out of the politics of his time. The politicization of the Christian religion in the US has done great harm to the cause of Christ, as many citizens, whom Christians supposedly desire to win over to Christ, react in disgust to the self-interested words and actions of

Christian church leaders trying to push their agendas through the political system. Such approaches misrepresent Jesus. In short, the Johnson Amendment should be properly enforced rather than repealed.

We need to uphold true religious liberty. I urge the Commission to reconsider and amend the errors in its report to better align with the historical record and the clear principles of the US Constitution .

Sincerely,

Donna Dumar

Donna Dumar, M.A.

From: Marina Romero <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:40:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I agree with the Pillar of Freedom response. As a person of faith I understand that our nation was founded on the principle of separation of church and state. This land was a haven for all those who were escaping religious persecution. Christians who wanted to worship God by following His holy word and their conscience were killed for not accepting church traditions. Our founding fathers understood that the church should not be allowed to have power over the government. Even Jesus rejected political power by not allowing them to establish him as an earthly king.

John 18:36
Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight"
Mathew 22:21
Then said He unto them, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Even those that escaped persecution ended up persecuting others who believed differently.

From: Brandon Roach <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Brandon Roach
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:41:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am a concerned citizen reaching out to express my objections to the Commission's proposed recommendations. I find it wholly revisionist to claim that the principles embodied in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution (see below) do not clearly establish the separation of Church and State.

"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."

This Amendment establishes that there is to be no alliance between Church and State. To state otherwise is not only disingenuous, but also not biblical. For Christ Himself stated the following in Matthew 22:

[Mat 22:20-21 KJV] And he saith unto them, Whose [is] this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

Here Christ distinguishes two separate spheres of responsibility: civil government ('Render unto Caesar') and man's duty toward God ('Render unto God'). To be without civil government would be anarchy. To be without a conscience toward one's Creator would be a rejection of Him who formed us. These two spheres are shown in the two tablets on which the Ten Commandments are written (see Exodus 20/Deuteronomy 5). The first four commandments pertain to what is owed by the individual to His Creator, and the last six pertain to our duties to our neighbor, which fall within the sphere of civil government. If we love God, we will keep His commandments. On these hang all the Law and the Prophets. This has not changed in the Old Covenant or the New Covenant. The Apostle Paul confirms this principle in Romans chapter thirteen, teaching that the commandments governing our duty toward our neighbor fall within the sphere of civil government. You can also see in the accounts of Daniel chapter three and chapter six that when a government intrudes into the realm of conscience regarding the first four commandments by issuing an ordinance, decree, or law that violates one's conscience toward God, it is right and just before our Creator to respectfully refuse obedience.

With this in mind, the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, as intended by our Founders, require no revision regarding the First Amendment or Article VI of the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits religious tests for public office, for they already accomplish the very purpose these men sought when they fled religious persecution. They well recalled the persecution inflicted by brother upon brother through the alliance of kingcraft and priestcraft, and this influence extended throughout many of the thirteen colonies until Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, became a leading advocate for liberty of conscience. These were the conditions from which they fled in the 'Old World'—conditions intended to deceive and control the common people. It is therefore that the happiness of mankind requires that Church and State remain forever separate.

Excerpt from *Ecclesiastical Empire*, by A. T. Jones (pp. 813–816):

> *"While Virginia was yet a colony and subject to Great Britain, and while the Church of England was the established Church of the colony, the colonial House of Burgesses, June 12, 1776, adopted a Declaration of Rights, composed of sixteen sections, every one of which, in substance, afterward found a place in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The sixteenth section, in part, reads thus: -- "*

"That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence, and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience."

"…July 4 following, the Declaration of Independence was made, wherein, as we have already seen, this principle is embodied in the statement that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." This is precisely the view that was taken of it, and the use that was made of the principle as it appeared in the Declaration of Independence, as soon as that Declaration was published to the world. For no sooner was the Declaration published abroad than the Presbytery of Hanover, in Virginia, openly took its stand, with the new and independent nation, and with the Baptists and Quakers, addressed to the General Assembly of Virginia a memorial, reading as follows: --"

"To the Honorable, the General Assembly of Virginia: The memorial of the Presbytery of Hanover humbly represents: That your memorialists are governed by the same sentiments which have inspired the United States of America, and are determined that nothing in our power and influence shall be wanting to give success to their common cause. We would also represent that dissenters from the Church of England in this country have ever been desirous to conduct themselves as peaceful members of the civil government, for which reason they have hitherto submitted to various ecclesiastical burdens and restrictions that are inconsistent with equal liberty. But now, when the many and grievous oppressions of our mother country have laid this continent under the necessity of casting off the yoke of tyranny, and of forming independent governments upon equitable and liberal foundations, we flatter ourselves that we shall be freed from all the incumbrances which a spirit of domination, prejudice, or bigotry has interwoven with most other political systems. This we are the more strongly encouraged to expect by the Declaration of Rights, so universally applauded for that dignity, firmness, and precision with which it delineates and asserts the privileges of society, and the prerogatives of human nature, and which we embrace as the Magna Charta of our commonwealth, that can never be violated without endangering the grand superstructure it was designed to sustain. Therefore we rely upon this declaration, as well the justice of our honorable Legislature, to secure us the free exercise of religion according to the dictates of our own consciences; and we should fall short in our duty to ourselves, and the many and numerous congregations under our care, were we, upon this occasion, to neglect laying before you a statement of the religious grievances under which we have hitherto labored, that they may no longer be continued in our present form of government."

"It is well known that in the frontier counties, which are justly supposed to contain a fifth part of the inhabitants of Virginia, the dissenters have borne the heavy burdens of purchasing glebes, building churches, and supporting the established clergy, where there are very few Episcopalians, either to assist in bearing the expense, or to reap the advantage; and that throughout other parts of the country there are also many thousands of zealous friends and defenders of our State who, besides the invidious and disadvantageous restrictions to which they have been subjected, annually pay large taxes to support an establishment from which their consciences and principles oblige them to dissent; all of which are confessedly so many violations of their natural rights, and, in their consequences, a restraint upon freedom of inquiry and private judgment."

"In this enlightened age, and in a land where all of every denomination are united in the most strenuous efforts to be free, we hope and expect that our representatives will cheerfully concur in removing every species of religious as well as civil bondage. Certain it is that every argument for civil liberty gains additional strength when applied to liberty in the concerns of religion; and there is no argument in favor of establishing the Christian religion but may be pleaded with equal propriety for establishing the tenets of Mohammed by those who believe the Alcoran; or, if this be not true, it is at least impossible for the magistrate to adjudge the right of preference among the various sects that profess the Christian faith WITHOUT ERECTING A CLAIM TO INFALLIBILITY, WHICH WOULD LEAD US BACK TO THE CHURCH OF ROME."

"We beg leave farther to represent that religious establishments are highly injurious to the temporal interests of any community. Without insisting upon the ambition and the arbitrary practices of those who are favored by the government, of the intriguing, seditious spirit which is commonly excited by this as well as by every other kind of oppression, such establishments greatly retard population, and consequently the progress of arts, sciences, and manufactures. Witness the rapid growth and improvement of the northern provinces compared with this. No one

can deny that the more early settlements and the many superior advantages of our country would have invited multitudes of artificers, mechanics, and other useful members of society to fix their habitation among us, who have either remained in their place of nativity or preferred worse civil governments and a more barren soil, where they might enjoy the rights of conscience more fully than they had a prospect of doing in this; from which we infer that Virginia might have been now the capital of America, and a match for the British arms, without depending on others for the necessaries of war, had it not been prevented by her religious establishment."

"Neither can it be made to appear that the gospel needs any such civil aid. We rather conceive that when our blessed Saviour declares His Kingdom is not of this world, He renounces all dependence upon State power, and as His weapons are spiritual, and were only designed to have influence on the judgment and heart of man, we are persuaded that if mankind were left in quiet possession of their inalienable religious privileges, Christianity, as in the days of the apostles, would continue to prevail and flourish in the greatest purity by its own native excellence, and under the all-disposing providence of God."

"We would also humbly represent that the only proper objects of civil government are the happiness and protection of men in the present state of existence, the security of the life, liberty, and property of the citizens, and to restrain the vicious and encourage the virtuous by wholesome laws, equally extending to every individual; but that the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can only be directed by reason and conviction, and is nowhere cognizable but at the tribunal of the universal Judge."

"Therefore we ask no ecclesiastical establishments of ourselves; neither can we approve of them when granted to others. This, indeed, would be giving exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges to one set of men without any special public services, to the common reproach and injury of every other denomination. And for the reason recited, we are induced earnestly to entreat that all laws now in force in this commonwealth which countenance religious domination may be speedily repealed; that all of every religious sect may be protected in the full exercise of their several modes of worship; exempted from all taxes for the support of any Church whatsoever, farther than what may be agreeable to their own private choice or voluntary obligation. This being done, all partial and invidious distinction will be abolished, to the great honor and interest of the State, and every one be left to stand or fall according to his merit, which can never be the case so long as any one denomination is established in preference to the others."

"That the great Sovereign of the universe may inspire you with unanimity, wisdom, and resolution, and bring you to a just determination on all the important concerns before you, is the fervent prayer of your memorialists."

These and many other historical accounts are recorded in the annals of our history and remain available to all who are willing to search them, so long as liberty permits. I also entreat that the Commission would consider this and the many submissions from concerned individuals to the following aims of the Commission.

1. That there should be no funding provided by the state to religious non-profit activities.
2. That there should be no funding of religious education and religious associations on public campuses.
3. That the Johnson Amendment, instead of being repealed, should be enforced.
4. That no religion would receive special treatment, but that rather each individual would be treated with complete neutrality in the government's relationship with religion.

The Commission has also been shown (in the following example) that to erode or remove the wall of separation between the Church and State is unbiblical not only literally but typologically.

The church is the bride of Christ as shown in the following passage.

[Eph 5:25 KJV] Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

This bride is to be presented to Christ at his return without spot or blemish. It is not a bride to any earthly ruler.

A kingdom or state is noted as a beast or horn based on Daniel chapter 7.

[Dan 7:17 KJV] These great beasts, which are four, [are] four kings, [which] shall arise out of the earth.
[Dan 7:24 KJV] And the ten horns out of this kingdom [are] ten kings [that] shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

A simple reading from these types or symbols is in Leviticus 18.

[Lev 18:23 KJV] Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman *[symbolizing the church, the bride of Christ]* stand before a beast *[symbolizing an earthly government or kingdom]* to lie down thereto: it [is] confusion *[Babylon]*.

Confusion certainly is what this merging of Church and State is. It is no different today as it was in the past. At the tower of Babel, the languages were confused, and certainly this merging of the two spheres will result in the same. We only need to read the next verses in Leviticus to know the result of these things for the nation that doeth these things.

[Lev 18:24-30 KJV] Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit [any] of these abominations; [neither] any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which [were] before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that [were] before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit [them] shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that [ye] commit not [any one] of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I [am] the LORD your God.

I humbly ask that you consider this plea and that as it is written in Haggai, chapter 1, verse 5: “Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Consider your ways.”

Please consider the submitted paper by Pillar of Freedom (PillarOfFreedom.org) and, in the fear of the Lord, amend the Commission’s report so that it honors God and upholds the constitutional principles established by our nation’s Founders.

[Ecc 12:13-14 KJV] Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil.

Sincerely,

Brandon Roach
Fort Worth, Texas

From: Rachel L <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State appeal
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:41:25 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While we are mindful of the Committee's labors, which resulted in the 12 recommendations released June 26, certain of which we agree with, we write to voice our concerns and objections to the Committee's first and ninth recommendations [1] and its obviously insufficient consideration of the warnings of the Founding Fathers of the dangers of a union of church and state or the many lessons of history regarding same.
The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice "issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state." [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 suppressed speech and the freedom of the press in England. It was a union of church and state that prohibited the work of translation of the Bible, which changed the world. It was a union of church and state that necessitated his flight to Europe. It was a union of church and state that killed him.

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

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

Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, David Hume and Edward Gibbon, and many others, all

at the behest of the Roman Papacy, which is itself a union of church and state. Free speech in the Western world is the legacy of those who risked the wrath of a unified church and state, often at the cost of their lives. We would also ask that the Department of Justice consider the repeated modern calls from the papal power today for the censorship of the internet and the suppression of free speech, contrary to the First Amendment. [4] We have no doubt that the censorship of Galileo, Kepler, Milton, and others was prosecuted under the justification of the censorship of misinformation, also.

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

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

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

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

avoided the consequences by denying the principle. We revere this lesson too much soon to forget it." [8]

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Peter and Rachel Luchak

[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/PJA01d

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From: brian canales <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:44:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

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.

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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.

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

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

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings.

Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. We are concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Brian Canales

[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

Thank you,
Brian Canales
Cell: [redacted]
Fax: [redacted]

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
1 Peter 4:11 KJV

From: Patti Guthrie <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Establishment Clause – Patti Guthrie
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:44:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission:

America is the greatest nation on earth. I'm incredibly blessed to be an American. It's painful to watch as well intentioned people seek to dismantle the reason for our greatness by blurring the wall between church and state.

History reveals the result of interference of the church in State affairs. The church of the day influenced Rome to crucify Jesus. Soon after, persecution of His followers became the norm for more than 1,000 years.

But the Christian faith should not be uniquely protected. The beliefs of all should be held as sacred to the individual and outside the sphere of government interference. This is the secret to the greatness of our nation.

The deepest argument for this separation is not secular at all; it is Christian. When Christ said to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's, he divided human duty into two jurisdictions forever. Civil government exists to enforce what we owe each other; it has no authority over what we owe God. As one advocate told a Senate committee in 1888, there is a limit to the lawmaking power, and that limit is the line Jesus Christ has drawn: government has no right to legislate on things pertaining to God. The test this leaves us is simple and needs no religious test at all: the state may ask only whether an act is civil or uncivil, never whether it is religious or irreligious. Every proposal that puts government behind a religious text, display, or lesson crosses that line drawn by Christ himself, and it does so in the name of the very faith it claims to defend.

This is also why majority opinion cannot settle the question. If a vote can grant religious liberty, a vote can revoke it, and then it was never a right but only a permission. Rights, as the older tracts on civil authority put it, are inherent in the person who holds them, independent of anyone else's will; man's highest allegiance is to his Creator, and no government of one or of many may invade that domain. Constitutions exist to protect the minority from exactly the moment when the majority is tempted to overrule them. As one Senate witness said plainly, the people, however many, have no right to invade another person's relationship to God. Popular support may justify a road or a tax; it cannot justify a religious measure, because religion was never a matter for the ballot box.

Finally, I would ask the Commission to consider that no religious law, however well-intentioned, can avoid narrowing free exercise. Any law touching religion must define which religion it favors, and even those it favors now hold their faith by permission rather than by right, subject to revision by the next majority. A believer who welcomes government endorsement of his own creed forfeits the freedom to be persuaded otherwise later, and hands a tool to future officials who may not share his convictions at all.

Protect free exercise for all, and keep the state out of the business of religion. The two commitments stand or fall together.

Respectfully and prayerfully,
Patti Guthrie
California

From: Karissa Heinrich <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Karissa (Heinrich) Schmidt
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:47:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. The continued separation of church and state in America is crucial for maintaining true freedom and protecting this country from grave corruption. Personal matters of faith and conscience do not need government involvement. Religious belief should never be forced, coerced, or even monetarily incentivised by any political power. Please do not attempt to "bridge the gap" between church and state. Please keep church and state completely separate, always.

Sincerely,

Karissa (Heinrich) Schmidt
Vermont, USA

From: Tangny Saballos <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Tangny Saballos
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:51:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my opposition to any effort to combine church and state. I firmly believe that they should remain separate. The government should have no authority over who we worship, where we worship, or how we choose to practice our faith.

While I understand that current intentions may not involve restricting religious freedom, history has shown that when the government becomes involved in matters of religion, it often leads to serious problems. One of the founding principles of this country is the protection of religious liberty, including the freedom for every individual to practice their faith according to their own conscience.

I also believe that God has given each person the freedom of choice—the choice to worship Him or not. That freedom is fundamental and should not be influenced or directed by the government.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that church and state remain separate. History, including the events of the Dark Ages, demonstrates the dangers that can arise when political authority and religious authority become intertwined. Preserving the separation between church and state helps protect both religious freedom and the rights of all people.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tangny Saballos

WPB, FL

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Henry Jones Jr <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS - J. Cameron
Date: Sun, 12 Jul 2026 23:55:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history." According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater

authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain. Certainly, the Founding Fathers were all aware of the persecution of the Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from

the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Jay and Rosa Cameron

[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

Sent with Proton Mail secure email.

From: Alicia Aiston <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:00:52 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Alicia Aiston

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device
Get Outlook for Android

From: Karen States <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Draft
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:00:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission Members:

I am very troubled after reading your report. Rather than restate all of my concerns, let me say that I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments and I implore you to implement them.

I have many apprehensions regarding your report, but one of my greatest is your suggestion to bridge church and state religion. Our forefathers fled to the 'new world' to escape that very thing. The wall between them is precisely what has made America great these many years, giving all of us the freedom to choose to worship or not to worship as our conscience dictates, without government interference. Again, please seriously consider the Pillars of Freedom's comments!

Thank you also for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,
Karen States

Sent from my iPhone

From: Angela Vandervalk <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:01:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comme

Angela Vandervalk

[redacted]

From: KEN _ ANNETTA WILLIAMS <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Keeping Church Separate from State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:08:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As a United States citizen and a person of faith, I'm greatly troubled by the Liberty Commission's proposal to do away with the separation between church and state with a "bridge." A bridge opens doors for government money and political control that would force churches to compete for government money and answer to politicians instead of to God. History demonstrates that the blending of church and state is detrimental to both. This wall between church and the government was put in place by those of faith in order to keep the church free, not by anti-religionists who wish to restrict religion.
Please reconsider your report recommendations that serve to weaken this church-state separation—
The Johnson Amendment must stay in place. If churches engage in partisan politics or open their pockets for government money, they are open to political corruption. Separation protects faith, which is precisely why religion has remained strong in our country. That separation of church and state is specifically why pilgrims came to this country in the first place = to escape the tyranny of big government. Please maintain separation of church and state – that is the best way we know of to keep both free.

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

Annetta Williams

From: Tammy Johnson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Tammy Johnson
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:11:10 -0400
Importance: Normal

Religious Liberty Commission

7-12-2026

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I was saddened to see the Commission's comments a few weeks ago (and others since) that said that the Separation of Church and State are not in the constitution. The words may not be there but it is absolutely the INTENT.

It is troubling to see in the report that the commission is considering tearing down the wall of separation to bridge between politics (the state) and the churches. This has never gone over well in the past. We should not be trying it again! I am a Christian believer but I do not believe that any bureaucrat should have any influence on ANY church. Once we go down this road, make a bridge, as you suggest, the money that is pouring into and distorting special interests will start pouring into the churches, distorting their views. Political favors will start to be the norm in churches to get more funds for their 'worthy' projects… to please the politicians rather than God. That's a dangerous place to be for the pleasers and for those who choose to follow God and not man.

I am also asking that you do NOT repeal the Johnson Amendment. It restricts the churches from the influence of politicians influencing them to vote one way or another and by restricting the flow of money which, as explained earlier, would bring the corruption of politics into the churches who choose to accept that money and endorse a particular political candidate.

This government was not set up by godless men to keep religion out. It was set up by God-fearing men to keep the government from controlling religion… FREE CHOICE by ALL to serve who they choose according to their conscience. This was from their lived experiences of persecution due to the lack of Religious Freedom where they came from.

Sincerely,

Tammy Johnson :-)

Pasco, WA

From: Briklin Arocho <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Freedom of Religion
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:21:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission:

Our country was founded upon religious freedom, and it was one of the chief reasons our founders came and settled in America.
America is a constitutional monarchy, and a majority should not be able to take away the rights of the minority, especially in regard to an individuals freedom of religion.

I ask that you maintain the proper constitutional opinion of this matter as you continue to protect our great countries liberties on these matters.

Thank you for your attention,

Briklin Arocho

From: James Vickroy <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT -- Separation of Church and State -- James L Vickroy and Renae L Vickroy
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:23:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission :

As a family of faith, we are concerned that the Commission is thinking of replacing the wall of separation between church and state with a “bridge.”
When a wall is built, there’s usually a good reason to build it. In this case, it was built by believers to keep the church free. Why free? Historically, throughout history whenever there was a union between church and state, persecution was the result. Whoever was in power would determine the “correct” understanding of God’s word and proceed to enforce obedience according to their dictates.

We hope you will reconsider your recommendation. Please keep church and state separate as originally written in our First Amendment.

PS: We agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.

From: Sheri Clarke <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:23:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

I can’t believe that the cause my dad devoted his whole professional life to is under attack — by the US Government, no less.

Stop it. Just say No to Christian Nationalism and the attack on religious liberty, and anything that even smells a little like it. Especially that nasty "religion" promoted by Doug Wilson, the misogyinist, and adhered to by the brown-nosed, racist and also misogynist Pete Hegseth.

Sheri Clarke

From: Nancy Thomas <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:23:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

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

Our family would like to voice our objection to the Commission's Recommendations to weaken the separation of church and state. Even though the actual phrase "wall of separation between church and state" does not appear in the First Amendment or in the Constitution, the idea is heavily implied in the first freedom of the First Amendment. The government has no right to establish an official state religion and protects individual's rights to practice any religion or no religion at all. This weakening of the separation is the first step toward repudiating the principle of this Amendment.

Religion should in no way be involved in the government. Have people learned nothing from the "Dark Ages"? We realize that term may be considered outdated, but can still describe the period of approximately 5th - 14th centuries as one of intellectual suppression, ignorance and religious dominance. The religious dominance likely caused the ignorance as the Bible, the light of the world, was not allowed to be in the hands of the common people. Revelation chapter 11 was fulfilled as Bibles were burned in the streets - the "two witnesses" of the Old and New Testaments. Protestants were hunted by the military under orders from the state religion and the Inquisition. Millions were tortured and/or killed by the sword, the rack, burning at the stake, starvation in dungeons and other atrocities. The Saint Bartholomew Massacre is one example of thousands of violent attacks. Force is the last resort of every false religion.

Why did all these horrors happen? Because the church and government were in bed together. The Bible calls it fornication. (See Revelation 14:8, 17:1-2 and 18:3.) The founders of our country knew very well the atrocities that the church combined with the state government could inflict on people and take away their freedoms or even their lives. They determined this should never happen again, and so our beloved country was formed, without a king and without a Pope. A country "of the people and for the people" with a Constitution that protects our rights, thank God. God bless America!

What we have described could easily be the end result of starting to let government and religion influence each other by weakening the separation of church and state. Because of these beliefs we respectfully request the Commission to withdraw its recommendations. In addition, we agree with "Pillar of Freedom's" comments. Please implement them.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit our concerns.

Sincerely,
Guy and NancyThomas

From: Bowen Bruce <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:31:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

Separation of Church and State - C Bruce Bowen
Members of the Religious Liberty Commission

This country has given stability to me and many other people. Public and private support by this country goes far beyond most peoples consideration.

My concern is public and also private. My freedom comes from this country.. My freedom also comes from the God of the universe. My freedom of choice has been given very specifically to me from divine heaven; a test of humans to see if we will be faithful to an eternally faithful God.

To designate an unseperatable human force, responsible for guarding many persons God given freedom of choice is a matter that is either very bad, or very good, or very otherwise.

It is not right when humans remove or block what God of heaven has given His other children. This is evidently eternal. What God gave to Adam should not be corrupted with current human establishments.

Please continue to consider future freedoms for both government and religion as divine freedom to think and choose. This issue has different sides. May both human wisdom and divine wisdom find their own place as you consider dangers, or hazards of our time. (for example - Iran)
The ditch on both sides of the road may be uncertain, but if we stay IN the road on our own side everything will work better.

TRUTH, ALL OF IT - NOTHING ELSE

i AGREE WITH PILLAR OF FREEDOM COMMENTS. PLEASE IMPLEMENT THEM.

From: Cheryl F <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty; Let Freedom Ring!
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:35:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission Members,

As a United States Citizen, I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

May God bless this country with liberty and justice for all.

Cheryl Fierce

From: Charlie Galan <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:36:19 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

This is concerning the Commission's recommendation to increase government funding of religious activities and to repeal the Johnson Amendment of 1954. With all due respect, there is a growing concern among many people of faith, including Christians, Jews, Muslims, etc… who believe this action would eventually infringe on the first amendment that specifically prohibits the government from making any religious-based laws. This actually serves to *demote* the liberty of conscience of American citizens. In the Bible, "conscience" refers to the innate sense of right and wrong that directs a person's thoughts and actions. As a Christian, Biblical freedom is a deeply felt principle that comprises liberation from sin, freedom from the law's condemnation, and spiritual bondage. The Bible teaches that true freedom is derived exclusively as the result of the redemptive work of Christ.

It is well understand that as a nation founded on the principles of the Bible, the US has had a history of granting liberty of conscience unlike any other nation. This is truly a marvel of history, which is embedded in our constitution. But it is precisely the principle of keeping the government detached from Church matters what has sustained and nurtured this great right. This is exactly the opposite of what the previous generation of our founding fathers had to contend with that led to this stately and magnificent principle, the granting of liberty of conscience, for the simple reason that we are endowed by our Creator with these inalienable rights.

The Bible clearly intimates that the rights of human beings are granted by God, not man (Acts 5:29), and that Christ is the one who makes that freedom possible (Galatians 5:1). God is the One who appoints governments to protect its citizens from evil, and to promote good (Romans 13:1). However, if a nation promotes evil God will punish that nation (Psalm 59:5). It is also true that a good nation will not force its citizens to worship in a specific way. God's kingdom never promoted despotism, neither in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. In fact, God's kingdom, being founded on love, could never find itself enforcing obedience, since force is contradictory to love. Moral enforcement of any kind breeds coercion, restriction and ultimately control of human beings— the exact opposite of liberty of conscience. The closest example in the Bible of complete government control is shown in the Old Testament when God was their direct leader, also known as a theocracy. However, there has never been a true theocracy since the days of the Hebrews in the times of the Judges. Since then God has approved governments that are to rule based on their knowledge of godly principles. Therefore, while the proposed introductory changes by this Commission may not, in and of itself, cause religious restrictions to minority groups, but its *successor* (i.e., future laws precipitated by well-meaning intentions to improve the moral state of our nation) will most definitely do this. And this is clearly evidenced by history. History is very clear that when well-meaning leaders seek to control by force of hand the moral or religious conduct of its citizens, control of conscience is the tragic outcome. This happens when religion, or the Church allies itself with government. This is not referring to standard laws that are intended to maintain order and peace in a society, but laws that go beyond this standard and trample on the freedoms of religion and speech.

Finally, the Bible is clear that God desires a service from the heart (Deuteronomy 30:6; Romans 2:29), not from mere outward performance. He will not accept our sacrifices or "Christian actions" if it's for mere outward show (Isaiah 1:11). God wants our deepest love (Mark 12:30). Also, He desires for His followers to act by faith, not force, "for whatever is not from faith is sin." (Romans 14:23). This can only be accomplished when religion remains *separate* from the state.

Please reconsider this proposal and consider what the Bible means when it says, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Mark 12:17)

Sincerely, Charles A Galan

"The pain of discipline is far less than the pain of regret"

Sent with Proton Mail secure email.

From: Karene Ashbourne <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – [DRAFT REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION] – [KARENE ASHBOURNE].
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:37:20 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Public_Comment_to_The_Religious_Liberty_Commission_Draft_Report.pdf

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My name is Karene Ashbourne, and I am a citizen voicing my comment regarding the Religious Liberty Commission Draft.

Please find my public comment below in the body of this email. I have also attached it as a pdf document for possibly easier access. Thank you.

Re: Public Comment to The Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report

July 13, 2026

Dear Chairman Dan Patrick, Vice Chairman Ben Carson, and other members of the commission:

It is reassuring to know that the idea of strengthening religious liberty for all Americans is a thought that this commission is striving to achieve. However, I do respectfully and strongly disagree with the first point outlined in the Religious Liberty Commission Draft which states, "Instruct the Department of Justice to issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and Separation of Church and State."

In context to the existence of this country, Religious Liberty goes back to the forefathers of this nation who also felt the need to ensure that there was freedom to all people to choose and practice their religion, or a lack thereof, without the necessity of compelling or forcing one's conscience. They understood that they, as the governing body at the time, had no jurisdiction in matters regarding religion as it was never the role of government to recommend, suggest, prohibit, or legislate religion within the United States of America. There was no government involvement in religious matters. Hence, the idea of Church and State Separation. This is the premise on which the governing body of the USA posited which led to the writing of the Constitution to further solidify and bolster the importance of stressing freedom of religion for all people without the government having a say in the people's decisions.

Historically, it was clear what the Constitution meant regarding the Establishment Clause and the Separation of Church and State. The proposition for the Commission to instruct the Department of Justice to make clarification seems to suggest or imply that the First Amendment Article in the Constitution whose very function is to protect the people's right to freedom from government legislation, involvement, and suggestions was not already clear.

In addressing the Establishment Clause first, 1971 saw a reinterpretation of the word 'establish' as it relates to establishing a religion. At that time, it was then defined with three parts of understanding. Of the three parts, I am particularly emphasizing the third which states that the government can assist religion when "there is no excessive entanglement between church and state"[1] making the government officially involved with religion but not to the extreme as seen by the word 'excessive.' By this time, the government was involving itself with religious matters and according to them it was so long as it was not in an unreasonable manner. Secondly, in like manner, the Free Exercise Clause was reinterpreted during the Prince vs. Massachusetts case in 1944 to have an exception that would cause the government to intervene and become involved when there is a public health

crisis.[2] One, then, is no longer free to exercise one's own religious beliefs and practices when the government claims that a health crisis is a time when freedom of exercising one's religion should be taken away. This is not to say that a crisis should not be addressed, but the main point to be made here is the government finding a reason to involve itself in religious affairs in some form of way with the idea that this will strengthen the nation.

History consistently teaches us that it never ends well when civil power involves itself in religious dealings. The Spanish Inquisition, the English Reformation, the Byzantine Empire among others, show the deleterious effects of church and state uniting. **These examples show persecution, rigid dogmas, and draconian rules governing the people as a result of having the church and civil power together leading a nation.** These baleful outcomes do not generally happen immediately. Instead, they first show up gradually in subtle ways, then at last in a more pointed and marked way. The United States of America has been a place of refuge and freedom for many people for centuries. During the times of separation of church and state, America has experienced successes and victories in leading this nation as a republic.

The Bible also shows the importance of church and state separation when in Romans 14:15 it states, "…Let every man be persuaded in his own mind." **That is to say, let religion be left up to the individual, not any government**. And in John 18:36, God says, "My kingdom is not of this world…" which shows that there is no need of an earthly rulership to establish religion or religious beliefs that are not founded outside of the realm of Earth. **This world has no jurisdiction in the things that are spiritual; therefore, an earthly nation such as the United States of America is unable to have jurisdiction in spiritual and religious things because spiritual things are not manufactured here on Earth, where the United States of America exists.**

Finally, it is commendable for the Religious Liberty Commission to seek to strengthen religious liberty for all Americans. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the absence of civil power involving itself in religious affairs. Instead of pursuing clarity on the First Amendment, it already seems clear that **Separation of Church and State is the sole decision the Commission can continue to support and practice for the best interest of the American people in order to maintain religious liberty in its appropriate context**. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Karene Ashbourne

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[1] First Amendment: Freedom of Religion. https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/freedom-religion_0.pdf

[2] First Amendment: Freedom of Religion. https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/freedom-religion_0.pdf

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Sincerely,

Karene Ashbourne

From: Biliftu Koshe <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Approval for Pillar of Freedom's comments.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:39:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

Regarding the Pillar of Freedom, I have reviewed the comments and I am in full agreement with the assessment and request. please implement those changes.

Thank You.

From: Kathleen Abbott <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to the RCL Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:41:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission.

My name is Kathleen Abbott and I wanted to say that I agree with the Pillar of Freedoms comments on the topic of Separation of Church and State with a Bridge.

This will not work as was proven in the dark ages when the church had control over the Kings and the masses.
Our country is a country of religious freedom.
How will that work if the state is in power again dictating to the churches what they can and cant do?
That's not freedom. One cannot legislate religion. Even God gives people freedom of choice.

Also I believe the Government should not be in the business of supporting religious schools and programs.
These use tax dollars paid by citizens who may not agree with that religious denomination.

I'm not very good at this type of formal letter writing. I just know about the churches history and the persecution that arose because of differences of beliefs.

I would ask that you put some serious prayer and study into the many millions of people that were persecuted and killed just because of their not going along with one religious system that was in control.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my voice in this matter.

God bless you all as you lay self and church affiliation aside, and truely ask our Heavenly Father what His will is at this time.

God bless you each one,
Kathleen 🙏💜🙏💜

From: Richard Clarke Jr <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RLC
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:42:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Christin Cervantes <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment re: Separation of Church and State - Christine Cervantes
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:46:08 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing as a concerned citizen of this country. My concern is that the Religious Liberty 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 forcing churches to compete for government grants and answering to politicians when they should be answering to God. History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands, it isn't good for either one.
Please don't build that bridge, keep the wall because it protects the church far more than it constrains it.

Sincerely,

Christine Cervantes
Clovis, California

From: Kindra Powell <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment- Presidential Religious Liberty Commission-Kindra Stewart.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:55:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Kindra Stewart

From: LB Anderson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 00:57:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

We are writing a sincere and concerned email response in regards to the pending possible decisions being made to do away with the separation of church and state.

Our country has enjoyed the freedom to exercise one's conscience when it comes to how to worship, whom to worship and when to worship. America is known for the many freedoms that faith communities of every type are able to freely practice, and this makes for a more peaceable society overall in that society has been able to enjoy such freedoms without a King or dictator-without government crossing this very sacred line of the freedom of choice that God in his Biblical Word has given each and every one of us.

We can see clearly in God's Word that Christ led by example-he never coerced-He never forced people to come to him and/or worship him; Christ gave every man and woman a choice in that matter-and so should we as Christians follow Christ's example by allowing all people to follow the dictates of their own conscience, when it comes to how they wish to worship or if they wish to worship at all. Christ in His Word clearly said the following:

Matthew 22:20-22
20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?
21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

Christ's words in the above verse are quite clear that civil power should tend to it's own rulings-it's own domain, and likewise the church should do the same; and this we have done as a great Nation so beautifully over the past few hundred years-why change the religious freedoms that every man and woman has enjoyed in matters of true religious liberty?….lest we forget, when church and state were last united, persecution was the unavoidable -unfortunate result; and with human beings at the realm of trying to repeat a church state union-the Bible clearly predicts where this will lead-Please read Revelation 13, in particular 11 and 12.

Many of us do not wish for history to repeat itself; mankind is fallible, and church and state can quickly become a slippery slope where religious persecution-punishment can once again sadly be revived. I do not wish for any one person to have to go through this. Please reconsider where a unification of church and state could lead, and "will lead according to Bible prophecy".

Thank you for allowing us to express our opinion and thoughts on this matter; and I do want to express that our sentiment is very much shared with "Pillar of Freedom's comments, and the letter that a dear brethren wrote by the name of David Barron, which is far more succinct with historical mentions and very eloquently written, for which I will paste his letter-link right below in this email.

Thank you kindly for your time.

Laura-Beth Anderson & John Pocock

From: C Monty <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-Regarding reinterpreting the Establishment Clause of the First Admendment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 01:00:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

History reveals that the separation of Church and State protects freedom. Mixing religion and government lets the state impose one faith on everyone, leading to discrimination and tyranny.

Thomas Jefferson described it as a “wall of separation between Church and State, and that government possesses no rightful authority to establish, direct or compel religious observance”.

James Madison also declared in his 1785 Memorial & Remonstrance Against Religious Assessment: “Religion or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence."

Religion is very personal.

Government must stay neutral to protect everyone's right to believe without interference.

History proves religious states oppress. It was exactly why the USA was founded originally! The first people came here exactly BECAUSE church and state in their own countries was NOT separate.

You have received many other well documented and very detailed historical proofs such as written by Alexander Bowen with Heritage & Hope Ministries as well as Jonathan Zircle, JD with Pillar of Freedom website that I would like to add my voice of approval and full support.

So PLEASE, keep church and state completely separate.

Respectfully,
C Monty

From: Hyun Bang <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 01:04:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I respectfully submit this comment in support of preserving a strong separation between the institutions of church and state, not because I oppose religion, but because history demonstrates that both religion and civil government are best protected when neither controls the other.

Throughout history, whenever religious institutions have exercised civil authority or governments have enforced religious doctrine, the result has too often been the suppression of conscience, persecution of minorities, and the loss of fundamental freedoms.

One of the clearest examples occurred during medieval Europe, when the Roman Catholic Church and civil governments became closely intertwined. While the Church made immeasurable contributions to education, charity, art, and the preservation of learning, history also records periods in which this union of ecclesiastical and civil power produced grave injustices.

Examples include:

- The Medieval Inquisitions, in which civil governments enforced religious conformity through imprisonment, confiscation of property, torture, and execution.
- The Spanish Inquisition, where individuals accused of heresy, including Jews and Muslims who had converted to Christianity, were prosecuted under a system combining religious and governmental authority.
- Laws criminalizing dissent from the established religion, leaving little room for freedom of conscience.
- The persecution of reformers and minority religious groups who sought only the freedom to worship according to their convictions.
- Civil penalties imposed for religious beliefs rather than criminal conduct.

These events are well documented by historians across many traditions. They remind us that sincere religious conviction, when combined with the coercive power of the state, can produce outcomes contrary to both justice and the teachings of Christ.

Importantly, this lesson is not unique to any one religion. Similar abuses have occurred whenever any religious or ideological system has obtained governmental power and used it to compel belief or punish dissent. Human nature, not one particular denomination, is the underlying problem.

The American constitutional system wisely sought to avoid repeating these historical mistakes. The First Amendment protects both the free exercise of religion and the prohibition against governmental

establishment of religion. These two principles work together. Government should protect every person's right to worship God—or not worship—according to conscience, while remaining neutral among faiths.

Religious liberty flourishes when faith is embraced freely rather than through governmental influence or coercion. Likewise, religious institutions are strengthened when they rely on persuasion, service, and moral example instead of civil authority.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission to preserve the longstanding constitutional safeguards that prevent the union of church and state. Our nation's remarkable tradition of religious freedom has allowed people of every faith—and those of no faith—to live together peacefully while protecting the conscience of every individual.

History repeatedly teaches that once government begins favoring or enforcing religious belief, liberty for everyone is placed at risk. The best protection for both religion and freedom is to maintain a clear distinction between the mission of the church and the authority of the state.

I submit these comments as a private citizen concerned about preserving the religious liberty guaranteed to all Americans.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to protecting religious liberty for all Americans.

From: David Morris <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State (From David Morris)
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 01:08:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Throughout history, any time the state has supported any religion with it's funds, it has also resulted in the religion supporting the government, and those who choose not to go along have been persecuted to the point of being eliminated. It was the case in the "dark ages"....1500's and on, until close to the 1800's), and is the case in many of the Middle Eastern countries to this very day, that if someone decides to be a different religion than the established one, he will be persecuted or killed, with the support of the state or country. It has always been, and always will be.

One of the secrets to America's power and prosperity is the complete separation between church and state. This country must not support any religion by funding it, or any of it's programs, or supporting any religion in any way at all. Churches must not be used or permitted to support any political party or individual. I support the Johnson amendment. Do not repeal it!

Thank you so much!

David Morris
Loma Linda
CA.

www.amazingfacts.org http://www.amazingfacts.org/bible-study/free-book-library.aspx

From: Julia Dunn <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] keep church and state separate
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 01:17:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

Separating church and state - protects people from religious persecution.

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

Sincerely,
Julia Dunn

From: Jim Buller <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 01:21:42 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: RLC@usdoj.

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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,

James Buller

[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: Virginia Echols <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State-Virginia
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 01:27:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

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 begin answering to the government instead of to God.

History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands, and it isn't good for either one - persecution of free thinking people follow close behind.

Please don't build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects the church far more than it constrains it.
Sincerely,
Virginia Echols Harrison
Bristow, OK [redacted]
_____-

From: Shanelle Adams <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 01:29:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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Lastly, I object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, I am mindful of my 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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I remain, Yours truly,

Shanelle Adams

[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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[8] James Madison, Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments
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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: Suzanne Tollefson <[redacted]>
To: Religious Liberty Commission <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Suzanne Tollefson
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 01:44:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

My name is Suzanne Tollefson. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the recently released draft report. The fact that the Commission's website features primarily pro-Christian comments justifies my concerns.

The Establishment Clause of the U. S. Constitution protects religious liberty by ensuring that the government neither favors nor disfavors religion. Every American remains free to pray, worship and speak about their faith -- or lack thereof. That same right does not authorize the government to sponsor religious observances or use its authority to promote one faith over others. The report ignores this critical distinction at every turn, dismissing the longstanding understanding of the Establishment Clause while failing to acknowledge extensive historical evidence that the Framers intentionally designed a road map for the nation that separates religion from government.

Many of the reports recommendations also violate the law, as codified by the Legislative branch and set forth in Supreme Court precedent. The recommendations abandon historic rulings by, for example, expanding governmental promotion of religion in public schools and other public spaces, and repealing the Johnson Amendment so that tax-exempt churches can engage in partisan electioneering.

The creation of new "hotlines" to report perceived religious discrimination pose their own particular problems. First, they are unnecessary, as persons experiencing such discrimination already have the ability to lodge a complaint with existing state and federal authorities (e.g., DOJ, HHS, EEOC, DIR). The process akso lacks guidelines to prevent unjustified claims, leading to a waste of law enforcement resources tracking down supposed offenders. Conceivably, someone with a grudge against their employer -- or even their neighbor -- could report them, resulting in a sanctioned form of religiously-motivated "doxxing". Finally, the government's formation, funding and support for such hotlines advances preferred religious claims, implicitly endorsing Christianity and justifying the persecution of non-Christians.

I also object to the Commission's proposal encouraging judicial appointments based on a particular ideological vision of religious liberty -- one where the rights of believers are favored over those of non-believers. History has shown, and current events continue to demonstrate, that professed piety or religious fervor is an indicator of neither morality nor justice. There should be no religious litmus test for judicial appointments, as a jurist's obligation is to apply the law impartially to all who come before the court -- and not favor the claims of those with whom they share a belief system.

The recent introduction of Christian-centered prayer meetings and discriminatory listing of approved faiths at the Defense Department is a particularly concerning and pernicious development. It infringes upon each service member's 1st Amendment right to practice the religion of their choosing, or none at all. Further, the Christian-centric focus is divisive and distracting to our troops in uniform. The strength and cohesion of our armed forces lies with the brave and dedicated men and women who have sworn an oath to the constitution and not to a god. Imposing an irrelevant mandate only undermines their mission.

As set forth above, these proposals threaten the constitutional commitment to religious pluralism and equal treatment for believers and nonbelievers alike. I ask that you withdraw this report and respect everyone's First Amendment rights. Thank you.

From: Jill <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] My response to the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 01:44:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Members of the Religious Liberty Committee,

I am in agreement with the Pillar of Freedom response to the draft report.

Please keep church and state separate as it protects our freedom.

Also, please keep the Johnson Amendment as is.

Thank you for reading this.

Sincerely

Jill Ellington

From: Eva steen <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillars of freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 01:51:55 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.

Kindly Eva Steen

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 02:11:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Heidi S <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 02:18:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE 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.

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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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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Yours truly,

Heidi & Sheldon Seemann

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

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Heidi M. Seemann

From: Cheryl Struchen <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 02:21:52 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Committee,

As a committed Christian I am so thankful I live in a country where the government does NOT get involved with the various religious denominations. The countries where the government dictates what churches can and cannot do are NOT countries I would want to live in. While I believe the principles that Christians live by (for example the 10 commandments) it is not the government's job to force them on the people of our nation. We should have the choice of whatever denomination we choose or none at all.

Religious organizations should not be funded by the government which will always have expectations that may not align with the churches goals and beliefs. Christian churches should answer to God and not to the government.

I believe the Johnson Amendment is a safeguard from the government using churches to endorse candidates and ideology. Churches are houses of worship NOT politics.
PLEASE keep the Johnson Amendment intact**!**

I have read the Pillar of Freedom's response and agree with the views expressed.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Struchen
White Salmon, WA

From: JoJo M <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I beg of you to PROTECT RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 02:23:19 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of The Presidential Commission for Religious Liberties,

Please, please consider the gravity of what you intend to do and the slippery slope that your commission intends to approve will cause.

As a woman who survived a near death accident and have now read the bible 7 times and am engaged in continuous biblical study sessions and research, learning of what your committee intends to do causes me deep concern.

Everyone should be made aware of this and given sufficient time to respond. The fact that there is minimal awareness of your intention is troubling to say the least.

The Sabbath was given to all man by our creator, our almighty heavenly Father at the time of creation and was changed by men.

The constitution states that individual liberty of conscience must be protected of which the religious liberty commission does not do.

I pray for God's protection for those who wish to honor the 4th commandment, to keep the Sabbath holey, if this is passed.

Our Father does not want His children to be forced to follow His laws, but to have FREEDOM to choose. No further elaboration is required on this critical subject.

I agree with **Pillar of Freedom's** comments and respectfully ask you to Please implement them.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration,
JoAnne Wajer

From: Constanta Turlea <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT—Separation of Church and State—Constanta Turlea
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 02:26:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the
church free after coming to the United States to secure their freedom from religious persecution.
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.

My family and I came to America due to religious persecution in communist Romania.
We have first hand experience with the overbearing hand of government in religious
matters, narrowly escaping with our lives, an after engaging in 2 weeks of hunger
strike. We came for freedom to practice our faith without government interference.
Please keep America the land of the free, as there is no other land to flee too after
this!

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,

Constanta Turlea

Banning, California

From: Lucian Turlea <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT—Separation of Church and State—Lucian Turlea
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 02:35:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the
church free after coming to the United States to secure their freedom from religious persecution.
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.

My family and I came to America due to religious persecution in communist Romania.
We have first hand experience with the overbearing hand of government in religious
matters, narrowly escaping with our lives, after engaging in approximately 2 weeks of
hunger strike. We came for freedom to practice our faith without government
interference. Please keep America the land of the free for all religious people!

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,

Lucian Turlea

Banning, California

Sent from my iPhone

From: Gina Risner <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission: Please reconsider
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 02:35:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sorry for my late response,“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments.

From: Debbie Estrada <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment - Religious Liberty Commission Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 03:05:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

While the "12 Opportunities to Strengthen Religious Liberty For All Americans" was written with very good intentions, history has shown us that unification of church and state ultimately leads to greater persecution.

With this in mind, I respectfully disagree specifically with recommendations 1 and 9:
- to "instruct the Department of Justice to issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state".
- to repeal the Johnson Amendment.

Yes, we the people can still put God front and center, "in God we trust", without government passing legislation regarding religion.

The term "separation of church and state" was mentioned back in the colonies as early as 1600's. And while the exact phrase was not written in the constitution - the concept was. Our founding fathers, such as James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and many others had learned that "liberty prospered better where church and state were separate".

Prior to 1776, many of the colony leaders were persecuting other colonists who didn't believe as they did. Ironically, those who fled themselves from being persecuted were now doing the persecuting. However, one by one, the colonies, starting with Rhode Island, started realizing that in order to have true religious freedom, those in government needed to keep religion out of their government duties and avoid legislation on religious matters.

In total, I agree with the comments made by Pillar of Freedom and request that you please NOT make a "bridge" but rather maintain the "wall" between church and state. I regret the fact that many have suffered due to the "gender" and "Covid-19" issues, etc; but fact is MANY MORE will ultimately suffer even greater persecution by making steps to unify church and state.
Secondly, do not repeal the Johnson Ammendment.

Thank you,
Debra Estrada

From: Diana Santos <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-Separation of Church and State- Diana Smith
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 03:14:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I once had a stalker, his voicemails and messages led like a man in love; they ended by attempting to strip me of my freedom to choose to believe otherwise.

Constitutional democracy has its own stalker. It's seduces with words harmonizing faith and freedom, it's predictively headed, in the light of history, on a slippery slope that ends with coercive, dehumanizing control because humans left to their own devices consolidate power at the expense of liberty.

It's a predictable pattern yet when clocked in language compatible with our ideological tribes we are predisposed to fall prey to the very phenomenon.

What should help keep us balanced is remembering that the checks and balances inherent in separating secular and religions realms of influence as pictured by our forefathers came from their contexts rich in proximate and personal historical experience to the contrary. Personal sovereignty and the societal safeguards for them are core to why the American experiment has lasted—and their erosion is coming unequivocally from BOTH secular AND spiritual sources.

There are certain Religious Liberty Commission Report recommendations that undermine core Religious Liberty tenets and set a dangerous, compromising precedent by blatantly ignoring the historical context and intent in the writing of our constitution. By explicitly asserting that there is no separation of church and state because that exact phrase isn't present—reveals intellectual sloppiness that honestly chills me.

While I support SOME of the recommendations present in the report and do appreciate the opportunity to review the subject; my main objections are to the following Religious Liberty recommendations:

1. The repeal of the Johnson Amendment—which restricts certain tax-exempt organizations, including churches from participating or intervening in political campaigns on behalf of—or in opposition to—candidates for public office.

Legalizing political endorsements by religious organizations is a decided step towards further intertwining Church and State influence and finances.

Why is it not safe to endorse such a union?

Because it ignores human natures coercive bent and history's example of just how manipulative and exploitative this union morphs into (besides also mischaracterizing the character of God) while ignoring biblical warnings that points to a showdown characterized by just such a union.

1. Expansion of Government Funding for Religious Organizations

Expanding public funding in the name of school choice or supporting faith-based organizations that meet community needs deserves far greater caution than the report reflects.

Once you're tied to government funding you're bound to government qualifiers—before expanding public funding, the Commission should articulate how such a system would protect the autonomy of all religious organizations, minimize government entanglement, and ensure that today's protections do not become tomorrow's means of regulation.

1. "Know Your Rights" Posters and Reporting Mechanisms

Publicly displayed "Know Your Rights" posters under the assumption that there is no separation of church and state, along with government-sponsored reporting hotlines for perceived violations, and mandatory written justifications for alleged violations creates an enforcement culture that risks encouraging surveillance and ideological conformity rather than genuine constitutional protection. History demonstrates that systems encouraging citizens to report one another—even when well-intentioned—can foster fear, self-censorship, and coercion inconsistent with a free society.

It is exactly because I believe in the Biblical narrative that I am NOT striving for a society reset to pre-reformation Europe—and I pray, neither is this Committee.

Sincerely,
Diana Smith

From: russell lovett <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 03:37:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear honorable Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
After reading through most of the religious liberty draft report I have to agree with the Pillar of Freedom response to this draft report. The checks and balances in to deter corrupt political meddling in reference to government funding of religious entities and repealing the Johnson Amendment would be unadvised at best and destructive at overall. I believe It is in the best interest of all Americans to not reinvent the wheel. It seems to be rolling along quite well. I ask you, please refrain from closing the gap between church and state .
.
Sincerely Russell lovett

From: friend ofjesus <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment – Religious Liberty Commission Report – Kristen & Mark Hoover
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 03:38:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 13, 2026

Via Electronic Mail to [redacted]

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

Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

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

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

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

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

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

and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Kristen & Mark Hoover

[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=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/.../adam.../index.php/view/PJA01dg2

From: Carolyn Alli <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Freedom in America
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 03:47:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

America must keep freedom of religion We must always respect each other's religious beliefs. To have one world religion would not be good because it will bring persecution, confusion and a FORCED RELIGION. GOD DOES NOT FORCE ANYBODY TO WORSHIP HIM HE GIVES US FREE WILL AND CHOICE! 👀 Look at the PAST Babylon and Rome it did not work. GOD IS COMING SOON REPENT AND OBEY HIS LAWS. IT IS NOT ABOUT RELIGION IT IS ABOUT A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. 🙏🙏🙏 PLEASE STAND FOR TRUTH THIS IS THE TRUE AMERICA FREEDOM - FREEDOM LET FREEDOM RAIN!! RESPECT THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION!! NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW!!!

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Melissa Steitz <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 04:17:02 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Jessica Garcia <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 04:52:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Chair Patrick, Vice Chair Dr. Carson, and the members of the Religious Liberty Commission,
I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments.
Sincerely,
Jessica

From: Laurinda Toews <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Importance of separation between church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 05:01:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,
I am writing to express that I am very disturbed about the information I recently received concerning religious liberty.
I would like to state that I fully agree with the comments provided by Pillar of Freedom. I request that you please implement their recommendations and comments regarding this matter.

Thank you for your time and for considering my position on this important issue.

Best regards,

Laurinda Toews

From: Brandon5020 <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 05:13:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

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 DRAGONE

[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: William Haskew <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] To the Religious Liberty Commission / Separation of Church and State...
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 06:08:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom it May Concern,

First off,
I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please
implement them.
Secondly,
I have noticed when discussing the Danbury letter and Thomas Jefferson, few have mentioned that:
1) President Thomas Jefferson was acting as President at the time of the letter. This gives much credence to it's authority in this matter.
2) President Thomas Jefferson was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence.
3) Though Thomas Jefferson did not help write the U.S. Constitution because he was serving as a diplomat in France during the 1787 Constitutional Convention, he heavily influenced its final form and the addition of the Bill of Rights through his correspondence with James Madison. (Google AI paraphrase)

Most of the informed part of society know the history of persecution that came when, in the former ages, church and state were aligned together. History shows that upwards of 50 to 100 million lives (or more) were taken by this cooperative.

Do not let this happen again...

...n Jesus Name!

William Haskew

"... the first rule of the fanatic: when you become obsessed with the enemy, you become the enemy!"

From: Myrlene Bruno <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Concern
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 06:12:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,

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

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

As a Bible-believing seventh-day Sabbath keeper, I write from the perspective of a religious minority whose spiritual ancestors experienced firsthand the dangers that arise when governments align themselves 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 governments suppress 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 the 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 the 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,

Myrlene Bruno from Arkansa

From: Wendy Belanger <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 06:13:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Roger A. Belanger

Wendlyn A. Belanger

[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.
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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: Marjorie Patch <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment—Separation of Church & State—Marjorie Patch
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 06:49:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

I have listened to your report and appreciate the work you have all put into it. One thing that I really disagree with is that the idea of separation of church & state needs to be bridged. Our own history has already proved the point that this separation is necessary for our religious freedom. Roger Williams found out if you legislate religion, you are not free at all and there began this idea of separating the two institutions.
I do agree with the response of The Pillar of Freedom and ask that you will give careful consideration to it and not make any recommendations to weaken separation of church and state. May we keep both separated to keep both free.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Patch
New Durham, NH [redacted]

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From: Thomas Yates <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 06:57:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While 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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We remain, Yours truly,

Thomas Anton Doyle Yates

[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: pathfinder pathfinder <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 07:16:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Maria Anthony <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 07:28:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.
Sincerely, Maria Anthony
Huntsville, Alabama

From: Mike and Cindy Hollie <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 07:35:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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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.

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

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

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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, too soon 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 we would enthusiastically support.

Yours truly,

Cynthia Ford

[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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[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: Karina Garrett <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Members of the White House, Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 07:45:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission, I respectfully submit this public comment out of deep concern for the future of religious liberty in the United States. I urge the Commission to reject any recommendation directed at the Department of Justice or any other branch of government that would weaken the historic constitutional principle of keeping religion and government institutionally separate, as well as any proposal that encourages greater unity between the two. America's greatest contribution to the cause of religious liberty has not been the state's endorsement of religion, but the protection of every person's God-given right to worship according to conscience without government interference. This principle has allowed religious communities of every tradition to flourish in freedom while preserving civil peace. As a Bible-believing seventh-day Sabbath keeper, I write from the perspective of a religious minority whose spiritual ancestors experienced firsthand the dangers that arise when government aligns itself with the religious majority. During America's colonial period, Baptists, Quakers, Jews, seventh-day Sabbath keepers, and many other religious minorities endured discrimination, imprisonment, fines, and civil persecution because certain established churches enjoyed the support of the state. These Injustices were among the very reasons the Founders rejected religious establishments and adopted the First Amendment.

The experience of Seventh-day Adventists provides another historical warning. During the late nineteenth century, Adventists who faithfully observed God's seventh-day Sabbath were prosecuted under Sunday laws that were imposed, once again, by the religious Christian majority. Some of our fellow believers were fined, imprisoned, and even forced into chain gangs because they chose to honor Saturday as the biblical Sabbath rather than conform to popular Blue Law Sunday observances. Their only offense was obeying the dictates of conscience and remaining faithful to their religious convictions. Their experience stands as a warning that whenever civil authority is used to enforce religious beliefs or practices, freedom of conscience is inevitably endangered, and religious minorities are often the first to endure discrimination and persecution. The medieval Inquisition demonstrated how religious institutions armed with civil authority suppressed dissent through torture, punishment, and even death. Various forms of religious extremism, including movements that have justified violence in the name of Islam, have shown how state-backed religious ideology can deny liberty of conscience. Likewise, communist regimes that officially embraced atheism illustrate the opposite side of the same error: when government suppresses religion altogether, believers are again persecuted. Though these different oppressive systems differed in ideology, they shared one common characteristic-the concentration of civil power over matters of conscience. The strength of the American constitutional system is that it avoids these extremes. Government was never commissioned to direct the spiritual lives of the people. The mission of the state is to preserve order, protect individual rights, and secure equal treatment under the law. The mission of the church is altogether different: to preach the gospel, emphasize truth and love through persuasion, not coercion, and call people to a voluntary faith, as Jesus did. These two institutions are strongest and remain uncorrupted when each remains within its proper sphere.

Our nation has become home to a diverse group of churches, synagogues, mosques, and religious communities because government has generally refrained from controlling or establishing religion. This constitutional heritage has protected both the majority and the minority alike. I, therefore, respectfully urge the Commission to recommend policies that reinforce-not diminish-the constitutional barriers separating ecclesiastical authority from civil government. Religious liberty is best preserved when government neither advances nor inhibits religion but instead protects the equal rights of all people to follow their own conscience. The United States must remain a nation where every church is free to proclaim its beliefs without governmental control and where every citizen is free to worship-or not to worship-without governmental pressure. History has already taught us the consequences of abandoning this principle. We should not repeat mistakes that countless generations have paid

dearly to overcome. For if we do, we would once again be fanning the flames of intolerance, religious bigotry, and injustice. Respectfully submitted by,

Karina Cantrell
Washington State

From: Beth Huddleston <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Separation of Church and State (Beth Gass)
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 07:53:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

In order to keep freedoms in our great country, I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's stance in Separation of Church and State and issues surrounding it. Please continue to keep church and state separate for the good of both. Thank you for your consideration in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Beth Gass
Bristol,VA

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From: Carl Joy <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:07:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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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,

Carl Joy

From: Sue Schomaker <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PILLAR OF FREEDOM
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:08:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

With appreciation,

Daryl Schomaker

From: Sherri Bryant <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:10:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While 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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We remain, Yours truly,

Sharon Bryant

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

From: Jesse Dian <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:10:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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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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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: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Protection
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:12:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

Our country's founding fathers established the constitution to protect our rights, including religious rights under the First Amendment, which reads:

"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 urge the Religious Liberty Commission (RLC) to remember: 1) why our country was founded and why religious freedoms were set up with protections as the very First Amendment in our Constitution, 2) the atrocities that have occurred throughout history when religious freedoms have not been protected and upheld, and, 3) that the human conscience cannot be forced — as Thomas Jefferson said in 1809, "No provision in our Constitution ought to be dearer to man than that which protects the rights of conscience against the enterprises of the civil authority."

Again, I urge the RLC in its discussions and votes to: protect and uphold the religious liberties that have already been established by our Constitution and to continue to maintain the separation of church and state which has allowed freedom of conscience for all.

Sincerely,
Penni Shelton

Sent from my iPhone

From: Daniel Marsh <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION REPORT – DANIEL MARSH
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:25:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to urge you to reconsider the proposal to bridge the constitutional wall of separation between church and state. History shows that this separation protects both institutions. The church and the state pursue fundamentally different objectives. Weakening the boundary between them inevitably entices the church to draw on state power and the state to leverage the church's moral authority.This dynamic has repeatedly led to coercion, favoritism, and the suppression of minority faiths or peoples.

I object to any proposal that directs public funds toward religious non-profit activities. Taxpayer money should not be used to subsidize religious missions, ministries, or doctrinal programs. When the government finances religious activity, it inevitably privileges certain faiths over others and forces citizens to support beliefs they may not share. This violates the neutrality required by the First Amendment and risks entangling religious institutions with political power.

I object to federal funding for religious education or religious clubs on public campuses. Public institutions must remain religiously neutral so that students of all faiths - and those of no faith - are treated equally. Government-funded religious programming blurs the line between private devotion and public endorsement, creating pressure on students to participate and exposing minority faiths to marginalization. Religious expression belongs to students and voluntary groups, not to publicly financed initiatives.

I object to the repeal of the Johnson Amendment. This longstanding protection prevents churches from becoming financial conduits for political activity. Repealing it would allow political funds to flow through religious organizations, turning houses of worship into channels for campaign financing and partisan messaging. Churches should be places of spiritual refuge, not political machines. The Johnson Amendment protects both the integrity of religious institutions and the fairness of our political system. Consistent enforcement is essential to maintaining the independence of religious institutions and preventing political actors from exploiting churches for electoral gain. Full enforcement protects religious liberty by keeping political power and spiritual authority separate.

I object to any special treatment given to Jewish people or to the state of Israel in federal policy related to religion. The government must remain completely neutral in its relationship with all faiths and all religious communities. Favoring one religious group - even with good intentions - undermines equal protection and fuels resentment, division, and accusations of religious favoritism. True religious liberty requires that the government neither elevate nor diminish any faith tradition. Neutrality is the only position consistent with the First Amendment.

Increased entanglement between civil authority and religious institutions would not strengthen religious liberty - it would compromise it. Faith thrives when it is voluntary, independent, and free from political influence. Likewise, the government functions best when it does not rely on religious institutions to advance policy objectives.

I respectfully ask the Commission to preserve the longstanding separation that has safeguarded religious freedom for generations.I also agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,
Daniel Marsh

From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please keep intact the separation of religion and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:28:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

Please keep intact the separation between government and religion.

Thank you kindly for considering this plea.

Kindest Christian regards,

Concern member of Christ body.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Darius Dumitrescu <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:32:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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,

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

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Charlie Meert <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:34:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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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,

Charlie D. Meert

Morrisville, NC 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=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: Pam Livingston <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:39:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:48:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

I want to voice my concern of the possibility of deleting the separation of church and state.
Separation of church and state has long been a fundamental cornerstone of America. Nothing should change with that. I'm voicing my concern over the possibility of relaxing the separation of church and state. I am very opposed to that. I appreciate your time and hope you take this into consideration.
Respectfully,
Bob Robbins
US Navy Retired

Sent from my iPhone

From: fannoncf <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:49:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

Religious freedom is a God given right of all people. It must be protected at all costs!
I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please
implement them.

Sent from my Galaxy

From: Gary Wilson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:51:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hello - I have read the response from Pillar of Freedom (Pillaroffreedom.org) and agree with their response. The framers, while not using the word 'separation', were stating in their words that there would be a separation.

Thank you -
Gary Wilson
Star, Idaho

From: Andrea Kotlow <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: recommendations of RLC
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:55:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

Holmes, in the Massachusetts colony, for the "crime" of religious dissent. Obadiah Holmes was not whipped by atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." [9] Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate in the

American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

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

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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=pAUkMwlWYB8; 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
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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: Shirley Abell <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Defend Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:58:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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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

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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.

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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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,

Shirley Abell

[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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[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: Rutsuko Chung <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Rutsuko Chung
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 08:59:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

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, specifically the proposals to use government money to fund religious activities and to repeal the Johnson Amendment.

When churches accept government funding or participate in partisan politics, they risk political corruption. This can lead to churches competing for funding and becoming accountable to politicians rather than to God, which is detrimental to both the church and the nation. The separation of church and state is a principle established by people of faith to protect faith, and it is the reason religion has remained strong in our country.

Please maintain the separation of church and state to ensure both remain free.

I agree with comments of Pillar of Freedom found @ pillaroffreedom.org/

Sincerely,

Rutsuko Chung

From: Fla <[redacted]>
To: <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillars of freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 09:07:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillars of Freedom comments.
Let's keep church and state separate.
Flavia Hansen

💐Fla 💐

From: William Haskew <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] To The Religious Liberty Commission / Separation of Church and State - Correction
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 09:17:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom it May Concern,

First off,
I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please
implement them.
Secondly,
I have noticed when discussing the Danbury letter and Thomas Jefferson, few have mentioned that:
1) President Thomas Jefferson was acting as President at the time of the letter. This gives much credence to the letter's authority in this matter.
2) President Thomas Jefferson was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence.
3) Though Thomas Jefferson did not help write the U.S. Constitution because he was serving as a diplomat in France during the 1787 Constitutional Convention, he heavily influenced its final form and the addition of the Bill of Rights through his correspondence with James Madison. (Google AI paraphrase)

Most of the informed part of society know the history of persecution that came when, in the former ages, church and state were aligned together. History shows that upwards of 50 to 100 million lives (or more) were taken by this cooperative.

Do not let this happen again...

...in Jesus Name!

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail on Android

From: jerry spencer <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 09:28:19 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments on separation of church and state and would like to see them implemented! I have always been amazed that we don't hear more about Roger Williams and his contribution to the religious liberty we enjoy in this greatest of nations! There is, or used to be, a marble statue of Roger Williams in the Hall of Fame in the Capitol building, Washington D.C., holding in his hands a Bible upon which is carved: "The Apostle of Soul Liberty". Please become acquainted with true history before you meddle with what our founding fathers gave us to protect us from the religious persecution that has raged throughout the world throughout the ages! Thank you!

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad

From: Joe Beck <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment - Separation of church and state - Joe & Lisa Beck
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 09:43:40 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the religious liberty commission,

I agree with Pillar of Freedoms comments, and would like to see the commission implement their ideas.

Whenever the church and state have been united, it has always resulted in persecution of some people groups. Just think of the dark ages where millions were tortured and killed for disagreeing with the catholic church, as an example.

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Sean Robinson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of church and state - Sean Robinson
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 09:53:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hello,

As a firm believer/ one who loves Christ, and a lover of my country, I cannot keep silent. Please understand that historically, every time church and state unite, it causes persecution. People suffer. You cannot legislate issues of the heart. Please do not move forward with the union of Church and State. It allows the state to dictate doctrine, and not The Holy Bible. It puts "man" in the place of God. The Word of God should be our guide, leading us to repentance... you cannot legislate that.

Everytime Church and State have been combined, it ended in nothing good. Only the enemy of God wants this, and Satan is a deciever... unfortunately, when we are decieved, we don't know it is happening. But Gods Word unveils deception.

Jesus came to heal and give opportunity to those who would choose Him. Not to destroy, coerce and force the will. He does not accept worship that is not from the heart. So how can man be involved in matters of the heart that only God can know. We are drawn to Him by His powerful love... for who He is and what He has done for us.

I have read the Pillar of FREEDOM'S response, and I agree with it. Please do not do this thing of combining Church and state. Please let America remain free... the greatest country ever. I love our freedoms which men and women have died for. Do not let their sacrifices be in vein. Let freedom always reign in America for as long as possible. Bridging Church and state together will inevitably change our country into something else, where there will be an attempt to force the dictates of one's heart. The power of choice is God given. Adam and Eve had it, we all have it... even the enemy had it. We cannot choose for each other. Remember the story of the Hebrew boys who would not bow to the statue. God honored them and was in the fire with them. (You can find that story in Daniel chapter 3). The state cannot choose for the country. It is wrong. The ideas of it are based on fallacies.

Please read the Pillar of Freedom's response. I do agree with it, and pray that you do too. I pray that someone can see the sense in this reasoning, as a Christian and lover of my country. God bless America.

Sincerely,

Sean Robinson

From: Scott MacConomy <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment, the Draft Report, From the Secular Coalition for America
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 09:54:52 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Comments_From_the_Secular_Coalition_for_America_on_the_Religious_Liberty_Commission's_Draft_Report.pdf

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Please see the attached comments

--
Scott MacConomy
Government Affairs

Secular Coalition for America
[redacted]
Office [redacted]
[redacted]
www.secular.org

Comments From the Secular Coalition for America on the Religious Liberty Commission's Draft Report

The Secular Coalition for America agrees with the Religious Liberty Commission on one fundamental point: religious liberty is one of America's greatest constitutional achievements. It protects every person's freedom of conscience - the right to practice a religion, change one's religion, practice no religion at all, or reject religion entirely without government coercion.

Unfortunately, the Commission's final draft departs from that constitutional principle almost immediately.

Rather than presenting religious liberty as a universal right belonging equally to every American, the report repeatedly suggests that religious liberty exists because religion itself is indispensable to society. It argues that religion is the foundation of civic life, moral formation, and national flourishing. In doing so, the Commission subtly but unmistakably elevates religious belief above the equally valid moral convictions of millions of Americans who do not ground their ethics or values in religion.

The Constitution does not make that distinction.

The Founders did not protect religious liberty because they believed government should encourage religion. They protected it because they understood that questions of faith and conscience belong to individuals - not the state. The First Amendment both guarantees the free exercise of religion and prohibits government establishment of religion because these principles work together to protect the freedom of every American, regardless of what they believe.

Throughout the final draft, the Commission repeatedly characterizes religion as being under attack while giving little attention to the equally important constitutional requirement that government remain neutral among religions and between religion and nonreligion. Religious liberty is not threatened when government declines to endorse a particular faith or when public institutions remain religiously neutral. Government neutrality is not hostility toward religion. It is the constitutional mechanism that allows Americans with profoundly different religious and philosophical beliefs to coexist as equal citizens.

The Commission also presents a false choice between welcoming religious voices into public life and maintaining the separation of church and state. No serious defender of church-state separation argues that religious Americans should be excluded from public debate. Religious individuals have every right to advocate for their beliefs, run for office, organize their communities, and participate fully in civic life. The constitutional principle of church-state

separation does not silence religious voices; it prevents the government from favoring one set of religious beliefs over others.

Equally concerning is the Commission's repeated suggestion that religious liberty is uniquely endangered while overlooking the rights of those who are harmed when religious exemptions and accommodations are expanded without meaningful limits. Religious liberty protects the freedom to live according to one's own conscience. It does not include the power to impose one's religious beliefs on others or to deny them equal treatment under the law.

America's remarkable religious diversity, and its growing population of nonreligious citizens, demonstrates why government neutrality remains essential. Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Humanists, atheists, agnostics, and countless others disagree profoundly about matters of theology and morality. Our constitutional system does not ask government to resolve those disagreements. Instead, it protects the equal rights of every individual to follow the dictates of their own conscience.

The Commission is correct that religious liberty deserves renewed attention. But preserving religious liberty requires defending it as the Founders designed it: as a guarantee of equal freedom, not special privilege; as a protection for conscience, not a preference for religion; and as a constitutional promise that government belongs equally to every American, regardless of faith or belief.

The Secular Coalition for America respectfully urges the Religious Liberty Commission to revise or eliminate those portions of the report that would redefine the Establishment Clause, diminish governmental neutrality toward religion, and recommend policies that would privilege religious beliefs through governmental action. The final report should accurately reflect the constitutional text, the historical record, and the equal rights of all Americans, regardless of their religious beliefs or lack thereof.

The Secular Coalition for America is comprised of:

American Atheists
American Humanist Association

Atheist Alliance of America
Black Nonbelievers

Center For Inquiry/Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science

Camp Quest
Ex-Muslims of North America

Freedom From Religion Foundation Action Fund
Freethought Society

Hispanic American Freethinkers
Recovering From Religion

Secular Student Alliance
Secular Woman

Society for Humanistic Judaism
The Clergy Project

Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association

From: Kristen Cuffari <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment: Opposition to the Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 09:57:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing to oppose the recommendations in the Commission's draft report. I write as one of the tens of millions of Americans who are not religious, a group the report barely acknowledges despite being among the fastest growing segments of the population.

I work for an educational program in Ohio. For years I have taught and worked alongside families of many faiths and none, and I have a child entering our local public school this fall. The families I serve trust that shared educational spaces will welcome their children regardless of what they believe. That trust depends entirely on neutrality.

The report treats religious liberty as something that belongs to believers and treats government neutrality as a threat to it. For nonreligious Americans, that framing gets it backwards. The separation of church and state is what makes my full participation in public life possible. It guarantees that my children can attend public school, that I can serve on a jury, work for a public employer, or receive government services without being asked to participate in or defer to someone else's faith.

The report's specific recommendations, including expanded prayer and religious instruction in public schools, religious expression by teachers in the classroom, and new guidance weakening the Establishment Clause, would make government institutions less neutral and less welcoming to families like mine. A teacher praying before class is not a private act when the audience is a captive room of children. I know from my own classroom experience how much weight a teacher's words and example carry with young children. Religious liberty must include the liberty to be free from government-sponsored religion.

I would also note that a commission with no nonreligious members, and almost no members from outside a single tradition, produced a report that reads as though Americans without religion do not exist. We do, we pay for these institutions, and we are protected by the same First Amendment.

I urge the Commission to withdraw these recommendations and affirm that religious liberty in America includes the nonreligious.

Respectfully,

Kristen Cuffari
Strongsville, Ohio

From: Wesley Owen <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Makes The USA Great!
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 09:59:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 13, 2026

Via Electronic Mail to [redacted]

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty

U.S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Room 5706

Washington, DC 20530

Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

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

Religious liberty is a very important belief for me and many grateful Americans. The exact phrase "… wall of separation of church and state…" may not appear in our constitution or related documents but the concept is deeply embedded therein. Thomas Jefferson's letter of 1802 portrays his and others' intentions for the safeguards provided in the First Amendment to keep church and state separate.

Our founding fathers established our government to protect its citizens from religious wars & persecutions as were manifest in earlier European history. They struggled to come up with what we have flourished with for the last two hundred plus years. I believe God worked through Roger Williams and others to establish the correct framework for the religious liberty which has made this country so GREAT!

As a Christian, I believe that God gives humanity free choice to worship as they desire, if that worship does not infringe on the well-being of others. That is what has made this country so GREAT. Government is created to serve the people, not to oppress them, to enforce morality, not dictate religious matters. The church is commissioned to influence and convict the conscience.

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

Wesley Owen

Sahuarita, Arizona

From: Cherie Bryan <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:02:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

I appreciate everyone's work concerning religious liberty, particularly relating to the tyranny with the covid mandates. However, I'm concerned about the development of getting rid of the separation of church and state. It may not have that wording in the constitution, but the 1st Amendment says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof:" The concept is there.

As a citizen, I'm concerned about the recommendation to repeal the Johnson Act and using government money to fund religious activities. I'm concerned about churches taking government money for things that should be done voluntarily and are allowed to be done with tax exempt status. This change would promote a competition with churches for government funds and answering to politicians instead of to God.

I wholeheartedly believe this statement, "In matters of the conscience the soul must be left untrammeled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. No one has the right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, 'let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.' Romans 14:12, 5. In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to cooperate with men in uplifting humanity." The Desire of Ages, page 550.6

I plead with you to continue the Johnson act and the separation of church and state and let people have a personal relationship with God on their own. I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,

Cherie Bryan

Verdi, Nevada

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From: Luke Gilmore <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Luke Gilmore
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:03:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission

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

I believe that it is important for the continued prosperity of all Americans that religious organizations stay out of politics, and that the government not give political or monetary support to any religious organization.

From: Medical Records <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] COMMENT re: Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:05:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While we are mindful of the Committee's labors, which resulted in the 12 recommendations released June 26, certain of which we agree with, we write to voice our concerns and objections to the Committee's first and ninth recommendations [1] and its obviously insufficient consideration of the warnings of the Founding Fathers of the dangers of a union of church and state or the many lessons of history regarding same. The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice "issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state." [2] At the formal release of the Committee's recommendations on the same day, Committee Chair Dan Patrick publicly stated that "the separation of church and state is not in the constitution" and that the phrase "has no constitutional basis." [3]

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

Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history." According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain.

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

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

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

atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

We are concerned that the Committee neglected to take into account the impact of the separation of church and state on the other rights codified in the First Amendment. Free speech and freedom of the press, for example, owe their flourishing in the modern world in large part to the separation of church and state in America. Prior to the protections in the First Amendment, the Roman Catholic Church for centuries maintained a list of banned books called the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The books were subject to confiscation, and the possession of them resulted in the punishment of the owner. Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, David Hume and Edward Gibbon, and many others, all at the behest of the Roman Papacy, which is itself a union of church and state. Free speech in the Western world is the legacy of those who risked the wrath of a unified church and state, often at the cost of their lives. We would also ask that the Department of Justice consider the repeated modern calls from the papal power today for the censorship of the internet and the suppression of free speech, contrary to the First Amendment. [4] We have no doubt that the censorship of Galileo, Kepler, Milton, and others was prosecuted under the justification of the censorship of misinformation, also.

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

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

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

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

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

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from the State." [10]

And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

[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

May Hills

From: Mark Wong <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:11:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the RLC,

Thank you for your work on the Religious Liberty Commission.

I have concerns about having Church and state merged together. Roger Williams who was one of the key principles who made this country great was the fact that church and state were separate. On the Mayflower they were escaping religious persecution only to start it up again with their new government in Massachusetts with requiring to be puritan. This country has been so successful because of that. While to have God in daily public lives is a desire of every Christian believer, We always want to hold up free will and the ability of citizens to make a choice for the Lord Jesus Christ. I may not understand fully but allowing church corporations to continually fund political sentiments and candidates would be a conflict of interest. Think of how our society is skewed by money. Please consider this.

Thank you for your service,

Mark Wong

From: David Bolduc <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment to Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:14:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

As a religious broadcaster, I am troubled to read the statement that there is no wall of separation between Church and State. Without that wall, the government will dictate what can or can't be said over the air. One religious voice will become the state sponsored church. We see that in many communist countries. Atheism is a religion, and they dominate everything in the lives of their citizens. Their nations don't prosper.

The moral values taught by the scriptures strengthen a nation. When a government restricts or penalizes its citizens from enjoying their liberty to believe or not to believe, that nation is weakening it's moral foundation. Liberty of conscious is a right given to us by our Creator, no minister, mayor, governor, President or Pope has the authority to take it away. I have family members who were told as children that they were not allowed to read the scriptures without permission from a clergy. No one has that authority!

I also believe women should have the same opportunities for employment and education as men do. Women made many wonderful contributions throughout history including in the scriptures. Esther stood up for her people.

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

Taking away the wall of separation between Church and State will take away what has made our nation great.

God bless you, and God bless the United States of America!

--
David Bolduc

[redacted]

From: Amy Wellard <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - KEEP THE WALL OF CHURCH STATE SEPARATION - AMY WELLARD
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:17:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

Due to time limitations I wish to simply state my agreement with the "PILLAR OF FREEDOM" 's comments formerly sent to you. Kindly implement these in the interests of the American Public and Religious Liberty for all.
Praying for God's will to prevail.
Sincerely,
Amy Victoria Wellard

From: Trenton Frost <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Department of Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:19:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Trenton Frost

From: Jennifer Munson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Jennifer Munson
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:21:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a Christian citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would "build a bridge" instead of keeping the separation of church and state.
It is especially concerning to use government money to fund religious activities, lend government support to particular religious organizations, and to repeal the Johnson Amendment.

When churches take government money or step into partisan politics, the potential 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 in this country.

We do not wish to return to the dark ages when the church was run by the government, and vice-versa.

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

Sincerely,

Jennifer Munson
Newport, WA

From: Martha Dann <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State (Martha Dannenberger_
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:24:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
In order to keep freedoms in our great country, I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's stance in Separation of Church and State and issues surrounding it. Please continue to keep church and state separate for the good of both. I think if we don't keep them separate that even the non-religious people won't have freedom. When church & state unite, then the government can then take liberty of proclaiming one religion over another & by force take other people's freedom away that don't agree with that religion. God wants our worship to be our choice, not forced one way or another. Thank you for considering my request in this important matter.

Sincerely,
Martha Dannenberger
Johnson City, TN

From: Shahin Bakhshnia <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report Comments
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:26:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

As a Christian who deeply values both my faith and the constitutional principles of our nation, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the draft report issued by the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty (separation of church and state). My faith teaches me the importance of individual conscience, and I firmly believe that true freedom of speech and religion can only exist when there is a clear distinction between church and state.

The proposals outlined in this document threaten to blur those essential lines between church and state. History has proven time and again that when a nation combines church and state, it inevitably erodes democratic freedoms and ends up as a theocracy.

Protecting the separation of church and state does not weaken religion; it safeguards it from government interference and the church to coerce the government, ensuring our democracy remains free for people of all faiths and no faith. Please consider my concerns in the final report.

Respectfully submitted,

Shahin Bakhshnia

From: Fred Lee <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:27:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern:

Please accept this message as my stand against the idea that the constitution doesn't know anything about the separation of church and state. It is the separation of church and state that allowed this country to flourish and become what it is today.

In order to maintain our liberty of faith and conscience, there must be a marked separation of church and state. Please continue to honor the sentiments and beliefs of our forefathers that made our country great and free!

Fred Lee

Sent from my iPhone

From: [redacted] PII [redacted] >
To: "RLC (OASG)" < [redacted] PII [redacted] >
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commentary to our right for religious liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:28:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

Separation of church and state protects freedom and was always the intent of our founding fathers. The blending of religion and government has always led to persecution of people unjustly.

Religion is a personal freedom that is God-given and should not be violated as there is a Holy God who establishes and judges all.

I am a God fearing Christian who does not believe in doing away with the Johnson Amendment or anything else that destroys or removes the separation of church and state.

Freedom is a word that meant something in this country at one time. Let us not remove the largest and greatest of the pillars of our freedom that will collapse the whole structure.

We escaped this type of tyranny in Europe only to find our way back to the precipice of it once again. America was supposed to be different. Making America great again is going back to its early years (minus slavery) and not what predated it and what we escaped from.

Let us break the cycle of constantly repeating the same mistakes in history while expecting a different outcome.

Your group is called the Religious Liberty Commission, it can only mean what is says by the right action of your will in this matter.

Thank you,

A lone voice of reason.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Marie Petrelis <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:34:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Thank you for your diligent work as the Religious Liberty Commission members. The topic of Religious Liberty is valuable and unique to the United States of America. My family are descendants of the Ark and Dove ships from England. Of course have not had the privilege of first hand conversations of the purpose and risk they endured leaving their homeland, but it is well documented these travelers were looking for freedom from religious oppression. If not in my blood, it is of serious concern! Thus repeated remarks stating our Constitution does not address "separation of church and state" are very troubling. If that being the case why would the First Amendment bar Congress from establishing a religion or prohibiting the free exercise of religion? These principles were purposefully designed to protect faith by wise gentlemen who had witnessed abuse in the absence of this freedom.

In reading "The Story of the Constitution" by Sal Bloom and Lars Johnson, page 161, "The language of the amendment prevented the establishment of an official, national religion and provided for the free exercise of religion. In his famous commentary on the Constitution, Joseph Story gave the original understanding of the religion portions of the First Amendment:

'The real object of the amendment was, not to countenance, much less to advance Mahometanism, or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity, but to exclude all rivalry among Christian sects, and to prevent any national ecclesiastical establishment, which should give to an hierarchy the exclusive patronage of the national government. It thus cut off the means of religious persecution...and of the subversive of the rights of conscience in matters of religion...(Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States).'"

This is encouraging, yet this "original understanding" seems to have been lost with some of the findings of the Religious Liberty Commission.

On one other related note, is real concern for the recommended repealing of the Johnson Amendment. When attending church I value the focused time for worship without political interference or interruption. There is merit in the term "sanctuary". Along the same line why would the Commission look to increase funding to support religious activities? That is a sure way to add fuel to the fire. If a group has financial needs finances are their responsibility (where there's a will, there's a way). Government contribution initiates government oversight. Without contradiction, the Bible in Luke 20:25 says, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's and unto God the things which be God's." The word of God Himself gives a divine line of demarcation. Government and religion have their respective roles and by God's grace may they remain respectfully autonomous.

Thank you for your consideration of these thoughts and facts. May God give you wisdom as only He can provide!

Respectfully yours--Marie Petrelis

Virus-free.www.avg.com

From: D Boehmer <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Donna Boehmer
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:35:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

After learning of this issue just this past weekend, I'm writing to ask you to reconsider the draft report. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,
Donna Boehmer
Fletcher, NC

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:38:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, 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,

Pam Stewart

Goodrich ND

From: Amanda Schlisner <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:40:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillars of freedom comments. Please implement them!
Sincerely,
Amanda Schlisner
Sent from my iPhone

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Public Comment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:40:29 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, 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,

Lyle Stewart

Goodrich ND

From: Joshua Bandel <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:41:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

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.

I would like to respectfully write that I disagree with the Commission's recommendation number 9. I believe strongly in the right of all to have liberty of conscience in religion and other areas. I do not believe that recommendation 9 would promote this.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joshua Bandel

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Daniel Moor <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:48:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

While I am mindful of the Committee's labors, which resulted in the 12 recommendations released June 26, certain of which 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, 1 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 Tyndale's 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 Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and 2 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] 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.

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 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 should "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." 3 [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.

[1] https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/president-trumps-religious-liberty-commissiondelivers-historic-report-draft
[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].
[3] https://www.chron.com/politics/article/dan-patrick-church-state-constitution-viral22323383.php
[4] https://reclaimthenet.org/pope-francis-calls-on-social-media-platforms-to-censormore-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

I remain, Yours truly,

Daniel L. Moor
High School Science Educator
PII
PII

From: Dabadoo6090 <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to RLC draft.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:53:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the RLC

As a naturally born citizen of this great nation and a lifelong practicing Christian, I am deeply concerned and troubled by the prospect of " building a bridge " between church and state. I have been a witness to the use of the government by atheist and anti-Christian groups to infringe on the individuals liberty of conscience, however, uniting church and state as history has shown time and again this also leads to the infringement of an individuals or groups liberty of conscience and freedom ultimately leading to persecution.
For 250 years this concept has been a light seen in no other nation which has allowed faiths and religions to flourish here.
I respectfully request this commission to reconsider the recommendation to repeal the Johnson Amendment and to bridge the state and church.

Respectfully,

Duane Bosch

Sent from Proton Mail for iOS.

From: Kathy Sturm <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Separation of Church and State - Kathryn Sturm
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:57:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

I have read the response of Pillar of Freedom's Comments and totally agree with them. Please implement them.

I believe from reviewing history this would be a grave error to remove the wall of separation of Church and State. Anything I would write would only be redundant to their comments.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Sturm
Delano, TN

From: Claudio Marsollier <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 10:57:55 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom it May Concern,

This email is to express our religious belief in keeping the separation of church and state alive to ensure freedom of religion. It is crucial not to have the government meddling in religious affairs, and vice versa. Instead, the government is instituted to ensure no particular religion or faith has preferential treatment or causes oppression unto other faiths.

Christians should not dictate laws to Muslims, and Muslims cannot dictate laws to Buddhists and so forth. The government's role so far in keeping this stance has been done very well. Changing this stance in providing a bridge between church and state will cause erroneous doctrines to be policy for our citizens.

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom viewpoint on this issue, and request that you consider not breaking the traditions guaranteed in our constitution to keep religious viewpoints free in Our Great Nation.

Respectfully,

Claudio Marsollier - Assoc. AIA
[redacted]

From: Karen Yost <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:00:10 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom it May Concern,
I am in agreement with the Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them in order to maintain freedom of religion! It should continue to be my choice to worship God the way the Bible instructs me to do so. I choose to worship Him on the 7th day of the week, Saturday, God's Sabbath. If our country fails to keep a separation between church and state, this will lead to mandated legislation requiring citizens of this great land to worship God on Sunday, man's sabbath. This is not God's intended day to worship Him. For in six days God created the heavens and the earth and rested on the seventh day (Saturday) and sanctified it, setting it aside as holy. I want to continue to worship God on the day the Bible teaches. Worshipping Him on any other day would be to worship Him in vain. "In vain do they worship Me teaching for doctrine the commandments of man." (Matthew 15:8-9, Mark 7:7) I would rather continue to choose to keep God's commandments over man's commandments. Wouldn't you? "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six day shalt thou labour, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." (Genesis 20:8-10). Thank you for honoring my rights as a U.S. citizen to serve and obey God.
Sincerely,
Karen Yost
Auburn, CA

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State - J.B Skapnit
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:06:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the Religious Liberty Commission. I respectfully ask that the barrier that separates both Church and State be upheld. My family's background includes the French Huguenots who faced persecution in France and eventual expulsion from the country. With them leaving they also took their trade skills to the other Nations they fled. That led to a "skills drain" in France. I do not wish for these events and outcomes to happen to me and my fellow citizens of the USA. I appreciate the shelter of grace and safety that the Separation of Church And State Provides. Sincerely.
J.B. Skapnit

From: Venus CC <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church & State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:07:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

SIRS
Please have Separation of Church & State stand and stay. It's concept is clear in the constitution.
Respectfully
V Coo

From: RR <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:07:51 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

As a Christian citizen of the United States, I urge you all to please reconsider the draft proposal in which you suggest to remove the separation of church and state. I also agree and support the Pillar of Freedom comments and ask for you to consider and implement them.

Liberty of conscience is our dearest freedom.

Thank you.

Ronald Ririhena

From: "Kurt Hildebrand" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Kurt Hildebrand
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:08:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

"Separation of Church and State" means a separation between ecclesiastical and political power. It means that a church cannot use the state's resources to compensate for the church's lack. It also means that the state must not use the church to influence the state's subjects.

"Separation of Church and State" does not mean restricting a public individual expressing their individual faith. In fact, separation of ecclesiastical and political power is the best safeguard to allow individual expression of faith.

If the wall separating church and state were to be broken down, then the state will corrupt the church. Unsanctified people will join the church not because of a conversion of heart, but because of selfish reasons (for example: to politically advance themselves). Furthermore, state support will compromise the church's doctrines. For a historical example, consider why Roger Williams argued for the separation of church and state in the founding of the state of Rhode Island. Also, see the comments to the Commission from Pillar of Freedom.

Lastly, the church will corrupt the state. A church that relies on civil authority to force conscience confesses that her god is powerless. The church in political power will fine, imprison, and kill those that oppose her doctrines. Draconian laws will be covered in a cloak of piety. (For a recent historical example, consider the treatment of Carrie Prejean Boller, with whom the Commission should be intimately familiar. The Commission calls for protection of religious expression in government, yet uses governmental authority to oppress religious views it deems objectionable. The Commission's own conduct is argument against the union of church and state).

Remember that it was a union of church and state that murdered Jesus. For the good of the nation and for the whole world, this illicit and unholy union of church and state must not be established.

Sincerely,
Kurt Hildebrand

From: Theodore Nicholson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State - Theodore Nicholson, Jr.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:16:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

It is very disturbing that this commission suggests a “bridge” between church and state. America has been the bulwark of freedom in this world, the leader, the standard. Blurring the lines between church and state will ultimately create a ‘church state’ which is characteristic of communism.
The freedom to believe and live out the dictates of one’s own conscience is indeed a pillar of freedom in America. This soft reversal of this fundamental and foundational principle of freedom is a step in the direction of Revelation 13. This “bridge” will go down in history as of the beginning of the end of freedom in this country and the world.
I agree with the **Pillar of Freedom’s** statement. Please protect America’s hard won, historical, and precious freedoms. Please keep the wall of separation between church and state. Please keep the Johnson amendment. Please keep religion free from government interference.

Thank you,
Theodore Nicholson, Jr.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Carol Reynolds <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom!!
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:17:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Josef Ludwig <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Josef Ludwig
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:20:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am grateful for the opportunity you offered to make public comments on your recent Draft Report on religious liberty and related issues.

As a naturalized US Citizen I have greatly appreciated and personally benefited from the religious liberty guaranteed by our Constitution. This is why I am quite alarmed to discover that in your recent Draft Report you argue in favor of weakening, if not dismantling the separation of church and state, especially as your points seem to be based on a questionable interpretation of the historical facts. As can be well known by any informed and honest history student, the actual past teaches us that any cooperation or "bridge" between church and state invariably leads to coercion and persecution, as it did in medieval Europe and initially in some New-England colonies, while strict separation of the two powers did and does enable the proper functioning of both.

Though I realize and agree that this separation is not found in our Constitution as the exact ***phrase*** "separation of church and state," we well know that the ***principle*** of this separation was acted upon in the disestablishment of churches in the first colonies **prior** to the Constitution and became a nationwide reality guaranteed by its First Amendment. I am fearful that a return to any kind of cooperation between church and state will reintroduce its destructive historic results. The book of Revelation tells us that this blessed country will eventually loose its best treasure and as a result, irreparable ruin will come to it, and by it to the global human family. I would not want your Draft Report become instrumental in fulfilling this prophecy.

We live during a most crucial time in our history, when the precious values that have guided and guaranteed the existence of our free nation are being misinterpreted, ignored or even argued against. I highly recommend and urge that the Religious Liberty Commission seriously consider the more detailed and professionally articulated points, concerns, and recommendations you received from Jonathan Zirkle, JD, President of Pillar of Freedom, and Alexander Bowen, Heritage and Hope Ministries.

With high regard and serious concern,

Josef Ludwig

From: Vincent Giambone <[redacted]>
To: [redacted], [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] The Commission on Religious Liberty Report Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:23:02 -0400
Importance: Normal

I Vincent Giambone have read the Pillar of Freedom's comments on the Separation of Church & State and "I agree with them". The Government should not get involved in religious matters. Please give the people the right to speak freely and defend their right of "freedom of speech including the "Separation of Church & State and please
implement those comments given by the Pillars of Freedom. Thank You for your support in this matter.

Sincerely,
Vincent Giambone

From: Nicole Broadnax <mscolex3@gmail.com>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <RLC@usdoj.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:25:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the comments of pillar of freedom!!

From: Katrina Browning <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:25:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Sir(s)/Ma'am(s),

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

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

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

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

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

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

account the brutal public whipping of President Abraham Lincoln's five-time great-grandfather, Obadiah Holmes, in the Massachusetts colony, for the "crime" of religious dissent. Obadiah Holmes was not whipped by atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." [9] Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate in the

American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Katrina Browning

[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: Brendy Lindsay <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Brendy Lindsay
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:26:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a US citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state. I am especially concerned about the use of government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment.
I DO NOT think that the government should:
1. fund religious non-profit activities.
2. fund religious education and religious clubs on public campuses.

I also DO NOT support repealing the Johnson Amendment, which restricts church's political activities. I request that the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. (pillaroffreedom.org)

I believe that things get complicated when churches take government money. I believe that church members need to answer to God instead of competing for government money. Separation of church and state is important and was built into this country to protect people of faith. It is not a secular idea. It is why our country is able to continue running smoothly with so many religions.

Please keep church and state separate. That's how we keep both of them free.
Sincerely,
Brendy Lindsay
Wallowa, Oregon

From: Esther Avelar <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Separation of Church and State-Esther Avelar and Clarencia Sanchez
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:28:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, that is exactly backwards — and as a person of faith, I find the idea alarming.
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.
I am however thankful for your intent to defend people of faith in the private sector that have been marginalized and persecuted. I'm aware of many examples of discrimination against Christians. Some have lost their businesses, their jobs for refusing to do that which goes against their faith. Schools that have completely disregarded the parents rights in the education of their children, enforced indoctrination of the LGBT agenda on children as young as kindergarten age and so on. The examples are many. I applaud your efforts to correct that wrong in our country.

Sincerely,
Esther Avelar and Clarencia Sanches
Tunnel Hill, GA and Ooltewah, TN

From: peter bautista <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Peter Bautista
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:30:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am familiar with the Draft Report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission. I wholly believe that the separation of church and state is best for our nation. Therefore, I object to funding religious non-profit activities and funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses. I also object to repealing the Johnson Amendment but rather support that it be fully enforced.

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

Sincerely,

Peter Bautista

From: Willie Trent <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject: Public Comment – Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:33:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing as a concerned citizen to respectfully ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state, particularly those that would allow government funding of religious activities and repeal the Johnson Amendment.

I believe churches are strongest when they remain independent from government influence. When churches receive government funding or become involved in partisan politics, they risk being influenced by political agendas rather than remaining focused on their spiritual mission. Instead of answering first to God, they can become dependent on government and political leaders.

The principle of separating church and state was established to protect religious freedom, not to oppose religion. It has helped ensure that people of every faith can worship freely without government interference, and I believe it has been one of the reasons faith has remained strong in our nation.

I respectfully ask that you preserve the separation of church and state. Keeping them separate protects the freedom and integrity of both.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Willie Trent

From: Jonathan Reynolds <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:41:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious liberty advocates,

Freedom of religion, lack of government backed churches and separation of church and state were some of the most critical principles that the founders of the United States set as the foundational underpinnings of the this country. These concepts need continue to be upheld as this country built upon Christian/Biblical principles but not forcing or coercing individuals into a state mandated religion or day of observance/obligation. Please continue to support and uphold separation of church and state.

Jonathan Reynolds

Hendersonville, NC

From: Amy McHenry <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Tim and Amy McHenry
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:42:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge."

Respectfully, that is the opposite of what it should be. And as a person of faith, I find the idea alarming. That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion out. 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 weasel in, until churches are competing for grants and answering to government instead of to God.

History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands, and it isn't pretty for either one.

Please allow each to live according to his or her own conviction. God is the ultimate example of freedom. He invites each of us into communion and relationship with Him. He offers each eternal life through the love and blood of Jesus. He does not force allegiance to Himself, though. Neither should the government. True worship and faith is through choice and conviction, not through force.

I again ask you to maintain separation of church and state. I don't believe I should be able to force my beliefs on others and I don't believe the government should either.

Sincerely,
Tim and Amy McHenry
Tennessee

From: Ruthea Wolford <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:42:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

Greetings,

I respectfully ask that you reconsider the merging church and state. Even a bridge isn't necessary. The Bible says that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty (2 Cor 3:17). History has shown that where church is mixed with the state that there is always persecution of people with various faiths. This is what the ammendment of the constitution was designed to protect.

Thank you

Thankyou

From: G White <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Protect my religious freedom not control them
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:45:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

I have spent some time reviewing aspects of the Religious Liberty Commission report. While many things I support, there are many things I do not support.

I have read the Pillar of Freedom responses. I agree with those comments.

Here are a few of my response, I want my religions freedom to be protected not control by others who have another agenda. The Word of God, which we Christians are to base our religious beliefs on, is suppose to change us, transform us internally, so that we represent externally the God we serve before others.

I agree - “The Commission is correct to say, “People of faith should not be required to leave their religious convictions behind when entering the workplace, engaging in commerce, serving their communities, or participating in public debate,” and that “institutions should foster environments in which citizens with divergent convictions can work together while maintaining fidelity to conscience.”

We must be careful in trying to implement laws to promote religion. Whose religious beliefs are to be promoted and whose will be disregarded. I know that you are familiar with Muslim countries where their religious beliefs dominate their government. And you know of some of the atrocities that occur to women and children. You know of the atrocities that occur to others who do not believe as Muslims. I know that you are familiar with European and Catholic history when Catholicism ruled the government, and the many atrocities that occurred under that ecclesiastical power. Why would you want to do that to US?

Thank you for protecting Religious Freedom for all and not only for a few.

Gale White

From: Little Feather <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:46:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
In order to keep freedoms in our great country, I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's stance in Separation of Church and State and issues surrounding it. Please continue to keep church and state separate for the good of both. I think if we don't keep them separate that even the non-religious people won't have freedom. When church & state unite, then the government can then take liberty of proclaiming one religion over another & by force take other people's freedom away that don't agree with that religion. God wants our worship to be our choice, not forced one way or another. Thank you for considering my request in this important matter.

Sincerely,
Debbie Harback

From: Teresa Pina <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:46:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history." According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from

the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

[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
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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: Brittany Clark <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:48:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." [9] Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate in the

American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

[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: Candace Huber <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Candace Huber
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:50:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission: I am writing as a citizen in asking you to reconsider points that will weaken the separation of church and state - especially in the point that would repeal the Johnson Amendment. In appealing the Johnson Amendment we would experience the effect of pollicization and thereby erasing the public trust in houses of worship and charities. Congregations of faith must be allowed to remain non partisan in fact and purpose in order to serve their mission and communities. Politicization of religious organizations in any form disrupts the integrity of faith mission as political neutrality would erode into political discord.

In short, I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Candace Huber, MPH, BSN, RN,
[redacted]

Now there abides faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
1 Cor 13:13

From: Gmail <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Patrick Herbert
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:53:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,
Patrick Herbert
Auburn, GA

From: Bruce Ellington <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 11:54:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Members of the Religious Liberty Committee,

I am in agreement with the Pillar of Freedom response to the draft report.

Please keep church and state separate as it protects our freedom.

Also, please keep the Johnson Amendment as is.

To make any changes to this would be detrimental to the rights of so many.

Thank you for reading this.

Sincerely

From: Samuel Thomas <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT: Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:01:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with “Pillar of Freedom’s” statement about the separation of church and state.

The freedom to worship must be buttressed by the principle that the church and state are 2 separate entities. I believe in a secular state which protects each individual’s right to worship according to the dictates of his conscience as long as his worship practices are compatible with the Constitution of the United States and does not infringe on the rights of others.

Sincerely,

Hannah Thomas

From: Cheryl Vaughn <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commissiion
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:03:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,

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

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

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

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

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

believers are again persecuted. Though these different oppressive systems differed in ideology, they shared one common characteristic—the concentration of civil power over matters of conscience.

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

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Vaughn RN

From: "Baydala, Larysa" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment- separation of church and state -Larysa baydala
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:08:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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From: Diana Giambone <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberties
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:12:40 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing as a concerned American citizen regarding the draft report suggesting that there should be no separation between church and state, that a closer relationship should be established between the two, and that the Johnson Amendment should be repealed.

Our Constitution was established to protect the freedoms of all Americans, including the freedom of religion. As a Christian, I believe that loving and following God is a matter of free will. Faith cannot be compelled by the government; it must be chosen freely. If our country is to uphold the principles that God has established, we should begin by respecting the freedom He has given each person to seek and worship Him according to their conscience.

Weakening the separation between church and state could jeopardize the religious liberty that has long been one of America's defining principles. History reminds us that people have often been mistreated and oppressed because they sought the freedom to practice and express their religious beliefs. Many of the early settlers, including the Pilgrims, came to America seeking greater religious freedom. Even today, in many parts of the world, people are persecuted or imprisoned because they wish to read the Bible, worship freely, or live according to their faith.

I also believe that Scripture supports a distinction between the responsibilities of government and the mission of the church. In Mark 12:17 (KJV), Jesus said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Likewise, in John 18:36 (KJV), Jesus declared, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight... but now is my kingdom not from hence." These passages indicate that Christ's kingdom is spiritual rather than political, suggesting that the church and the state have distinct roles.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission to preserve the principle of the separation of church and state and to maintain the Johnson Amendment. Protecting these safeguards helps ensure that every American can freely practice—or choose not to practice—their religion without government interference or favoritism.

Thank you for considering my comments and for your service to our nation.

Sincerely,

Diana Giambone

From: robert thomas <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Separation of Church and State- Gina Thomas
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:13:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state.

I would like to formally record my agreement with the comments recently shared by Pillar of Freedom. Their perspective aligns closely with my views on this matter, and I fully support their position.

Thank you for your time and for taking my feedback into consideration.

Best regards,

Gina Thomas , Carbondale Illinois

On Mon, Jul 13, 2026, 11:02 AM robert thomas <[redacted]> wrote:

> Dear [Members of the Religious Liberty Commission
>
> I am writing to formally express my agreement with the comments recently shared by Pillar of Freedom regarding [Topic/Discussion]. Their perspective aligns closely with my views on this matter, and I would like to officially record my support for their position.
>
> Thank you for your time and for taking my support into consideration.
>
> Best regards,
>
> Gina Thomas, Carbondale Illinois

From: trudy martin <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:15:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

I completely agree with the Pillar of Freedom recommendations and would appeal to you to implement them.

Thank you,

Trudy Martin

From: Don Korenko <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Don Korenko
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:19:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

When this country was started, church and state were joined. What happened? Persecution. It took time but when the constitution was being written, the founding fathers were careful to separate church and state. We are going backwards. History is repeating itself. We will be back to persecution again. It will take time but it will come. The state has no business with religion. I disagree with what is happening. Do not do this.

Don Korenko

Clayton, Alabama

From: Alexis Miosi <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] My Religious Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:22:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hi, I am here to express my concern about my religious freedom. I believe that everyone should have the right to believe what they choose and that the government should not be able take that away from anyone. If they do, then they are showing that it is not the people that they care about, but themselves and their power. Do the right thing for the people. Please think about what it is that you're doing.

From: Alexis Miosi <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:24:42 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hello, I am here to express my deepest concern about my religious freedom. The people deserve to have the choice to choose what they believe. Otherwise, we are not free.

From: Ever Lasting <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State- Rumbi
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:27:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

The current proposal to remove the Separation of Church and State is concerning because it goes against what the founding fathers of this country were trying to establish. This is going backward for a country that is supposed to be progressive.

As a person of faith with friends and family in different faith groups, legalizing or politicizing mortality goes against Biblical principles and removes freedoms that Jesus Christ worked so hard to establish.

I am writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations outlined in your report. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please
implement them.

Thank you,

Rumbi
(Massachusetts)

From: Liviu burciu <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please maintain separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:27:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

Separation of church and state protects freedom. Mixing religion and government lets the state impose one faith on everyone, leading to discrimination and tyranny.

Religion is personal. Government must stay neutral to protect everyone's right to believe without interference, and respect their individual conscience.

History proves religious states oppressed and interfered with people’s free choice regarding religious matters.

It was exactly why the USA was founded originally! The first people came here exactly BECAUSE church and state in their own countries was NOT separate.

So PLEASE, keep church and state completely separate.

May God bless each member of the commission to make the right decision and maintain separation of church and state.

Sincerely,
Liviu

From: Lizzy Reyes <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:28:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Rumbi Lee <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:29:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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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,

Rumbi Lee

[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: Nancy Call <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:31:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
Let us be free to worship as we please. The United States government should not be involved in any way.

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,
Nancy Call
New York

From: Shon Darcy <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Seperation of Church and State – [Shon Darcy]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:38:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was shocked to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge."

I am a descendant of William Bradford i.e. the pilgrim fathers. I am a 7 generation American lineage by birth. My family were pilgrims who escaped the state church of england. Germans who escaped the communist revolution of Russia. I am a decendent of Ulysses S. Grant as we fought to liberate a nation from the slavery of a church who believed it had the right to own men. I am a direct descendant of General George Custer via his brother. We have seen the wickedness that can happen when the government decides that certain sectors or races of men are but animals. I hate evolution.

I am a devout Christian who holds the Bible as my highest standard, a homeschooler, a republican party supporter. I love president Trump and believe he was placed in his office by God. I am also a Bible Teacher.

I see a bridge between church and state as well meaning, but in willful ignorance of the history of religious persecutions of the old and new world. The wall of separation was built by Christians such as Roger Williams not by secularists. Secularists have misused and misinterpreted the wall of separation as a goverments which is founded on communism. As a way to persecute Christians via a willful misinterpretation of the constitution. The democratic party is the beast from the bottomless pit. The secularist wall is communism.

This country and its constitution was built by Protestant Christians and protestantism and republicanism are its strengths. If these ideals of protestantism and republicanism are lost national apostasy will lead to National ruin. The separation of Church and state is to prevent the church from using the state for its purposes which corrupts the church as power and wealth multiply professors without conversion.

The solution is not to abolish the separation of church and state or to build a bridge. The solution is to enforce the separation of church and state as was intended by the influencers of the constitution such as Roger Williams. We must prevent immigration of those persons who would by their political or religious beliefs destroy this republic. There was a time in America when we the people threw a stone donated by the Pope for the Washington moment into the potomac because the Pope has ever stood for the combination of church and state so that the church may use the sword of the state to persecute decent. The Papacy orchestrated the assasination of president Lincon. There was a time when the Jesuit was not allowed office or entrance in this country because of their oath to destroy both the republic in its constitution. We can see this in the Biden holocaust under the plandemic.

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

Shon Darcy

Loxahatchee, Florida (USA)

From: Carmen White <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:38:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Department of Justice and the President's Religious Liberty Commission:

As a committed Christian who believes the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, I write because I deeply value both religious liberty and the constitutional principles that have protected it throughout our nation's history. It is precisely because of my faith - not in spite of it - that I believe the separation of church and state remains one of the greatest safeguards of both religious freedom and the integrity of the Christian church.

Contrary to the misconception, the separation of church and state is not hostile to Christianity. Rather, it protects the church from becoming dependent upon government power and shields the government from becoming an instrument of religious coercion. Whenever the church seeks to accomplish its mission through the authority of the state, both institutions are diminished. The church risks exchanging its moral and spiritual authority for political influence, while the state is tempted to elevate one faith tradition above another.

Scripture teaches that matters of conscience belong to God alone. Genuine faith cannot be legislated, compelled, or sustained through political power. Christ Himself established an important distinction when He declared, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). Civil government has a God-ordained responsibility to preserve justice and protect the rights of its citizens, but it was never intended to serve as the enforcement arm of religious belief or to empower one religious majority over another.

For this reason, I respectfully object to any recommendation that characterizes the separation of church and state as a constitutional mistake rather than one of the foundational principles that has preserved religious liberty in America. The two religion clauses of the First Amendment - the Free Exercise Clause and the Establishment Clause - were designed to work together. One protects the freedom to practice one's faith, while the other prevents government from establishing, promoting, or favoring one religion over another. Together they form one of the strongest protections of religious liberty ever established by any nation.

The mission of the church is most effective when its allegiance remains first and foremost to Christ rather than to political parties or candidates.

History repeatedly demonstrates the wisdom of these constitutional safeguards. Religious persecution in America has seldom arisen from secularism alone; more often it has occurred when one religious group gained the support of civil authority and used governmental power to suppress the convictions of others. Baptists, Quakers, Catholics, Jews, Seventh-day Adventists, and many others have experienced discrimination when government aligned itself with particular religious interests. Our Founders wisely sought to prevent such abuses by limiting the power of government in matters of religion, thereby protecting believers of every faith as well as those of no faith.

As a Christian, I do not view the separation of church and state as a threat to the gospel. I regard it as one of the essential protections that preserves the purity of the church, safeguards the sacred right of conscience, and secures the religious liberty guaranteed to every American. My prayer is that these constitutional principles will continue to be upheld, ensuring that faith remains a matter of conviction rather than compulsion, and that both church and state remain faithful to their distinct and God-given purposes.

Respectfully submitted,
Carmen White

From: Suzan Lozano <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I am in favor of keeping Church and State separate.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:40:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am in favor of keeping Church and State separate.

Suzan Lozano
[redacted]

From: Suji Martens <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:40:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from

the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

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

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

We remain, Yours Truly

Suji Martens

From: rick guinan <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comments/Religious Liberty commission Report:
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:40:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

The scriptures tell us that God said “my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:”-Hosea 4:6.
Noticeably missing from the religious liberty department of the Trump administration is the "knowledge" of our past history as a nation. The separation of Church and State has done no violence to either Church or State. All the justices of the past history of our country who have up held the separation have now become most ignorant in their belief that such a separation existed.
James Madison wrote a letter to Edward Livingston on July 10 1822 saying,
"every new & successful example therefore of a perfect separation between ecclesiastical and civil matters is of importance..."
James Madison is known as the "father of our constitution"
The God of heaven is known as the "Father of us all" Malachi 3:10, Ephesians 4:6.
Jesus, who came to reveal the Father said, "render to Caesar the things that are Caesars, and to God the things that are God's"-Mark12:17.
If the father of our constitution, and the Father of us all, have spoken in unity and clarity, that there is to be a separation between Church & State, and these United States of America have fulfilled this design of Divine desire since 1791.
Why in the name of good "knowledge" and common sense should this blessed country go in any other direction than the one it has taken since the first amendment was voted as good and worthy law respecting the separation of powers?
Only a reputation of such a wonderful blessing as the separation has been to this country awaits it’s ruin.

Rick Guinan

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Kendel Margart <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Kendel Margart
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:41:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was highly disturbed when I read that the Commission is seeking to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With all due respect, that is a destructive path — and as a person of faith, I find the idea alarming, and so should you. That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the church free from political influence. It allows Christians to open their Bibles, study it for themselves, and live their lives according to the dictates of the Holy Scriptures.

A bridge won't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money and political favors to enter, until churches are competing for grants and answering to politicians instead of to God (the last thing we need is corruption). You will see church doors close for good, and devout Christians bow to the political power that feeds them. This sounds familiar doesn't it? History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands, and it isn't good for either one. It wouldn't be long until the churches were oppressed by governmental agencies and would then resemble the churches in communist China or Russia.

Please don't seek to build that bridge, for it will surely bring ruin. Keep the wall. It protects the church far more than it constrains it.

Respectfully,

Kendel Margart

Baker City, OR

From: Darrell Baudoin <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:43:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

I support Religious Liberty, Freedom of Conscience and separation of Church and state.

Virus-free.www.avast.com

From: Dale Flick <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission's Draft Report Comments [Executive Order 14291 1 May 2025]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:45:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

SUBJECT: Presidential Religious Liberty Commission's Draft Report Comments [Executive Order 14291 1 May 2025]

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

Any "bridge to", as opposed to "separation of", church and state" has the potential to unduly influence one or the other to the detriment of both in the long run (e.g., Christian church's persecution of the Protestants, the pilgrim government's persecution of Roger Williams an earlier advocate for religious freedom in early America, Constantine's state influence on the early Christian church and the Chinese government's persecution of Uyghurs and Christians). The church should not have undue influence on the state and vice versa.

Government financial support of religious organizations will sooner or later infringe upon their constitutional free exercise rights by means of government stipulations associated with such support.

The state cannot equitably, financially support all religions, as well as atheists; thus, tacitly infringing upon them all with respect to their establishment rights, i.e., favoring only the ones of the state's choice.

The Johnson Amendment better clarifies the line between church and state, i.e., churches can communicate to their congregants the issues that may affect them but cannot endorse any candidates which is solely the prerogative of each congregant's conscience in the voting booth. The church cannot seek to directly or indirectly dictate for who a congregant must vote. This amendment is necessary and must not be weakened or repealed!

America must seriously reconsider its sometimes-blind support of any country. We should not discriminate based upon religion, but we must not give their government carte balche financial, military or moral support when they do not act respectfully of others in their own country or in neighboring countries. In the case of Israel, America and Americans are not anti-sematic when they publicly disagree with the actions of the government of Israel—they are simply exercising their constitutional First Amendment rights against which there is no law.

We must beware of religious organizations, or those posing as religious organizations, that openly seek to influence the state to their own ends, as opposed to religious freedom for all, through public monies or legislation.

I respectfully request you consider the Pillar of Freedom's comments.

I want to thank the commission for all their hard work and their desire to ensure the religious freedom of all Americans for now and the future. It is an unalienable right that we must guard for our posterity, our children and grandchildren.

As a veteran and a Christian, I thank you for the opportunity to share my views on these critical issues that affect religious freedom for all Americans.

Respectfully,

Dale M Flick

Mansfield Center, CT

From: Dori Strait <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:47:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments

Dori Strait
Sent from my iPhone

From: Joshua Lewis <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:51:02 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Joshua L

From: Jacquelyn Davis <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Joseph Davis
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 12:57:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get Outlook for Android

From: Nina Marsh <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION REPORT – NINA MARSH
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:01:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Randy Horning <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Need to keep goverment an religion separate
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:03:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

The US government was set up to protect individual freedom of thinking. The government should never govern or enforce a way of thinking.

Thanks

Randy Horning

[redacted]

From: Xaver Piñero <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:04:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While I am mindful of the Committee's labors, which resulted in the 12 recommendations released June 26 — some of which I agree with — I write to voice my concerns and objections to the Committee's first and ninth recommendations [1], as well as its evidently insufficient consideration of the Founding Fathers' warnings about the dangers of a union of church and state, and the many lessons of history on that same subject. 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 that 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 that the flawed and unconstitutional view held by the Committee's Chair regarding the so-called "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" might prove influential — or worse, instructive — to the Department of Justice. If the Committee's opinion of the "proper understanding" of the Establishment Clause matches that of its Chair, then it's clear that its understanding isn't proper at all — it's 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. 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's, 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,
Xaver Piñero

[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: Keith Magnant <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Keith Magnant
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:05:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was troubled to learn that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, that is completely backwards — and as a person of faith, I find this 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 governmental favors and politicians to lobby in the churches. THis sentiment will ultimately cause faith to deteriorate as the money from the government will be seen to replace need for God. Additionally, this will also cause churches whose memberships are small to have less an "ear" to those who are granting funds "hear" the larger churches because there are more members there...and therefore more of a constituent appeal to the politician as those constituents represent votes. History has taught us clearly what happens when church and state join hands, and the picture it paints for the future is that a single church will stand out and try to dictate morality AND governmental concerns. For these reasons and many others I do not support this action and am requesting that this "bridge" is NOT put in place. Please do not build that bridge. Keep the wall intact. It protects the church far more than it constrains it.
Sincerely,
Keith Magnant
Ooltewah, TN

From: Lera Little <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Lera Little
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:06:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

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,
Lera Little
Bloomfield, CT

From: Martin Sanchez <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on the draft report of the presidential religious liberty commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:06:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of faith comments
Please consider all the information as it is historically documented.
Also do not repeal the Johnson amendment. Please leave as it was originally created.
Thank you,May God continue to guide America .

From: Andrew Bair <[redacted]>
To: [redacted], [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on the findings of the Commission for Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:07:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

The Commission's recommendations raise serious concerns. They invite risks the Commission either overlooks or leaves unstated, and I share the concerns raised by Pillar of Freedom at pillaroffreedom.org.

Beyond those concerns, the Commission's call to repeal the Johnson Amendment is especially troubling. The amendment bars churches from partisan campaign activity, including candidate endorsements, but it does not prevent them from addressing public issues or offering moral guidance on matters such as abortion or the right to life. Repeal would turn churches into powerful tax-exempt political tools. Pastors, who often hold considerable influence within their congregations, could face pressure to deliver votes in exchange for financial support, while wealthy interests could use churches to advance political causes. Paired with the Commission's proposal to direct government grants to religious organizations, repeal would create a dangerous system of patronage and tempt struggling congregations to trade principle for money. Scripture warns that "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10 KJV). If financial interests take hold in the churches, the public will recognize the hypocrisy, and any supposed benefit from uniting church and state will be nullified. What remains would not be a living church, but one dependent on government support. The Commission should withdraw its recommendation to repeal the Johnson Amendment and instead call for its enforcement.

Robin Bair

Marlinton, WV

From: Pat Simons <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:08:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.

From: Carol Healy <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Religious Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:12:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Commission,

It seems that your recent report does not support religious freedom in the American tradition (after colonialism). I believe that the government does not have oversight of what to believe and how and when to worship. Please value religious freedom.

Carol Healy
U.S. Citizen

From: nev grg <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:18:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

I find it amusing when I hear proponents of tearing down that wall that separates the church and the state by claiming that the words “Separation of Church and State” do not exist in the constitution. They are correct, those 5 words in that sequence, do not exist in the constitution.
They are attempting to change the original meanings of the Establishment Clause in the minds of the public.
Just look at the way Trump uses the words “Religious Liberty”.
To us it means separation of church and state. To him it means that religion should be more free to influence the government.
Every person that is paid by government employment mist have their conscience guided by their relationship to his or her deity, and not by the Government.

The Government must not be permitted to establish, endorse or support any religion, or none religion. Moral values are declining in our citizens. That is because our leadership is ignoring Jesus’s admonitions. And that is not only our governmental leadership, civilian leadership also.

The Government must not Tread on our conscience.

Kind regards,
Neven Grgas

From: Amy Tesso <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Seperation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:21:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
As a citizen and a person of faith, I am deeply troubled by the Commissions proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge,".

The 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 complete 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 please reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken this seperation- specifically , using government money$$$ to fund religious activities and Repealing the much needed Johnson Amendment. When churches engage in partisan politics or accept government funding , they inherit political CORRUPTION. Seperation PROTECTS FAITH, Which is precisely why religion has remained strong in OUR COUNTRY!

PLEASE maintain seperation of church and state- thats how we keep both FREE. I do not agree on ALL POINTS!

Respectfully,
Amy Tesso

From: Timm Andersen <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-Separation of Church and State-Timm Andersen
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:22:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As a man of faith, I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Timm Andersen

Grants Pass, Oregon

From: Ezra Moore <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:23:40 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please don't allow any one religion to take its place in government. That is a slippery slope that could allow a very unpopular religion to one day rear its ugly head in government. The government must remain free of religion.

We remain, Yours truly,

Ezra J Moore

Coon Rapids, MN USA

[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: ldmmcclain <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:24:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom It May Concern,

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

Sent from my Galaxy
Thank you,
Linda McClain
Dallas, Texas

From: Richard Rumps <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] My Response to the RLC's recent Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:24:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Committee,

I have concerns with some issues found in this report. I have also read the Pillar of Freedom's comments sent to you; and I am in complete agreement with the statements made there. Specifically, I ask you to please Not repeal the Johnson Amendment. I strongly believe that POLITICS as well as ANY FORM of GOVERNMENT FUNDING should not make its way into our churches since this can only promote the worship of government when our pledge of allegiance through worship should be 100% about God. Churches don't pay taxes to the government and, therefore, should not be entitled to any funding from the government. Churches should receive all of their support including funding through the blessings of God to its members and attendees. Jesus is our example. Jesus never went to the government for any assistance. Any, and all, blessings that He received came from the Father through prayer. Please keep government out of our churches. Thank you, Richard.

From: Bills Nwokoma <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State is Freedom of worship and it is our heritage
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:25:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

Pillar of Freedom is a religious liberty non-profit. It was formed in 2026 to advocate for the religious liberty principles that the United States of America was founded upon. At Pillar of Freedom, we believe that a right understanding of the principle of religious freedom is necessary for understanding the character of God, and His desire for His followers to be free to render Him love and devotion based upon their own free will and not coercion. Pillar of Freedom believes that any union of church and state only ever leads to false worship and oppression. Pillar of Freedom is opposed to any formulation of religious liberty that favors one group over another or would in any way legislate the first table of the Decalogue, while at the same time recognizing that God expects humanity to adhere to the principles of the second table of the decalogue, which is freely ascertainable through conscience and reason, as testified to by Paul in Romans 1 and 2. Pillar of Freedom also believes that as we near the end of earth's history, there is a spiritual battle raging, and that the final spiritual battle will be a contest over religious liberty, specifically a contest between the receiving the mark of the beast through coerced worship or remaining free and true to Christ by keeping the commandments of God, as outlined in Revelation 13 and Three Angeles of Revelation 14.

Send sample response to
[redacted]
In the Subject section, put your name
And simply state:
I agree with the response of Pillar of Freedom to the Commission's draft on the issue of the separation of Church and State. You can add more, should you desire.

From: Robin Roberson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of FREEDOM
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:26:02 -0400
Importance: Normal

STOP the separation of Church and State! One reason I LOVE LOVE LOVE being a United States of American citizen is because of our RIGHTS to choose RELIGION! It is important for every American/Me to be allowed to PUBLICLY acknowledge GOD in a church of their/my CHOICE .

I am undisputedly AGAINST Trump's Religious Liberty Commission!

Thank you,
Robin

From: ldmmcclain <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Maintain The Separation of Church and State.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:29:52 -0400
Importance: Normal

Greetings, to whom it may concern,

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

Sincerely,
Linda McClain
Dallas, Texas.

Sent from my Galaxy

From: Jonathan Hill <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RLC Concerns
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:30:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

The Declaration of Independence says: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

And the first amendment to the constitution states:
“ 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.”

It really requires some mental gymnastics to deny that the founders of this country didn’t intend for 100% separation of church and state.

Freedom of speech, religious liberty and freedom of conscience are foundational to a healthy America.

Using political power, influence or authority for religious purposes is directly opposed to the constitution. Not only is it against the constitution, but it also leads down a path towards religious persecution and force, which is using Satan’s methods, NOT God’s methods.

Separation of church and state protects freedom. Mixing religion and government lets the state impose one faith on everyone, leading to discrimination and tyranny.
Religion is personal. Government must stay neutral to protect everyone's right to believe without interference. History proves religious states oppress.
It was exactly why the USA was founded originally! The first people came here exactly BECAUSE church and state in their own countries was NOT separate.
So PLEASE, keep church and state completely separate.

Thank you,
Jonathan

From: Linda Stolley <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Draft Report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission - Linda Stolley
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:32:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As a citizen and person of faith, I have concerns about the separation of church and state. There have been so many viewpoints and arguments surrounding this issue, it is often difficult to know what that really means. The people that came to this country seeking religious freedom were fleeing government control of religion. The founding fathers sought to guarantee that religious freedom for generations to follow. Any time the government channels money into religious organizations, no matter how well-meaning the reason, it is the first step onto a very slippery slope. Over time, the government can claim a right to control that religious organization and that religious organization is now obligated to obey the government. At a time where "thought policing" has become a clear and present danger (e.g. "cancel culture" in the USA and current trends in the United Kingdom), it seems that the separation of church and state is more important than ever.

I urge that you to seriously consider implementing the comments promoted in "The Pillar of Freedom."

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Linda Stolley
Spirit Lake, Idaho

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Gary Rodman
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:35:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Gary Rodman
Horse Shoe, North Carolina

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "'Religious Liberty Commission at'" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Keeping government and religion Institutuonally separate
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:35:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,
I respectfully submit this public comment out of deep concern for the future of religious liberty in the United States. I urge the Commission to reject any recommendation directed at the Department of Justice or any other branch of government that would weaken the historic constitutional principle of keeping religion and government institutionally separate, as well as any proposal that encourages greater unity between the two.
America's greatest contribution to the cause of religious liberty has not been the state's endorsement of religion, but the protection of every person's God-given right to worship according to conscience without government interference. This principle has allowed religious communities of every tradition to flourish in freedom while preserving civil peace.
As a Bible-believing seventh-day Sabbath keeper, I write from the perspective of a religious minority whose spiritual ancestors experienced firsthand the dangers that arise when government aligns itself with the religious majority. During America's colonial period, Baptists, Quakers, Jews, seventh-day Sabbath keepers, and many other religious minorities endured discrimination, imprisonment, fines, and civil persecution because certain established churches enjoyed the support of the state. These injustices were among the very reasons the Founders rejected religious establishments and adopted the First Amendment.
The experience of Seventh-day Adventists provides another historical warning. During the late nineteenth century, Adventists who faithfully observed God's seventh-day Sabbath were prosecuted under Sunday laws that were imposed, once again, by the religious Christian majority. Some of our fellow believers were fined, imprisoned, and even forced into chain gangs because they chose to honor Saturday as the biblical Sabbath rather than conform to popular Blue Law Sunday observances. Their only offense was obeying the dictates of conscience and remaining faithful to their religious convictions. Their experience stands as a warning that whenever civil authority is used to enforce religious beliefs or practices, freedom of conscience is inevitably endangered, and religious minorities are often the first to endure discrimination and persecution.
The medieval Inquisition demonstrated how religious institutions armed with civil authority suppressed dissent through torture, punishment, and even death. Various forms of religious extremism, including movements that have justified violence in the name of Islam, have shown how state-backed religious ideology can deny liberty of conscience. Likewise, communist regimes that officially embraced atheism illustrate the opposite side of the same error: when government suppresses religion altogether, believers are again persecuted. Though these different oppressive systems differed in ideology, they shared one common characteristic—the concentration of civil power over matters of conscience.
The strength of the American constitutional system is that it avoids these extremes. Government was never commissioned to direct the spiritual lives of the people. The mission of the state is to preserve order, protect individual rights, and secure equal treatment under the law. The mission of the church is altogether different: to preach the gospel, emphasize truth and love through persuasion, not coercion, and call people to a voluntary faith, as Jesus did. These two institutions are strongest and remain uncorrupted when each remains within its proper sphere.
Our nation has become home to a diverse group of churches, synagogues, mosques, and religious communities because government has generally refrained from controlling or establishing religion. This constitutional heritage has protected both the majority and the minority alike. I therefore respectfully urge the Commission to recommend policies that reinforce—not diminish—the constitutional barriers separating ecclesiastical authority from civil government. Religious liberty is best preserved when government neither advances nor inhibits religion but instead protects the equal rights of all people to follow their own conscience.
The United States must remain a nation where every church is free to proclaim its beliefs without governmental control and where every citizen is free to worship—or not to worship—without governmental pressure. History has already taught us the consequences of abandoning this principle. We should not repeat mistakes that countless

generations have paid dearly to overcome. For if we do, we would once again be fanning the flames of intolerance, religious bigotry, and injustice.
Respectfully submitted, Nicholas Beaumonte Sr

From: SCOTT HOLDER <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment: Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:39:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Thank you.

From: Cindy Pereira <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Cindy Draper
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:45:25 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am a U.S. citizen who serves my community as a healthcare provider. I'm also a firm believer in Jesus Christ and am very grateful for the freedom this country gives me to worship Him openly. Because of my faith, I care about religious liberty for myself and others around me. This is why I oppose repealing the Johnson Amendment.

The Johnson Amendment helps churches stay focused on their purpose of teaching and helping people instead of getting pulled into politics. It also protects churches from being used or pressured by political groups. If we get rid of it, church and state could end up mixed together in a way that actually hurts churches instead of helping them. I believe that the government should have no say in what citizens believe or how they worship, and preserving this separation protects that freedom for everyone.

Let's keep the USA as the 'Land of the Free,' just as it was founded, with the First Amendment keeping government and religion separate. This is a separation I ask you to maintain, as it benefits both citizens and the integrity of government. I also strongly agree with the comments submitted by Pillar of Freedom, and I ask that you take the time to read and implement their recommendations.

Thank you for listening to the voice of the people and doing what is right and just for everyone.

Cindy Draper

Oklahoma

From: Ellen Smith <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please protect our religious freedom for all faiths
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:48:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

Please protect our religious freedom for all faiths

From: H Nelson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church and State changes
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:48:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

In regards to your considering removing barriers to the inclusion of the church and state on various matters in government and society, I disagree with changing anything that involves a further merging of church and state on any matters. Please keep what our founding forefathers fought and died for in the pursuit of individual God given liberties. Even God hasn't imposed a theocratic society on earth, giving mankind the "liberty of conscience" to choose Him, rather than forcing men to choose to worship Him. Government should follow suit, and let men, specifically Americans, decide for their own liberty of conscience without government regulation or control. “I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please
implement them.”
--
Helen Nelson, E.A.

[redacted]

From: Joleece Starr <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Report - Joleece Starr
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:50:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

I am against combining church and state by building a bridge. I am against this because it takes away from freedom of consciousness. Our founding fathers took precautions to leave people freedom of religious choice and to dismantle this would take away certain inalienable rights endowed to each human endowed to each person by our creator God.

I support and agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.
Thank you,
Joleece Starr

From: Shaunece Daily <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:50:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from

the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Shaunece Slaughter

From: Scott and Cherline Hunter <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] We agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments!
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:51:55 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern:

We agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments in regards to the Draft Report of the Religious Liberty Commission. We believe and advocate Separation of Church and State! Please consider upholding this very important element in our government!

Sincerely,

Scott and Cherline Hunter

Sent from my iPhone

From: sharene spencer <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Seperation of Church and State - Sharene Spencer
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:53:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
As a citizen and a person of faith, I am surprised and deeply troubled by the Commission's proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." A serious reading of our country's founding history will reveal the danger of "welding together" church and state. Many of our ancestors fled to this country in the first place because of religious persecution.

This wall was built by our founding fathers to keep the exercise of religion free, not by secularists to restrict religion. A bridge opens the door for government funding and political influence, forcing churches to answer to politicians instead of to God. History demonstrates that the blending of church and state is detrimental to both. I believe that one of the greatest reasons we enjoy living in the greatest country in the world is because the PRINCIPLES of Seperation of church and state as given in our Constitution have been maintained and upheld as foundational. I believe anything else will prove a danger.

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.

Thank you for your consideration.

From: Christopher Gloudeman <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church and State matters
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:55:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." With respect, that is exactly backwards — and as a person of faith, I find the idea alarming. 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. Please keep what our founding forefathers fought and died for in the pursuit of individual God given liberties. Even God hasn't imposed a theocratic society on earth, giving mankind the "liberty of conscience" to choose Him, rather than forcing men to choose to worship Him. Government should follow suit, and let men, specifically Americans, decide for their own liberty of conscience without government regulation or control. “I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please
implement them.”

Sincerely,

Christopher Gloudeman

From: [redacted]
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:56:34 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Attn__Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Attn: Religious Liberty Commission

I watched the presentation of The Religious Liberty Commission to the American public and I am very thankful to see the formation of this Committee and the goals and process they are following to protect all citizens of this great country in religious freedom.

This country was begun by a few immigrants with a desire for freedom that was unavailable in their country. Here was the opportunity for a new beginning for all. No longer were we as Americans under the thumb of a government which did not believe in equality, or equal rights for all citizens. The right to pursue their dreams, to enjoy opportunities for education, to marry, work, and worship according to their beliefs.

This Religious Liberty Commission has set forth their goals and plans to assure all Americans the protection of those rights. I truly believe this will be a blessing to all our citizens and commend President Trump for the establishment of this Committee.

A proud American

From: Cynthia Gardner <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State- Cynthia Gardner
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:57:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I want to thank you for this opportunity to respond to your religious liberty draft report regarding the separation of church and state. Thank you for reading and prayerfully considering my desperate appeal.

It is with utmost urgency that I request you do *not* move forward with the recommendations made in your draft. We as Americans have been enjoying the amazing freedom that has made this nation great for 250 years. Our ability to maintain the liberty of conscience to worship as each individual sees fit has been a model and beacon of hope to the entire world. It is what has people pouring into this country- the land of the *free*, the home of the brave. However, doing away with the separation of church and state would completely undermine what this country stands for, and destroy what millions have sacrificed their lives for- true religious freedom. The result of uniting church and state has only led to horrendous persecution and unspeakable tyranny in the past and in other countries. This is why people came to America in the first place, to *escape* religious persecution.

Liberty of conscience to worship, or even *not* worship, however each one sees fit is a God-given right that no man or woman can ever take from us. I beg you not to participate in opening the door to the great evil that results when the structure meant to preserve freedom- the separation of church and state as well as the Johnson Amendment- are removed. I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments and urgently plead that you will implement them. We need the wall, NOT a bridge!

Sincerely,

Cynthia Gardner

From: Amy Tesso <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-Seperation of Church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 13:57:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
As a citizen and a person of faith, I am deeply troubled by the Commissions proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge,".

The 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 complete 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 please reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken this seperation- specifically , using government money$$$ to fund religious activities and Repealing the much needed Johnson Amendment. When churches engage in partisan politics or accept government funding , they inherit political CORRUPTION. Seperation PROTECTS FAITH, Which is precisely why religion has remained strong in OUR COUNTRY!

PLEASE maintain seperation of church and state- thats how we keep both FREE. I do not agree on ALL POINTS!

Respectfully,
Amy Tesso

From: Alejandra Elvira Courntey <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:03:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

It is alarming that the partition that has allowed us freedom of conscience is now being threatened. Haven't we learned from history? Do we want to start returning to epoch's such as the dark ages when the church ruled the world and thousands upon thousands were tortured, killed and encarcerated by the influence of the popular church? God gives us the responsibility to do all we can to continue being a land of the free and the brave and thus influence the world. Thus, we must defend this sacred partition between church and state. In other words, as the Holy Scriptures says "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."
We must learn from history that there is a supreme responsibility to keep church and state separate.
I very much agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments.
Alejandra Courtney
Harlingen, TX

From: Shawn Johnson <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:04:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 13, 2026

Dear Members of the Religious Freedom Commission,

As a citizen of this great United States of America, and a woman of faith, I am writing to you today to ask that you do not recommend implementation of replacing the separation of church and state with a “bridge”, that will further blur the lines of the separation.

History tells us our country was founded as a safe haven for those who were facing religious persecution. Our forefathers came here to establish a country that was WITHOUT a king, and a CHURCH without a pope. They came seeking FREEDOM to worship freely our Lord, as they desired, but they also did NOT seek to implement their beliefs upon others.

God Himself is a God of LOVE. He does not seek to FORCE us into a relationship with Him, rather He gives us free choice to serve Him or not. I believe that choice is a personal, conscience one, that EACH person needs to make for himself/herself, and that the government should not interfere in that decision with laws governing the choice to serve God or not. Laws are very necessary for governing a people, and by no means am I saying we don’t need laws. We must have and enforce laws against murder, stealing, etc, all of the laws that govern how we as a people interact with one another, for the safety and wellbeing of all those in our country.

Please consider these scriptures from the Bible, which speak of our choice to serve God or not.

Deuteronomy 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Gal 5:1, **13** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

Because God has given us freedom to choose, what right have we as a people to enforce what others believe? I must respectfully but firmly oppose any proposal that will continue to blur the line of the constitutional separation of church and state that not only God has established, but that our forefathers of our great country also ensured that we would have in these great United States of America.

Respectfully Yours,

Mrs. Shawn Johnson

From: Joanna Archilla <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:08:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,
Joanna Archilla

From: Blanche Maristela <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>, Blanche Maristela <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:13:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Please do not remove the wall of separation between church and state. Our pioneers came to this country to avoid persecution from Europe where there is no separation between church and state. Thats the reason we are enjoying our freedom right now is because there is a separation between church and state in our country. God bless you.

Sincerely
Blanche Maristela

From: "veronica ....." <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:15:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

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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]

[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: Jacob Haun <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Jacob Haun
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:16:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,

Jacob Haun

Spirit Lake, ID

From: Jozané Bryan <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Jozané Bryan
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:19:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

I wholeheartedly agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.

From: Miguel Archilla <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:20:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

Subject: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

We respectfully ask that the Department of Justice, in considering the issue of public guidance of the separation of church and state, consider the history of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania and early Founding Father,

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

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

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

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

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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 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,

Miguel Archilla
A Follower of Christ
and USA Patriot

From: Kaitlyn B <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Kaitlyn B.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:23:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

I am staunchly opposed to any removal of the separation of church and state, whether by repealing the Johnson Amendment, funding religious education, clubs, activities, etc., or by any other means that would bind government and religion together. I oppose this not because I do not believe in or support religion, but because I do.

The separation of church and state is what has set our great country apart from other nations since her beginning. America was formed by those who were seeking an escape from religious persecution, and in the laws that they created, they designed that our great nation would forever maintain a separation of church and state so that history would not be repeated in our great nation. Through seemingly generous or benign means, such as what is being suggested by you, the members of the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty, our nation could soon become as one that our forefathers fled because of religious persecution. A bridge between the two only weakens the whole by allowing money, political favors, and the unavoidable greed to influence and corrupt.

God has given each of us a unique and valuable gift, the gift of choice. In this gift, we have the choice to obey His law and reap the rewards or to disobey and reap the consequences. The Creator God is a God of love, and though He wishes us, His children, to obey His laws for our own good, He does not force anything upon us. If He did, we could truly not call Him good, merciful, or loving. We could only love and obey Him in mindless obedience. As God has given us this right since the beginning, it is only right that a government, especially one that proudly proclaims, "One nation, under God", should follow God's example and allow its people the same liberty.

Should America dare to remove the wall of separation between church and state, it will inevitably transform itself into a nation that forces its people to obey the religion that its leaders agree is correct. As God created His children with the mental capacity to understand and think, the responsibility of deciding between right and wrong rests on and will be demanded of the people, not the government. Maintaining separation between church and state will allow America to continue creating and upholding its laws while God maintains His precepts.

Furthermore, I have also read Pillar of Freedom’s comments, and I respectfully ask you to please implement them.
Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,
Kaitlyn B.
Adams, Nebraska

From: Rick Hinojosa <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:26:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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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,

Ricardo Hinojosa

PII

From: Nancy DePaula <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:31:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

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.

Respectfully,

Nancy DePaula

From: Diana Oxentenko <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religous Liberty:Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:33:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

I sent this note earlier but it was not properly edited so I'm re-sending it.

To Whom It May Concern:

As a loyal MAGA supporter, I have been very happy with much that President Trump and his administration have done to bring law and order back as well as to end woke dominance in our culture. I believe the role of a good government is to enforce the last 6 Commandments of the Decalogue.

I also believe that Christians should be active in our government and should uphold their personal values. They should not compromise them and they should let those religious values guide their decisions.

However, we must encourage the separation of church and state as our founders saw it: in that government has no right to impose or legislate regarding the first 4 Commandments, which affect an individual's personal relationship with God and his own conscience.

Different churches/denominations have different beliefs. The separation of church and state means the members of various churches are allowed to believe and practice those beliefs as they understand from the Word of God without fear of persecution or coercion to go against their understanding.

I strongly encourage the current administration and the Department of Justice to uphold those freedoms, which have made our country great for the past 250 years!

Thank you kindly for your attention to this matter,

Diana Oxentenko
[redacted]

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Vernessa Peterson <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:37:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hello- I agree with Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

Thank you

From: Stuart Marsh <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION REPORT – STUART MARSH
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:37:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the comments of Pillar of Freedom. Please implement them.

From: Priscila Sefton <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:37:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

[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: Mari Medina <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please maintain separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:40:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

From: Kyle McCollum <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment- separation of church and state- Kyle McCollum
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:44:16 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Jenny Avaylon <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT—Separation of Church and State -Jenny Avaylon
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:45:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of Religious Liberty Commission,

I have read the recommendations made in your report and as a citizen I am very concerned about the two points that talk about using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson amendment.

With all due respect, if these recommendations are implemented churches will end up competing for funding and answering to politicians instead of to God and that will weaken the church and its integrity as it opens the door for government money and political favors to step right in.(1Peter 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind). Therefore, will also weaken the nation further.
The state should not be allowed to legislate concerning religious matters. Religious matters are only between God and man (Matthew 22:12 render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.) Also, the church should not seek to compel society or non-believers to adhere to Christian laws through civil authority. •**Matthew 26:52:** Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword."
The Bible does not explicitly say to not "smoke" because it is harmful to the body, but it clearly describes the principle that our bodies are the temple of God and therefore we should not do anything to it that is harmful (1 Corinthians 6:19,20) In the same way the constitution may not explicitly use the words "separation of church and state" but it most definitely describes the principle, which is a healthy principle, between the church and state — to be separate.
I respectfully ask that these recommendations please be withdrawn.

I would also like to eco the comments by Pillar of Freedom and Pastor Michael Avaylon and I'm in complete agreement.

Thank you to the RLC for the opportunity to share our comments and may the wisdom of the Lord our mighty God guide and lead in this very detrimental matter.

Sincerely,
Jenny Avaylon

Sent from my iPhone

From: Ron Turner <[redacted]>
To: [redacted], Ron Turner <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission with Regard to Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:45:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Additionally I would like to add that the mixture of Church and State has always ended in persecution, of those that are outside of the majority religious group. Please do not let our religious freedoms be taken away. The minority group should always be protected by the constitution and not ignored or punished for disagreement with the majority. This is the Reason we are a Constitutional Republic!

Ronald Turner
[redacted]

From: Morales Margaret <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] US Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:46:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Anne Petrovich <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's support of the "Separation of Church and State"
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:48:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sent from my iPhone
This separation of church and state is a fundamental right for Americans. It is necessary for the distinct operation of each entity. History records the sad persecution of American settlers who "disagreed" with the governmental "church" of earlier colonial times. The main focus of this separation pertains to government not mandating a state religion or prohibiting the practice of individual religion freedom.

Thank you for continuing to stand for this important freedom.

Anne Petrovich

From: Delene Drescher <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Delene Drescher
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:49:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am 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 very alarming and very disturbing.

That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep the church free of government. 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. Also, I have objections to funding religious non-profit activities, as well as funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses. 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. It is vital to **keep the wall of separation**. It protects the church far more than it constrains it.

Sincerely,

Delene Drescher
Mission, Texas

From: Jenny Avaylon <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Jenny Avaylon
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:51:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,
I have read the recommendations made in your report and as a citizen I am very concerned about the two points that talk about using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson amendment.

With all due respect, if these recommendations are implemented churches will end up competing for funding and answering to politicians instead of to God and that will weaken the church and its integrity as it opens the door for government money and political favors to step right in.(1Peter 5:2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind). Therefore, will also weaken the nation further.
The state should not be allowed to legislate concerning religious matters. Religious matters are only between God and man (Matthew 22:12 render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.) Also, the church should not seek to compel society or non-believers to adhere to Christian laws through civil authority. •**Matthew 26:52:** Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword."
The Bible does not explicitly say to not "smoke" because it is harmful to the body, but it clearly describes the principle that our bodies are the temple of God and therefore we should not do anything to it that is harmful (1 Corinthians 6:19,20) In the same way the constitution may not explicitly use the words "separation of church and state" but it most definitely describes the principle which is a healthy principle between the church and state —to be separate.

Thank you for your sincere efforts and time spent by the members of the Commission in this endeavor but I respectfully ask that these recommendations be withdrawn.

I would also like to eco the comments by Pillar of Freedom and Pastor Michael Avaylon in complete agreement.

Sincerely,
Jenny Avaylon

Sent from my iPhone

From: MERCEDES RODRIGUEZ <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Chrch ans State Mercedes Rodriguez
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:51:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,
Mercedes Rodriguez
Lehigh Acres, FL

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment - Separation of Church and State - Emilia Ion
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:51:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Commission,

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

Sincerely,
Emilia Ion
Salem Oregon
Sent from my iPhone

From: Randy Hoyt <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] TO: The Dept. of Justice regarding recommendations to the RLC
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:54:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Mr. Patrick and members of the Religious Liberty Commission, I have no doubt that the RLC are sincere in their beliefs that because the pendulum has swung so far left, which has allowed numerous godless policies and activities to occur on a regular basis, especially in some of the larger cities in our beloved Country, something must be done to stem the tide of evil and bring righteousness back to America. I wholeheartedly agree with this! HOWEVER, I earnestly seek to remind the RLC that "God's hand is NOT shortened that it cannot save, nor is His POWER to deliver diminished." Isaiah 50:2

Mr. Patrick, has God suddenly become impotent? Does He need man's help to accomplish His purposes? Don't you dare lessen the power (inspired by the Almighty) in the First Amendment to our Constitution. What is it you are reading in the Establishment Clause that gives our Government the right to begin an ESTABLISHMENT of religion? And how exactly is the First Amendment NOT separating Church and State? Whether the words Jefferson wrote to the Danbury Baptists are actually in the 1st Amendment or not, there is no question that is the intent.

If God is truly your ultimate authority how is it you do not clearly understand these words of Jesus Christ Himself found in Luke 20:25 and John 18:36? "therefore render unto Caesar what is Caesars and to God what is God". "My Kingdom is NOT of this world otherwise my servants would fight." You are fighting sir. You are no doubt familiar with the letter Benjamin Franklin wrote to Richard Price on October 9, 1780 which states: "When a Religion is good I conceive that it will support itself, and when God does not take care to support , so that it's professors are obliged to call for the help of the Civil Power, it is a sign, I apprehend, of it's being a bad one."

For Christians to call on Caesar to help them, INSTEAD of falling on their knees and asking for the help of their MIGHTY Creator God is BOTH an insult to Him and a terrible witness to a country and world that desperately needs to see genuine Biblical faith demonstrated in true believers. I therefore urge you to abandon this attack on liberty of conscience and stop trying to change a critical part of our Constitution that has served America well for 237 years.

Respectfully,

Randall Hoyt
A Christian and proud citizen of the USA

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] religious freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:55:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

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to whom it may concern,

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

Sincerely

Earl and Ginger Harvey
Concho Arizona

From: Christine Lockwood <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT—Separation of Church and State—Christine Lockwood
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 14:57:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

As a person of faith, I was rather alarmed to read the recommendations put forth to build a “bridge” between church and state and I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,

Christine Lockwood

Seale, AL

From: Joshua Hamil <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: 1st ammendment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:00:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Representatives ,

With due respect to your office and the weight of your decisions.

The civil government only has jurisdiction in civil matters.

No to the mixing of Church and State.

The constitution does not need reinterpretation. It reads plainly.

Separation of Church and State is essential for freedoms people enjoy.

Remove such a wall and America removes its protection.

History tells. History will repeat.

Because of what I personally believe, respect and uphold law and order, do good to my neighbour as well as the stranger in the land and contribute to the good of community—The civil government only has jurisdiction for civil matters.

Any redefinition of the constitution to bring in religious laws is harmful to anyone for simply thinking differently. Thus trampling on principles of freedom and the constitution is not acceptable.

I know many of you hold deep convictions too. I'm not questioning your faith or your motives—only asking that we all honor the constitutional boundary that protects every American's freedom.

I urge you to uphold the First Amendment as written and oppose any measure that would breach that wall.

Respectfully,
Joshua David Hamil

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.

1st AMMENDMENT

From: Christine Kilpatrick <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State - Christine Kilpatrick
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:01:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them as I am a firm believer in religious liberty and the ability of every human to worship and honor their Creator as their conscience leads them. We can look back in history and see the results of the combining of church and state in other countries. It never was nor will be a good thing. Our founding fathers realized this when the first amendment to the Constitution stated " *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof*." Please consider keeping America truly free by maintaining separation of church and state.

Sincerely,
Christine Kilpatrick
Equality, AL

May "The Lord bless you and keep you; {may} the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; {may} the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)

From: Kaye Yarbrough <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:06:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: kaye thrash <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-Seperation of church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:07:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 13, 2026

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, And unfair!!

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.

This is not all clearly defined and the public is not

well informed, nor is enough time given to look

over all this. Please, keep the Johnson

amendment!

I agree with the PILLAR OF FREEDOM!!

Please maintain the separation of church and state

- that is what is fair to all and that's how we keep

both free.

God Bless America! Land of the FREE!!

THANK YOU

Respectfully,

Donna Kaye Thrash

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:09:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

I do not write a long statement.

I just insist:

1. Government can not, must not, force me to worship in any way! Government must stay away from my God inspired convictions
2. Government can not, must not, keep me from worshiping in any way that God inspires my conviction.

These two principles must separate Government from Church

Thank you.

Dwayne & Janet Toppenberg

[redacted]

From: Darla Day <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:14:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern,

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

Thank you, Darla Day

From: Virginia Deacon <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:14:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Sincerely,
Roger and Virginia Deacon

Sent from my iPhone

From: ximena Rheaume <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of State and Church - Ximena Rheaume
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:16:02 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

> I agree with Pillar of Freedom's response to your commission report.
>
> Thank you.

From: Rael Iteba <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:16:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

We respectfully ask that the Department of Justice, in considering the issue of public guidance of the separation of church and state, consider the history of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania and early Founding Father, who was repeatedly jailed for his religious faith in England. The Pennsylvania Colony became a haven, not from

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

[THE UNDERSIGNED

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:17:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

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 the members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

The separation of church and state protects religious freedom for everyone, prevents government-enforced religion, and ensures that public resources treat all citizens equally. Maintaining this boundary prevents sectarian conflicts, upholds democratic equality, and safeguards the integrity of religious institutions from political corruption. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

Key reasons to oppose the breakdown of church-state separation include:

1. Protection of True Religious Liberty

- **Freedom for all faiths:** When the government is neutral toward religion, citizens are free to practice their faith—or hold no religious beliefs—without facing persecution, favoritism, or state-sponsored coercion. [1, 2]
- **Preventing religious favoritism:** Eroding this boundary allows the government to elevate specific religious doctrines (such as Christian nationalism) in the public sphere and marginalize minority faiths or secular worldviews. [1, 2]

2. Safeguarding the Integrity of Religion

- **Avoiding political corruption:** Entangling faith with government power tends to corrupt religion, turning houses of worship into partisan instruments and diluting spiritual messages to fit political goals. [1, 2, 3, 4]

- **Preventing state control:** Historically, the founders sought to protect churches from government interference, taxation, and state control. Repealing rules like the Johnson Amendment can pressure clergy to endorse candidates simply to keep their tax-exempt status. [1, 2, 3, 4]

3. Preserving Civil Equality and Rights

- **Equal treatment under the law:** Government services and public funds are intended to serve everyone. Blurring the lines often results in public money being directed to specific religious groups or enables institutions to legally discriminate based on conscientious or religious objections. [1, 2, 3, 4]
- **Preventing sectarian division:** If the government embraces religious preferences, politics inevitably becomes a battle over which faith gets to rule, leading to increased polarization, discrimination, and sectarian friction. [1, 2]

4. Constitutional Integrity and Public Education

- **Protecting public schools:** Separating church and state ensures that public education remains focused on academic excellence rather than the theological indoctrination of specific sects. [1, 2]
- **Historical precedent:** The concept of the "wall of separation" is deeply rooted in the U.S. Constitution's **Establishment Clause**, which was specifically designed to prevent the federal government from establishing an official state religion. [1, 2]

Sincerely,

David B. Dunkin

David S. Goswick

From: Doug Hamel <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Feedback on the Religious Liberty Commission Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:19:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you to the Religious Liberty Commission for the time and careful thought invested in preparing your report. I appreciate the Commission's commitment to the important principles of religious liberty and the effort made to provide thoughtful recommendations for consideration.

After reviewing the report, however, I want to respectfully express that I am not in favor of recommendations **#1 and #9**.

My concern with **point #1** is that it appears to weaken, if not remove, the important wall of separation between church and state. This principle has long served as an essential safeguard for religious liberty. Indeed, many who came to these shores did so seeking freedom from systems in which church and state were too closely intertwined. I believe we should be very cautious about any proposal that could weaken that historic and important separation.

Regarding **point #9**, I am also concerned about the proposed repeal the Johnson Amendment. Removing this restriction could open the door for churches to become increasingly partisan and political from their pulpits. I do not believe the pulpit should become a platform for political endorsements or partisan campaigning. The church should be free to speak clearly and prophetically on moral and social issues, but its primary mission is to proclaim the gospel and point people to Christ—not to become an instrument of partisan politics.

My disagreement with these two recommendations should not be understood as a rejection of the report as a whole or of the important work of the Commission. Rather, I believe these particular points raise significant concerns and warrant further discussion and careful consideration.

Thank you again to the Commission for its work and for the opportunity to thoughtfully and respectfully engage with its recommendations.

Sincerely,
Doug Hamel

From: Linda Kirk <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:23:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's position. Please keep government and religion separate!

From: Washington Villarroel <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] church / state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:23:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

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ubject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Washington Villarroel

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

The union of church and state through out history has proven to lead to persecution and death to those who do not agree with the laws being passed.

Sincerely,
[Washington Villarroel]
[Glendale, CA]

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT -- Religiious Liberty, separtation of church and state, no favored parties -- John Strickland
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:24:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

Commissioners:

I only recently became aware of your request for comments, so my comments of necessity will be less polished than otherwise. The separation of church and state is vital to religios liberty. The pilgrams on other early settles and founders of colonies came here mostly to escape religious persecution brought on by state sponsored or offical churches. They mandated whocould believ what and how they could share those ideas. John Bunyon, author of The Pilgrim's Progress was jailed because England requried a license for preaching. Not a call from God, but permission from the state.

And the first colonoies brought persecution with them. They forced others to bow to their beliefs. They were glad to be in control but they were not ready to lets others have freedom beside them. Thanks to Roger Williams, this mode passed and we inherited religious liberty.

Funding religion ties it to the government. Extra protections for the Jews make them more special than others, a favored class just like George Orwell talks about in "Animal Farm." All animals are equal, but somee are more equal than others! This is not what we want. The commissions own dismissal for Carrie Prejean shows this at work.

Keep church and state as separate as you possibly can if you wish to preserve either.

Thank you for your attention and your good faith interest in religious liberty

Sincerly,

John Strickland

Gentry, Arkansas

From: "D'Mor Bornschlegl" <lgmbornschlegl@gmail.com>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <RLC@usdoj.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:27:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments. Please implement them.

D'Mor Bornschlegl

From: orionprsda <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State - José L. Guzmán
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:30:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation betweenchurch and state with a "bridge." With respect, that is exactly backwards — and as a person offaith, I find the idea alarming.That wall wasn't built by secularists to keep religion down. It was built by believers to keep thechurch free. A bridge doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money andpolitical 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 joinhands, 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,

José L. Guzmán
Carolina, Puerto Rico.

Sent from my Galaxy

From: Beth Jepson <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Pillar of Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:34:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with pillar of freedom comments. Please implement them.

Beth Farrell

From: Vladimyr Jean-Pierre <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State - Vladimyr Jean-Pierre
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:36:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While 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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As citizens and students of history, and as Christians, we are alarmed lest the flawed and unconstitutional view of the Chair of the Committee of the so-called "proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state" prove influential or worse, instructive, to the Department of Justice. If the Committee's opinion of the so-called "proper understanding" of the Establishment Clause is the same as that of its Chair, it is apparent that its understanding is not proper, but rather improper.

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

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

We respectfully ask that the Department of Justice, in considering the issue of public guidance of the separation of church and state, consider the history of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania and

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

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

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

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

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

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

prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State." [7]

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Vladimyr Jean-Pierre

[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: Noelle Cappa <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Separation of Church and State-Noelle Mesa
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:37:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Committee:
I first want to thank you for your interest and commitment to protect religious liberty in the United States of America by creating the committee and this report. I value and respect each one of you and the roles you perform in our government. However, I am a bit concerned about the proposal to "bridge the separation of church and state" and comments made that this principle of separation is not a part of our constitution. You are correct is not explicitly stated but the principle is very much so as stated in our First Amendment regarding freedom of worship and also our founding fathers, including our 4th president, James Madison, were very much proponents for it. Why are we digressing from this Biblical principle and foundation of our founding fathers? I fear the consequences of what could happen and so does every other American who believes in true religious liberty. I urge you to reconsider this "bridge" and keep the "wall".

P.S. I agree with the "Pillar of freedom" comments

Respectfully submitted,
Noelle Mesa
Ooltewah, TN

From: Tracey Ellis <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty vote
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:37:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,
Tracey Ellis
Stockbridge, Ga

From: Jerry Allen <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT-RELIGOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION DRAFT REPORT
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:37:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty,

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments, 100%. Please implement them.

Thank You for your time,

Jerry Allen
Arkansas

From: Tracey Ellis <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment separation of church and state- Tracey Ellis
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:39:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,
Tracey Ellis
Stockbridge, Ga

[redacted]

From: Lily Kaiyanuyanu <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – LK
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:43:02 -0400
Importance: Normal

Greetings, Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

As a proud member of our community, I am writing to urgently ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state. Specifically, I am deeply concerned about the proposals to use government funds for religious activities and to repeal the Johnson Amendment.

When houses of worship depend on government funding or engage in partisan politics, the inherent divisiveness of politics inevitably emerges. Rather than prioritizing faith and community, churches risk competing for resources and answering to political figures.

The separation of church and state isn't a secular attack on religion; historically, it was championed by people of faith to protect religious freedom from government interference. It is precisely what has allowed diverse faith traditions to stay vibrant and strong in our country.

For the sake of our families, schools, churches, and communities, let's maintain the separation of church and state. That's the only way we can guarantee that both institutions remain genuinely free.

Thank you for protecting our fundamental right to freedom of thought.

Lily Kaiyanuyanu

From: Beau Marty <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I really do NOT want the separation of church and State to end.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:43:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

I seem to remember when we learned some American History, and European History, that several of the European countries forced their citizens to believe in a "state" religion. People were slaves to the KIng or Emperor, or Count or whoever led the geographical state.

Then they fled to the far west, America to get some freedom, and the right to worship as they believed was right. And to own their own land and build their own lives. If someone is telling you that you have to worship according to their beliefs, not your own beliefs, you have lost your freedom of religion.

So, the idea of merging the Government with the beliefs of Religion is abhorrent. Totally wrong. An abomination in my opinion. Please DO NOT Make it a rule that will cripple our country.

From: New Mail <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom response
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:44:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the response of Pillars of Freedom.

It is essential to keep the separation of church and state. When there is no longer a distinction between church and state how will we keep out corruption? Money is corruptible and corrupts. It buys out people. Will it buy out of one religion over another? Most likely yes. Thereby erasing the very reason for the separation of church and state in the first place. The only "gatekeeper" of the Church should be God Himself.

Corina Kennedy

From: Moses Chege <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:45:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom. Org that Church and state do need to stay separated

From: MarkSharon Learned <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment - Separation of Church and State - Sharon Learned
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:47:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Sharon Learned

From: Deborah Blossser <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:48:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

I HAVE READ AND AGREE WITH THE COMMENTS FROM PILLAR OF FREEDOM. PLEASE IMPLEMENT!!!

Thank you!!

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Jayne Lambert <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Citizens Concern
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:49:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom It May Concern,

"Separation of Church and State" may not be stated in the Declaration of Independence, Constitution of the United States of America, nor Bill of Rights but it is implied and was implied because of what our Founding Fathers went through. They did not want to see one'Religion to become more powerful backed by the government of the USA, against the Conscience of the individual's walk with God. The government's responsibility is to deal with peoples actions, and the Churches responsibility is to deal with people's hearts. And if either one takes on the responsibility of the other, history has shown that really bad things happen.

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

Sincerely,

Jayne Lambert
[redacted]

From: Alicia Gore <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - (Alicia D. Gore)
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:50:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I have read several of the “Pillar of Freedom’s Comments” and I agree with them, all so explicitly stated! Please prayerfully consider the information forwarded to you and implement them. There is no need in belaboring clear points that have already been stated! You are men and women of sound judgment and are fully aware in your conscience the history of our country and the reasons the Constitution was drafted in the first place! And though the words “ Separation of Church and State “ are not written verbatim, it is certainly implied! Please let us keep that wall of separation in place! The repercussions for not doing so will be more than any can imagine! Doing so will keep the liberties our forefathers worked so hard for and fought for in place! With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,
Alicia D. Gore
Ardmore, Alabama

From: Maggie <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:51:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Truth comments!!!!!!!!!!!
Stop trying to combine Church & State!

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:52:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern,
I am a very concerned citizen. Church and state should stay separated....the government should not run the church, or religious freedom. Religious freedom is what our forefathers FOUGHT FOR. So we could all decide how we worshipped God or if we wanted to worship God. It is each persons decision...no one is to force us. God does not force people to come to Him....to worship Him. In fact He wouldnt ACCEPT that worship....because He wants us to come to Him on our own free will and choice. We are free to decide what we want to do and who we want to serve. Thats how it is now, and thats how it should stay. That is how our forefathers set it up to be. They did that because they had to flee religious persecution. They never wanted us to fall back into that horriable trap of not having FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE!
The govt should run itself and the church doesnt need interference from the govt....we follow God's laws. Let man be in charge of manmade civic laws and our Lord and Savior will be in charge of His church.
In case my words arent clear enough.... I believe in and agree with what PILLAR OF FAITH said.
Thank you for your time,
Russell j Ogden
Dallas, Oregon

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: "Mohr, John A (Wally) CTR (USA)" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Cc: John <[redacted]>, Carone J Phillips <[redacted]>, John Mohr <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Religious Liberty Commission - John Mohr
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:57:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

(This is a general statement for the religious liberty commission.)

I love the fact that the president is interested in "bringing back religion." The Protestant roots of America is surely one of the main reasons for her success and concept of liberty. And it is in this vein that I must speak out. I want Christianity to flourish and be free to spread. But I don't want this done with force or requirement.

The investigation of the committee is super appreciated. I think the most recent and widely impactful religious persecution in the form of a "Pandemic" is well illustrated. But the more subtle impacts such as the encroachment of the state upon the common biblical institution of marriage and gender is well stated and understood in the more bible based religious community. This commission is to be complimented for it's thoroughness for its honesty in this aspect.

Having said all of this - history is very clear – Any government that mixes directly with religion becomes an entity of persecution. (Indeed, if we label secularism as a religion - because it is – we can see it was involved in persecution of religions people at the hands of those who have no issue in abusing their positions of power. See our COVID era acts for reference.) It is our wall of separation and the acknowledgement of Americans with different views that has allowed America to flourish. We need look no farther than our foe in Iran, to see the scourge that religion brings to government. A "Christian" example is shown most pointedly by looking at the history of Papel Rome, as it was the arbitrator of the dark ages – and within the pages of history is plainly seen its attempts to silence or kill all who opposed her EVEN those who used the exact same bible. This state sanctioned violence against the state chosen religion will come to this land of liberty, if the wall of separation is breached. As any logical person knows, if you have a law you must figure out how to enforce that law. The enforcement mechanism and organization within the government will do what all government entities do – grow, get more resources and accrue more power. And this power will be used for the next wave of decided enforcement that will eventually turn into enslavement. The seeds of this government entity is already in this committee – however well intentioned it may be.

Nothing good can come from mixing government with religion. If the president and the American people wish to make this a nation that regains its roots, it needs to be done at the level of the heart. People need to understand their loss at not having a God in their lives and invite him in personally. A government forming laws and forcing public adherence has not achieved a heartfelt change but merely effected public change and perhaps even started a private distain for God himself, especially among those who wish to not have God in their lives. But worse still, for those who worship God differently, it will burden them as they will need to maintain a public presence that adheres to a public image and continue their private allegiance to God in the way their conscious and study has show to be correct. The end stages of this battle of conscious and truth will be persecution. (Great example can be seen from Cuba – as Christians were persecuted for not following the state regulated mindset.)

In many ways the best thing this committee could do is remove the tax-exempt status of all religious institutions (not the Johnson amendment,) and allow free speech to flow as it might. After all, those of serious religions aspirations need no tax-exempt status to continue to support as God has impressed on their minds. The worst thing we can have is pastors pulled in by politicians to return voters to a cause for money. I think it can be well observed where money and influence flows, the temptation to abuse one's power and position for temporal gain is well documented. But if the Tax-exempt status is to be kept in place, then the Johnson amendment should be kept in place. What we need are people who do not abuse their positions of power - not a loss of protections. We need pastors who are honest from the pulpit with their flocks. And we need those truly interested in bringing Christianity back to America to do it honestly and not with the power of the state. What I am appealing to is our problem is not so much with our laws, but with those in positions of power and unfortunately a change in law can not change hearts and minds or bring about honesty and morality. We don't necessarily have a law problem, we have a heart problem. Separation is indeed a wall of safety our founding father's recognized. – I give you something I copied from a more professional writer who has made a most important note about separation:

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.

However having said all of this, as the committee has noted, we need the government to act responsibly and allow religion to stay in the public and private square as the people wish. Christians should be allowed to speak bible truths such as "Marriage is between a man and a woman" and refuse to participate in moral degradation - as their own conscious dictates. They should not be forced to engage in acts or business that is diametrically opposed to their conscious. Christianity should be free to participate in every public square. Government should not show preference to secular or evolutionary religious practices (or in other words – ideologies of non-religious origins.) Especially in school – this is a difficult problem. Parents should be allowed to remove their children from under the tutelage of Teachers who seek indoctrination into specific ideologies. And schools should be called to be honest about what they are teaching. Where funding is involved, parents should be allowed to give funding to any school of their choice and not limited to public schools. Aka, this appeals back to freedom of conscious.

May God bless this committee and those who are members of this committee so they will be endued to make the hard but correct choices to ensure freedom of conscious and liberty for yet a little while longer may grace this great country of ours- the United States of America.

Vr
John Mohr

[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].
[3] https://www.chron.com/politics/article/dan-patrick-church-state-constitution-viral-22323383.php

From: Nereida Diaz <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 15:59:50 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the pillar of freedom about religious liberty.

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on Religious Liberty and Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:00:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Commission:

I feel compelled to comment on this topic that I ardently believe in, Separation of Church and State. As a U.S. History teacher for thirty one years, I taught the formation of the colonies every year. In my research, I learned of Roger Williams, a Puritan that was persecuted for his beliefs because they were not mainstream beliefs of the Puritans in Massachusetts Bay Colony. He was not afraid to express his beliefs and was banished, ironically from the very people who were persecuted in England! He went on to found Rhode Island where any religion, Quaker, Catholic, Jews, or even atheists were welcome. As an American History teacher in a public school, I emphasized the acceptance of ALL RELIGIONS. Though the Constitution does not use the exact words, "Separation of Church and State," it is definitely implied, especially in the first amendment. It is important for the "State" to refrain from interference in religious institutions, schools, etc. History verifies this — as in making laws that may appear to be good for all, but may require behavior that goes against a particular religions's belief.

Please refrain from any decision that would challenge or trample upon this PILLAR OF FREEDOM in our great country, the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, a country I am proud to be a citizen of.

Karen Bungard
San Diego, CA

From: David Braswell <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:02:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.

Sincerely,

David Braswell

From: Jordan Lindsay <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Jordan Lindsay
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:03:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

I DO NOT think that the government should:
1. Fund religious non-profit activities.
2. Fund religious education and religious clubs on public campuses.

I also DO NOT support repealing the Johnson Amendment, which restricts church's political activities. I request that the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. (pillaroffreedom.org)

I believe that things get complicated when churches take government money. I believe that church members need to answer to God instead of competing for government money. Separation of church and state is important and was built into this country to protect people of faith. It is not a secular idea. It is why our country is able to continue running smoothly with so many religions.

Please keep church and state separate. That's how we keep both of them free.
Sincerely,
Jordan Lindsay
Wallowa, Oregon

--

Living the dream!

From: Carol Sindorf <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – RLC PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH & STATE – CAROL SINDORF
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:05:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

Via Electronic Mail to [redacted]

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

Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report

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

PUBLIC COMMENT – SEPARATION OF CHURCH & STATE – CAROL SINDORF

1. I agree with the comments provided by the Pillar of Freedom on the separation of church and state being among America's greatest achievements, grounded in the Constitution and central to our freedom. I also agree that the Religious Liberty Commission's report undermines this principle by proposing to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a bridge. Changes to our current constitutional standards, laws, and rules in any manner is unwarranted and unneeded.

2. Regarding the Proposed "Building Bridges" between Church & State Draft report, specifically pages 44-45 where it states *"To preserve this freedom, we must build bridges, not walls, between the City of God and the City of Man. If we do so, we will pass on a free and prosperous nation to the next generation."*

COMMENT: Why must we "build a bridge" between opposing institutions? Bridges are built to avoid obstacles like rocks, rivers, canyons, or busy roads. For this proposed "bridge" connecting government and religion, exactly what "obstacles" are being avoided? Obstacles like protected individuality and liberty for Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, atheists, agnostics, Saturday Sabbath- keepers, and Sunday-keepers alike to practice their religion as they interpret ?
The scary thing about this proposal is that the primary objective is to gain influence, and thus control over individual religious choices. That is the opposite of freedom.
Do not permit changes to current 501.3C rules, do not advocate for any specific day of rest (blue laws), and do not discontinue, modify, or replace any of the established rules & regulations on this matter.

Carol Sindorf
[redacted]

From: Jose Dossantos <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:06:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history." According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain.

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

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

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

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

the protections in the First Amendment, the Roman Catholic Church for centuries maintained a list of banned books called the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The books were subject to confiscation, and the possession of them resulted in the punishment of the owner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee and that it adopt recommendation 1 of the Committee that it convene a public hearing, with written

and oral submissions from the public, to more comprehensively study the question of the separation of church and state in history, and in American history in particular, a study which we would enthusiastically support.
I agree with the above recommendations.

We remain, Yours truly,
a fellow Christian

From: Suzanne Thompson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on draft report of the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:08:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Fernanda DosSantos <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:09:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While 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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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 religious bigots. It was a union of church and state that suppressed speech and the freedom of the press in England. It was a union of church and state that prohibited the work of translation of the Bible, which changed the world. It was a union of church and state that necessitated his flight to Europe. It was a union of church and state that killed him.

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

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

the protections in the First Amendment, the Roman Catholic Church for centuries maintained a list of banned books called the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The books were subject to confiscation, and the possession of them resulted in the punishment of the owner.

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

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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]

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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.
I agree with the above recommendations.

We remain, Yours truly,
a fellow Christian

Grace & Peace,
Fernanda Dos Santos

From: Florin Pirv <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:09:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Florin B. Pirv

From: Nurys Hilton <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:09:57 -0400
Importance: Normal

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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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

Enviado desde mi iPhone

From: mary patten <PII>
To: PII
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:10:29 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of The Religious Liberty Commission

I am a USA citizen and person of fath. I appreciate you trying to keep Religious Freedom in the USA. I do disagree on the bridge between church and state as I fel it opens up the possibility of creating laws that will govern all religions and that is not religious freedom. That will lead to persecution. Please keep the separation of church and state in tact. I agree on freedom of expression in schools and workplace but religion should never be governed or mandated. Christ, Himself gave us power of choice and the government should never make laws which take that away. Separation of church and state is what protects us.

Thank you for paying attention and listening.

Mary Sue Patten

From: Stanley Tschritter <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Stanley Tschritter
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:13:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

As a citizen of the United States of America I am extremely concerned with current discussions regarding the breakdown of the wall of separation between church and state in our country.

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

Sincerely,
Stanley Tschritter
Tucson, AZ

From: ELSIE SPEER <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: FW: Recommendations to the Religious Liberty Commission [RLC]and US Department of Justice [DOJ] before July 13 deadline
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:15:41 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Part_1.rtf; FW_Recommendations_to_the_Religious_Liberty_Commission_[RLC]and_US_Department_of_Justice_[DOJ]_before_July_13_deadline.rtf

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> Dear friends
>
> Please read the letter below [drafted by an attorney] which I sent to the
> RLC and DOJ. If you see merit, consider forwarding the same letter to:
> [redacted] <mailto:[redacted]> . Take the FW off in the subject
> line above, and remove my signature and sign your name at the bottom of the
> letter [right before the footnotes] where my name is. Religious liberty is
> really at stake in America. I'm praying God will guide you in your
> decision.
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> Dear Friends at the Religious Liberty Commission (RLC) and the U.S.
> Department of Justice (DOJ):
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>
> Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of
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> June 26, 2026. While we are mindful of the Committee's labors, which
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> agree with, we write to voice our concerns and objections to the Committee's
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>
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Elsie L. Speer
> [1]
> <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/president-trumps-religious-liberty-commissio
> n-delivers-historic-report-draft>
> https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/president-trumps-religious-liberty-commission
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> [2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].
> [3]
> <https://www.chron.com/politics/article/dan-patrick-church-state-constitutio
> n-viral-22323383.php>
> https://www.chron.com/politics/article/dan-patrick-church-state-constitution
> -viral-22323383.php
> [4]
> <https://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=c61c48db-a3502194-c61b6c3e-74fe4868cd43-
fb358c463a80fca2&q=1&e=e9462c49-f459-45a7-aecc-2c8e52686ad3&u=https%3A%2F%2Freclaimthenet.org%2Fpope-
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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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From: Semiti Taoi <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:16:40 -0400
Importance: Normal

Please I don't agree with church and State been amalgamated together. Because state will persecute other religions who don't agree. State and religion should be separated. This has proven in past and often history will repeat itself.
I hope you will consider my request.
Semiti Taoi American Citizen.
Sent from my iPhone

From: Kendra Purvis <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:17:50 -0400
Importance: Normal

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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,

Kendra Purvis and family

[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: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: [redacted], [redacted], [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty comment by July 13, 2026
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:19:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,

I, Monese Washington, 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,

Monese Washington, of South Florida

From: Jëan-Luc Albert <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Jean-Luc Albert
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:19:25 -0400
Importance: Normal

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty

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

Subject: Formal Objection to the Religious Liberty Commission's Draft Recommendations

Dear Chairman Patrick and Members of the Commission,

Thank you for your dedicated service and your efforts to protect faith in our nation. I am writing to you today during the public comment period to respectfully submit my formal objections to the draft recommendations put forward by the Commission.

I write this not out of a desire to diminish religion, but out of a deep concern for its future purity and protection. I have no doubt that the initial creators of these recommendations are entirely sincere in their desire to shield believers and preserve faith. However, a careful review of history and the structural mechanics of state power suggests that the proposed trajectory will ultimately harm the very institutions you seek to protect.

I ask you to consider the following points as you review the final draft:

- **The Protective Origin of the Separation**: Historically, the concept of a "wall of separation" was not an invention of secularists seeking to attack religion. Instead, it was introduced in 1644 by Roger Williams—a deeply devout, persecuted pastor banished into the New England winter by religious magistrates. He conceived the wall specifically to keep the heavy hand of government out of the "garden" of the church. The separation was built to protect the conscience of believers from state overreach.
- **The Hazard of a "Bridge"**: Replacing this protective wall of separation of church and state with a conceptual "bridge" to bring religion into government invites unintended consequences. A bridge always carries traffic in both directions. When the church utilizes state machinery, it inevitably allows state control, political agendas, and bureaucratic oversight to flow directly back into sacred spaces. True religious liberty requires that the state has no authority to define, manage, or regulate faith. I know that at this point there is no effort to define, manage, or regulate faith, but it is precisely what this structural framework will lead to.
- **The Architecture of Intolerance**: The recommendations call for federal hotlines, online reporting portals, and a specialized task force to manage religious litigation. History demonstrates that state-enforced religion rarely begins with overt persecution. It begins quietly with paperwork—forms, files, and administrative channels. These mechanisms inadvertently weaponize local communities, causing neighbor to turn against neighbor over personal grievances under the guise of religious compliance.

- **The Spiritual Compromise**: When a faith community reaches for legislative or executive authority to enforce its values, it makes a tragic confession. It signals that it has stopped trusting its own authentic, divinely given power—which relies entirely on truth, love, and the spirit of God—and has chosen instead to rely on the coercive machinery of Caesar.

In light of these historical realities, I strongly urge the Commission to reconsider its recommendations. I specifically ask you to preserve the traditional understanding of the Establishment Clause, which has successfully kept the market of religious ideas free, diverse, and vibrant for centuries. Please ensure that our nation's foundational protections remain an authentic shield for the human conscience rather than a tool for state-managed faith.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your willingness to hear the feedback of citizens who cherish true religious liberty.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean-Luc Albert
Lindale, TX

From: Sharon Steck <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Sharon S
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:19:55 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

First of all, I want to thank you so much for giving the public the opportunity to respond. And, secondly, I would like to share my concern.

I'm a Christian, and I'm very concerned that you are considering to break down the wall between the separation of church and state. It seems that you think that our constitution doesn't really uphold the separation of church and state when it actually does. The separation of church and state is not only clearly in our constitution, but it was strongly upheld by our founding fathers. The pilgrims even knew the consequences that resulted in a place where there was no separation between church and state. Go back even farther in history to the Dark Ages, the Reformation period, and the Enlightenment in Europe. When we look carefully at the history of Christianity there, we will find recorded very dark periods of time when the state and the church were one. Countless men, women, and children, lost religious freedom and even their lives because the state dictated what their relgion should be and they chose to stand faithful to what they believed the Bible said. For a long time, the Bible was even banned from the reach of the common people. Reformers like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale devoted themselves to try to get the Bible into the hands of the public. And they received great opposition. Other reformers, such as Martin Luther and Jan Hus, and countless other men and women, such as the Waldenses preceding them, were persecuted because of their beliefs that contradicted the church-government powers of the time. These men and women believed that their faith should be built upon sola Scriptura (upon the Word of God solely), not upon the dictates of man. They were persecuted because they sought to be faithful to God and His Word.

The merging of, or building a "bridge" between, church and state will only bring devastating results. Look at history. It will tell you. Countless men, women, and children lost their lives and went through horrifying experiences because of their faith, and not being willing to bown down to a church that dictated and tried to controll what their faith should be. When church and state merge together, the use of force comes hand-in-hand with it, resulting in religious liberty being taken away. This is contrary to the kingdom of God; for, His kingdom is opposed to the use of force. God never forces anyone to do anything. He gave us the right to choose, and He expects all of us who profess to know Him to do the same. Jesus also made it very clear that we should give to the government (Caesar) what belongs to it and give to God what belongs to Him (Matthew 22:21). He clearly indicated that state and church should be separated. To choose to merge the two is to work contrary to the principles of God and bring in a spirit that isn't Christian and which will break down society instead of building it up.

I would also like to say that I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.

Praying for the honor of God and of the principles of His kingdom to be in all your decisions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Sharon S.

From: Aleecia Martinez <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Aleecia K. Martinez
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:20:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I'm writing as a citizen stating I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them
Sincerely,
Aleecia K. Martinez
Taylorsville, Utah

From: Gary Walton <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] My Objection
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:23:31 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please be advised that I fully agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comment. Consequently, I am asking that you implement them without any changes.

Thanks.

Gary,

"The end of all things is at hand." Prepare to meet Jesus.

Gary

From: Charlene Castillo <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Charlene Castillo
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:24:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members fo the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing as a concerned citizen to submit my formal public comment regarding the newly released draft report.

I wholly agree with the comprehensive comments and religion liberty principles submitted to the Commission by the Pillar of Freedom organization. I strongly urge the Commission to implement their

recommendations and uphold the foundational separation of church and state.

As a resident of my community, I firmly believe that keeping religious institutions independent from government funding protects the integrity of both. I am choosing to write directly to express that this issue is

deeply important to me personally, and I stand firmly behind Pillar of Freedom's analysis.

Thank you for your time and for recording my opposition to any weakening of church-state separation.

Sincerely,

Charlene Castillo
Pasadena, MD

From: Andrew Tryon <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:26:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." [9] Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate in the

American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,
-Andrew Tryon

[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: Stephen Caudill <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Stephen Caudill
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:28:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the religious liberty commission,

Please consider what made America great. It was separation of church and state. Our founding fathers and signers of the constitution staunchly held to that, because they, and the early pilgrims, fled religious persecution from the government, which was a result of union of civil and religious power. Of all the world powers in history, from Egypt, Babylon, Medi-Persia, Greece, and Rome, whenever they "built bridges" between secular and religious power, it resulted in their demise; albeit even if they continued for awhile afterwards.
Please maintain separation; and let Freedom Ring. Freedom of Conscience.
I agree with Pillar of Faith statements regarding separation of church and state.
Thank you.
Sincerely,
Stephen T. Caudill
Kettle Falls, Washington.

From: eric stutz <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Eric Stutz
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:28:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

Church and State – Eric Stutz

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,

Eric Stutz
Colmesneil, Texas

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Jackee Andrews <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment- The Draft Report of The President's Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:29:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

Thank you for the tremendous work that has gone into this report. I appreciate the Commission's effort to remind our nation that religious liberty is not a secondary constitutional issue but one of the indispensable pillars of the American experiment.

I write not only as one engaged daily in the work of civic renewal, but as a naturalized American citizen who was born in Kenya.

Long before I ever set foot on American soil, I encountered America, through Americans who owed my country nothing and gave anyway. My own mother heard the Gospel from a missionary from California preaching on the open streets of Nairobi. Her conversion that day changed the trajectory of my family forever, in ways that reach every branch of our family tree to this day. My own faith was later strengthened as a teenager through Campus Crusade for Christ, now Cru, and Word of Life. Samaritan's Purse reached my family through Operation Christmas Child, with a simple shoebox that told a child she was not forgotten, and villages in Kenya drink clean water today because of wells dug through the ministry of the late evangelist James Robison. None of this was sent by any government, and none of it was owed. It came because ordinary Americans believed every person bears the image of God and is owed the dignity of hearing the Gospel, an education, clean water, a life not defined by scarcity. As a Christian believer, I'm deeply grateful for the lives across the world that have been forever changed for the better, not through foreign aid conditioned on political outcomes, but through the voluntary, sacrificial service of people whose faith compelled them to give.

I did not understand, as a child, that this generosity was itself downstream of a specific constitutional inheritance. I understand it now. The American missionaries who impacted my life and many others were only free to leave their homes and give as they did because a nation existed that had, two centuries earlier, decided religious conviction was not a threat to be managed but a liberty to be protected. America could export compassion at that scale because America had first secured, in law, the freedom of its people to act on conscience without asking government's permission. This report gets that causal chain right, and I want to underline it rather than restate it: religious liberty is not a downstream luxury of American prosperity. It is the upstream cause of it. Religious liberty is ultimately about acknowledging that every human being bears the image of God, that rights come from Him, and that governments best serve their citizens when they remain humble before the One from whom all authority ultimately flows.

The report's central image, that religious liberty functions as a bridge between church and state rather than a wall dividing them, captures something I lived on the receiving end of before I ever articulated it as policy. A "bridge" produces exactly what I witnessed as a child: the free movement of conviction into action, and of resources into need, without government standing in the doorway to inspect whether the giver's theology met some secular test of neutrality. I would ask the Commission to make this connection explicit rather than implicit that the same freedom which lets a pastor preach without

government permission is the freedom that let a missionary build a well in a remote African village without a government determining that the well was too religious to fund or too religious to permit.

President Washington's 1790 letter to the Touro Synagogue, which the report rightly features, promised that religious minorities in the new republic would enjoy liberty not as a matter of government indulgence but as an inherent right, so that "every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree." I believe that promise was never intended to terminate at America's shores. A nation that secures religious liberty at home does not merely protect its own citizens. It produces citizens free enough, and convinced enough, to carry that liberty's fruits to the rest of the world, at their own initiative, without a government directing them to do it or a government stopping them.

This is also where I would push the report to go further. Executive Order 14291 specifically tasks this Commission with identifying opportunities for the White House Faith Office to partner with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom "to further the cause of religious liberty around the world." The current draft honors that mandate mostly by implication. I would ask the Commission to state directly, perhaps as a thirteenth recommendation, that America's example is itself a form of foreign policy: that nations seeking to escape cycles of poverty, corruption, and instability should look at the American founding not as a museum piece but as a template. Secure the individual's liberty to act on conscience, protect the institutions that liberty produces, and prosperity and human flourishing follow, not by government decree but by the accumulated free choices of citizens who believe they owe a duty to their Creator and to their neighbor.

I would also ask the Commission not to overlook the debt owed to the Puritan founders in telling this story, since their imprint on this instinct runs deeper than the more commonly cited Enlightenment sources. The Puritans did not come to New England seeking irreligion, secularism, or the exclusion of God from common life. They came believing in a covenant, a mutual and binding obligation between a people and God and between the members of a community themselves. Their errand into the wilderness produced Harvard within six years of the Massachusetts Bay Colony's founding, established for training a literate, biblically formed ministry. It produced town meetings and congregational self-governance long before the words "self-governing democracy" entered the American vocabulary. Whatever their limitations, the Puritans modeled something the report's argument depends on: that a people bound by shared conviction and covenantal obligation will build enduring institutions, educate their children, and govern themselves with restraint, because they believe they are accountable to God for how they do it. That instinct did not disappear at the founding. It is the same instinct that, over three centuries later, sent ordinary Americans to villages like mine with no expectation of return.

I am living proof of what this report argues in the abstract. The chain runs unbroken from a street corner in Nairobi to this comment: an American, free to preach without a permit from any government, spoke the Gospel to a young Kenyan woman who had no reason to expect that anyone from a country as distant and prosperous as America would cross an ocean to speak to her. She believed, and that single afternoon reordered everything that came after it, for her children and now her grandchildren, in a family she could not have imagined the shape of. My mother never met the Founders and could not tell you what the Establishment Clause says, but she is living proof of what it protects. I would ask the Commission to say, plainly, that this is not only a domestic inheritance to be guarded but a gift the world is still receiving, and that America should never grow hesitant about the fact that its religious liberty has done more good for the nations of the earth than its foreign aid budgets ever will.

May God grant our nation the wisdom to preserve this precious inheritance for generations yet to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline Andrews

From: Jeff Richards <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:29:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings.

Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. We are concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours truly,

Jeff Richards.

From: Alesha Evans <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Alesha Evans
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:29:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. United States of America should keep Church and State separate for the benefit of its people and the health of this nation.

Sincerely,
Alesha Evans
Trout Creek, MT

From: Suzie Burry <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report-Suzie
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:30:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

The separation of church and state is among America's greatest achievements, grounded in the Constitution and central to our freedom and to our country's power and economic success. If this current government structure is changed or repudiated, the outcomes for our nation will be changed detrimentally to itself as history has demonstrated. Mr Standish, my ancestor came over to America on the Mayflower to escape the persecution that results from only one perspective being enforced. And we are still enjoying the freedom of diversity today, making us a very strong nation. I would like your influence to help keep religious liberty available for everyone. No one wants to be restricted by persecution because only one is perspective legal, but let us all live together freely helping each other as best as we can, like we are successfully doing now.

I object to the need to fund any of the church's non-profit activities. I object to my government needing to fund any of the country's religious clubs or campuses. I want to keep the Johnson Amendment and strongly request that this amendment continue to be fully enforced.

I like that our government is by the people for the people. I would like your help to to keep it that way for all of us equally.

Have you experienced how force destroys relationships and brings harm to all involved? The same outcome will happen even to this amazing government that we currently have. We all are blessed here. People still flock to come live in our country. We all want these freedoms to continue. These keep us all happy and safe. Thank you for what you are doing personally to safeguard these amazing benefits of being a U.S. citizen. Can you see how this has helped build us to become the strongest nation on earth today? No other nation has what we have achieved. No need to make changes or improvements to what has proven to work successfully already. That's my vote. Thank you for considering my response. I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

May you have increased wisdom and light for each of your decisions.

Thanks, Suzie

From: waid fox <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State - Waid Fox
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:32:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Henry Hernandez <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I agree with with pillar of freedom's comment s
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:32:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with pillar of freedoms comments, thank u.
Henry Hernandez

From: Lentner Tom <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillars of Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:34:10 -0400
Importance: Normal

The Constution in challenge today was Divinely instituted by God Himself through the hands Christian men of Faith. We need not infringe upon the Freedom for Divine Assemblies which God has foreseen the need and has set aside for this Nation. Such infringement will bring about persecution from within. I stand with Pillars of Freedom as a proud Veteran who served and loves this Country.

From: Jim Gray <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Concerns with the Religious Liberty Commission Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:35:52 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission regarding the draft report:
As a person of faith and a citizen of this great nation I am terribly concerned with the Commission's proposition to replace the idea of "wall of separation" between church and state with a "bridge." The concept behind the wall was to keep[the church free from encroachment by the government that may wrest that freedom from the church. I understand the wording in your report that the nowhere in constitution do you find the phrase "wall of separation." Yet history is replete with examples showing that when church and state become closely aligned the rights of religious dissenters are often reduced leading to persecution. This happened in medieval Europe when the Catholic Church aligned with the state and thousands were persecuted and killed as a result. Anababtists were persecuted by secular authorities just to name two examples. The point is that the separation of church and state protects liberty while mixing religion and government allows the state to impose one faith on everyone leading to discrimination and tyranny.

Two other concerns regard the Commission's recommendation to repeal the Johnson Amendment which will further politicize America's churches plus the expanding of funding. Of religious organizations engaging in religious activities. Both of these recommendations run counter to the separation of church and state as provided for by the Constitution.

In closing, a "Bridge" encourages future possibilites for encroaching on personal religious liberties and attacking liberty of conscience issues that would have fearful and eternal consequences. My personal and deep conviction is that we should never open this "Pandora's Box." Joe Biden once famously said in a message to Iran and Hezbollah, "Don't!"

From: Gabriela Carolina Rojas <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Gabriela C. Rojas
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:38:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

I have thoroughly read Pillars of Freedom's comments, and I agree with them. Please implement them.
Besides the constitutional aspects presented, even though I agree that Christianity and Bible principles are a good base for society, I do not agree that the government should enforce them for the following reasons:

1- The first four commandments govern the relationship of man to God; the last six govern the relationship of man to man. If social order is to be preserved, the civil government must have a say regarding the commandments related to the man-to-man relationship (last 6), but if freedom of conscience is to be preserved, it must not have anything to do with the man-to-God relationship (first 4).
2- Jesus clearly stated that his kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). We have nothing to do trying to enforce Christian Nationalism then. Theocracy was overthrown by God's order, and any attempt to have another one would imply going against His will
3- If we wish to see genuine Christian conversions and not hypocritical pretense of Christianity, we must let people decide. As Luther said during one of the most destructive fanatic movements in Germany, "I will preach, discuss, and write; but I will constrain none, for faith is a voluntary act. See what I have done. I stood up against the pope, indulgences, and papists, but without violence or tumult." "If I had wished to appeal to force, the whole of Germany would perhaps have been deluged with blood. But what would have been the result? Ruin and desolation both to body and soul. I therefore kept quiet, and left the word to run through the world alone." "We have a right to speak: we have not the right to act. Let us preach; the rest belongs unto God. Were I to employ force, what should I gain? Grimace, formality, apings, human ordinances, and hypocrisy.... But there would be no sincerity".
Constraining people to act on religious matter is against the freedom of conscience, and no good thing can come out of it.
4- ¿Haven't we seen enough examples of manslaughter when Church and State have united in history? ¿Hasn't the United States of America been founded precisely by people fleeing a persecution that originated from church and State union?

From: Myrna Colon <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:38:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

Esteemed Recipient,

I am writing to articulate the fundamental importance of upholding the constitutional guarantees concerning religious liberty, which are cornerstones of our democratic society. The principles enshrined in our nation's founding documents, particularly the First Amendment, unequivocally protect both the free exercise of religion and prohibit the establishment of any particular faith by the government.

This dual protection inherently mandates a robust and unambiguous separation between church and state. Such a distinction is not merely a legal precedent but a vital safeguard for the diverse spiritual landscape of our country. It ensures that the government remains neutral on matters of conscience, preventing coercion, fostering equality among all citizens regardless of their beliefs or non-beliefs, and allowing individuals the freedom to practice their faith—or no faith—without governmental interference or endorsement.

It is with this understanding that I express my unwavering expectation that all actions undertaken will consistently reflect a steadfast commitment to preserving these essential constitutional liberties, thereby maintaining the integrity of our secular governance.

Respectfully,
MC

From: BRENDA <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:40:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commision
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:42:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Thank you concerned citizen of the USA.

From: Jaron Richards <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:42:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings.

Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. We are concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

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

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

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

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

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

the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

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

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

Yours truly,

Jaron Richards

From: Charlotte Collier <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:42:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Thank you! Charlotte Collier
Walla Walla, WA [redacted]

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Recommendation Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:45:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

Please reconsider the recommendations in your report. You seem to think that the first amendment does not symbolize a wall, but a bridge between church and state. Yes, you're aware that the pilgrims who came to the New World in 1620 were escaping persecution from the state religion, and braved the hardships of a wild, unknown land just so they could worship God according to their conscience without the dictates of the state religion.

Looking back in history, it seems that whenever the state (government) and religion join hands, they tend to dominate and control belief systems resulting in mandates & persecution of those who think differently, and freedoms are lost. Religious wars and the Inquisition killed very many people in the 1500's to 1700's. We don't want a repeat of that.

I see that financial vouchers might be offered to parents for the education of their children in a school of their choice, public or private. Now for many years, I paid for the support of public schools through my property taxes. I also paid for my children to attend private, church-run schools. I basically paid double for my children's education and was glad to do it because it kept church & state separated.

In 2022, I saw a newspaper article that stated that the Coeur d' Alene, Idaho city council dispensed with starting their meetings with prayer because a Satanist demanded equal time to pray at the council meetings. Now if you give parents tax-payer vouchers to pay for the tuition at private, church schools, then you'll have to do it for tuition to Satanist and Witchcraft schools, also. Do you see where this is going? Please leave things as they are. Do not involve the state in religious affairs. Do not fund a religious entity or prohibit its free exercise (within reason with no harm to someone). Please protect the separation between church and state.

Sincerely yours,
Beverley Birmele
Sent from my iPhone

From: Susan Pena <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commenting on the Draft Report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:45:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hello,

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments in response to the draft report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission. Please implement them.

Best regards,

Susan
Susan Peña,

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE
This message (including any attachments) contains information that may be confidential. Unless you are the intended recipient (or authorized to receive for the intended recipient), you may not read, print, retain, use, copy, distribute or disclose to anyone the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received the message in error, please advise the sender by reply e-mail, and destroy all copies of the original message (including any attachments).

From: Sonya Tardif <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:45:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the comments from Pillar of Freedom. Please implement them.

Sonya Desormiers

From: Holly Lembcke <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment—Separation of Church and State—Holly Lembcke
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:45:55 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. Separation and state must remain separate to reflect the perfect Law of Liberty—God's government relies on the individual conscious choice of every man.
Sincerely,
Holly Lembcke
Lompoc, CA

From: Greg Collins <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Supporting Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:46:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the position on religious liberty and recommend the book "Pillar of freedom". While I disagree with the principle "separation of church and state" and remind everyone that what the 1st amendment does say is "non-establishment of religion", I am concerned that the current trend toward "christian nationalism" is swing the pendulum too far the other way.

At your service,
Greg Collins
[redacted]

From: Chantelle Martens <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty commission response
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:46:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern:

I want to let you know I have concerns about some statements in this Religious Liberty commission. Each person should worship freely or not worship on any day they choose according to their own conscience.

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

Thank you and have a blessed day 😊

From: David Howell <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church & State [David P. Howell]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:46:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I fully agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments provided in response to the draft report.

I strongly oppose several recommendations contained in the draft report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission because they depart from the constitutional principle of government neutrality toward religion. Genuine religious liberty is not strengthened when government finances or favors religious activities; it is strengthened when every individual and every faith is treated equally under the law. For that reason, I strongly object to any proposal that would expand taxpayer funding for religious nonprofit organizations, religious education, or religious clubs on public campuses. Public funds should not be used to advance religious instruction or activities. Such policies risk eroding the separation of church and state, creating unequal treatment among religious and nonreligious citizens, and inviting government involvement in matters of faith that should remain independent of state influence.

I also strongly oppose any effort to repeal, weaken, or circumvent the Johnson Amendment. Tax-exempt status is a significant public benefit, and organizations that receive that benefit—including churches—should not be permitted to engage in partisan political campaigning. Repealing or refusing to enforce the Johnson Amendment would blur the line between religious ministry and political advocacy, undermine public confidence in both religious institutions and government, and inject partisan politics into houses of worship. Rather than being weakened, the Johnson Amendment should be fully and consistently enforced to preserve the integrity of the tax code, protect the nonpartisan character of charitable organizations, and safeguard religious institutions from becoming political instruments.

Finally, I strongly object to any recommendation that grants preferential treatment to any religious group or to the State of Israel based on religious identity. The United States government has a constitutional obligation to protect the rights and liberties of all people equally, without elevating one faith or religious community above another. Religious liberty must be universal, not selective. The Commission's final report should reject recommendations that confer special privileges based on religion and instead reaffirm the enduring constitutional principles of equal protection, equal treatment, and government neutrality toward religion.

Sincerely,

David P. Howell
Laurel, MD

Sent from my iPad

From: Tanya Rj <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:47:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission

I wanted to weigh in on this important issue before time runs out. Please keep church and state separate. If you remove that separation, you will be undoing the progress of generations and you will be setting us back. It might sound like a good idea to blend church values with politics but history shows clearly that theocracies result in religious persecution for dissenters. Please don't take this perilous step. Please reconsider and keep the separation between religion and government. I know it looks like our society is degenerating and falling apart, but mixing religious ideals with government will ultimately ruin everything.

Sincerely,
Tanya Joham
Attalla, AL

Sent from my iPhone

From: Michelle Figueroa <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - (Michelle Figueroa)
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:47:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,
Michelle Figueroa
Port St. Lucie, FL

From: DEWANE BRUESKE <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:47:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Chairman Patrick, Vice Chairman Dr. Carson and Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

As a committed Christian, a veteran, and an interested student of the history of religion in my beloved USA and the rest of the world, I am extremely concerned that the First Amendment of our great and unequaled constitution be upheld. Our founding fathers came to this country because the lacked religious liberty in their home country. Countless millions of people from around the world have come here to seek a land where they have religious liberty. Unfortunately some who have come have tried to establish changes in our government that would influence the rest of us to accept their beliefs.

I believe in freedom of speech as long as it is not harmful to our fellow citizens. I do not want my tax dollars to be used in any way that controls, or even encourages other peoples religious beliefs. If our friends and neighbors cannot be convinced by my logic and speech, then perhaps I should take a second look at what I am saying. I should not try to get the government to enforce my own views.

I know that not all of the original colonies of our country provided religious freedom, but by the time our constitution had been formed they had agreed to incorporate it into the first amendment. Our nation has prospered because of it. Many thousands of my fellow veterans have died defending our constitutional way of life.

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments and am praying that they will be implemented. I believe that all men are created equal. I believe that the government should avoid taking sides for or against any of them.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Seperation of Church and State- Rebekah Bonson
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:47:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

Remember the following quote exists in the Constitution of the United States:

“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.”

No laws should be made to support any religion above another financially or any other way. Neither should any laws be made to repress any religion as long as such religious activities do force another persons life, liberty, or pursuit of happiness to be denied them.
The claim that there is not separation of church and state in the Constitution is very ignorant at best.

Please use the recommendations made by Pillar of Freedom and implement them.
Thank you and God Bless.

Sent from Proton Mail for iOS.

From: Chris & Tiffany <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] To the Commission on Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:47:56 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Commission on Religious Liberty,

Due to time constraints, I will not have time to write my own thoughts. Please consider, instead, the comments of

~Pillar of Freedom~

It is my desire that you implement their suggestions.

Sincerely,

Chris Fuemmeler

From: Dennis Hayes <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Public Comment - Separation of Church and State - (Dennis Hayes)
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:49:51 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,
Dennis Hayes
Columbus, Ohio

From: josiah Jennings <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment on the Draft Religious Liberty Commission Report, 'America's First Freedom' (June 26, 2026) – Josiah Jennings
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:50:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I'm writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider the recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state — regarding government funding in the "Equal Treatment Rule" in Chapter 3, which lets faith-based groups compete for federal grants and contracts. especially using government money to fund religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment found in Chapter 8, which calls for outright repeal plus interim IRS guidance.
Your own report cites Madison's Memorial and Remonstrance for his definition of religion but omits its actual argument: that a 'prudent jealousy' of the union of church and state 'is the best armor against error,' and that government support corrupts both civil and religious authority. That is precisely the danger Recommendation 2 reopens. Johnson Amendment repeal creates partisan capture; churches becoming campaign tools.

My ancestors John Alden and Priscilla Mullins came over on the Mayflower. They came to find religious freedom from the oppression they faced in Europe. But they did not extend that to their fellow pilgrims. While wanting religious freedom for themselves they persecuted many of different beliefs, which is one reason why the colonies were so divided.
Your own report documents this history (Mary Dyer's execution, tax-supported churches) and concludes the Founders chose pluralism over a 'wall.' But my family's experience with the Pilgrims shows the opposite lesson: proximity to state power is exactly what turned persecuted people into persecutors.
Our founding fathers saw that failure and learned from it. They didn't separate church and state to weaken faith, or the judicial power. They did it so every person could worship according to the dictates of their own conscience — without government interference or favoritism. Your report reframes the First Amendment as a 'bridge' rather than a 'wall.' But a bridge for individual worship is not the same as a funding pipeline for institutions — the Framers protected free exercise precisely by keeping government money out of it. That principle isn't spelled out word-for-word in the Constitution. It's the foundation the First Amendment stands on. Erode it, and you erode the country's foundation.

Sincerely,
Josiah Jennings
Colville, Washington
Monday July 13th

From: jacqueline fennell <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - CH 1 ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE/ BY JACQUELINE FENNELL
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:50:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to submit my public comment regarding the draft report, "12 Opportunities to Strengthen Religious Liberty for All Americans," which became available for review on June 26, 2026. Specifically, I am commenting on the recommendations in Chapter I regarding government neutrality and the Establishment Clause.

The Commission's draft report seeks to systematically dismantle the foundational "wall of separation between church and state" in favor of government-supported religious favoritism. Decades of Supreme Court precedent firmly establish that the First Amendment's Establishment Clause does not merely forbid a state-church; it forbids the state from aligning itself with, promoting, or funding religious tenets over secular ones.

- **The Commandment of Government Neutrality: In the landmark ruling *Everson v. Board of Education* (1947), the Supreme Court formally adopted Thomas Jefferson's interpretation that the First Amendment erected a "wall of separation between church and state." Justice Hugo Black, writing for the majority, declared that this wall "must be kept high and impregnable," asserting that neither a State nor the Federal Government can pass laws which "aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another." The Commission's proposals directly violate this baseline rule of absolute neutrality.**
- **Protection Against State-Sponsored Indoctrination: The draft report's call to introduce religious texts and expanded religious instruction into public schools directly threatens public school students. In *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), the Court ruled that "it is no part of the business of government to compose official prayers for any group of the American people to recite as a part of a religious program carried on by government." Furthermore, *McCollum v. Board of Education* (1948) barred the use of public-school systems to aid religious groups in disseminating their doctrines.**
- **Preventing Financial Coercion of Taxpayers: By proposing a vast expansion of public funding and taxpayer dollars for faith-based groups, the report creates the exact conditions of religious coercion the Founders fought against. As James Madison noted in his *Memorial and Remonstrance*, compelling a citizen to contribute even three pence of their property for the support of any religious establishment is a violation of liberty. While recent jurisprudence in cases like *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* (2022) shifts focus on historical practices, the Court still firmly holds that the government cannot coerce anyone to support or participate in religion.**
- **Prior to the ruling in Kennedy v. Bremerton School District, the precedent case law since 1971 had been the following ruling in Lemon v. Kurtzman which required the government to apply a 3 prong test, i.e. "The Lemon Test" in order to determine whether or not the government has violated the Establishment Clause:**
- **In Lemon v Kurtzmam (1971) by applying the following three pronged "Lemon Test": The Establishment clause is violated IF all of the following apply:**
- **1. The law must serve a secular purpose: The statute must have a valid secular (non-religious) legislative purpose.**

  2. The statute's principal or primary effect must neither advance nor inhibit religion.

  3. The statute must not foster "excessive government entanglement" with religion

  .. and if the statute does not comply w/ anyone of those three prongs of the "Lemon Test," then the government MUST prove that the statute, policy or action was implemented by the LEAST

RESTRICTIVE MEANS.

Applying the “Lemon Test,” used to be the precedent judicial case law standard until 2022 .

The Lemon Test standard was overruled by a landmark decision in the following case:

Kennedy v Bremerton School District (2022) in which there was a 6-3 Supreme Court decision, citing that Justice Neil Gorusch declared that the court abandoned the Lemon Test, characterizing the framework as “abstract” and “ahistorical.”

The new judicial standard now states that courts must now interpret the Establishment Clause by evaluating whether a government action aligns with the historical practices and understandings of the founding fathers. Also according to the new judicial standard, the Constitutionality of a law or practice is drawn in accordance with the original meaning of the Constitution at the time of the founding. While the Court discarded Lemon, it maintained that direct government coercion REMAINS unconstitutional. The government still CANNOT compel citizens to support or participate in a religious exercise against their will.

It is pertinent to critically note that since the new standard no longer requires the 3-pronged test, to be applied, and is accepting of the new language that allows laws to be enacted with a, "historical practices and understandings," would consequentially allow for laws that previously existed that oppressed and undermined the individual liberty of conscious in America.

While First Amendment rights are not absolute and must be balanced against public safety, the Commission’s proposals do not strike a legal balance; instead, they exceed established constitutional limits by transforming a framework of neutral accommodation into active government endorsement of sectarian faith. Treating the separation of church and state as a historical "misunderstanding"—as this Commission does—re-writes constitutional history to favor a majoritarian, sectarian agenda.

True religious liberty can only exist when the state remains completely neutral, ensuring that every citizen's faith or lack thereof is treated with equal dignity. The Department of Justice must reject these recommendations and continue to enforce a robust, clear line between church and state.

In addition to my own statements, I also agree with the "Pillar of Freedom's" comments made. Please implement them.

Thank you for considering my feedback on this critical constitutional matter.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Fennell
New Braunfels, TX

From: Isaiah Bonson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State- Isaiah Bonson
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:50:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

Remember the following quote exists in the Constitution of the United States:

“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.”

No laws should be made to support any religion above another financially or any other way. Neither should any laws be made to repress any religion as long as such religious activities do force another persons life, liberty, or pursuit of happiness to be denied them.
The claim that there is not seperstion of church and state in the Constitution is very ignorant at best.

Please use the recommendations made by Pillar of Freedom and implement them.
Thank you and God Bless.

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation Church and State - Louis Hughes
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:50:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

In brief, please support and implement the Pillar of Freedom's recommendations.

Separation of church and state is key to maintaining our nations freedom of religion. It was my privilege to serve our nation in the USAF to support these freedoms.

Thank you for your attention to this comments.

From: Jeanine Goodwin <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT: Separation of Church and State - J. Goodwin
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:50:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the USRLC:

I've been reading your draft report. I agree with some aspects of it, such as my constitutional right as an American to speak about, worship, and freely express my faith in God. I agree that with the past two administrations, the "cancel" culture and the suppression of religion was bolstered and supported; and that went on because persons in the LGBT movement and atheists and non-religious people alike spoke up and pressed the government to make provisions and laws supporting their agenda.

What I disagree with in your report is calling religious liberty a "bridge" between church and state when it is literally to be a "wall of separation". Not that the wall means disrespect, but that the wall means the two are mutually exclusive; it serves as a boundary that neither entity is to cross, thus maintaining the freedoms of both.

I'm writing as an American citizen who is also a Christian, to ask this body to reconsider and rescind the recommendations in your report concerning bridging church and state, as well as the recommendation concerning the Johnson Amendment. As long as this nation of ours has enjoyed its freedom, the civil and religious authorities have been separate. Even when political figures had their own sincerely held religious beliefs and acted from them according to their conscientious convictions, they never attempted to remove that wall of separation between the civil and religious authorities.

Churches and religious institutions have always been sustained by the tithes, offerings, and donations of their members, adherents, supporters, and recipients of their outreach and care. It is the role and function of the civil authorities to protect the freedoms and rights that allow for churches and religious institutions to exist and operate in this country---not to directly fund them or grant them special privileges *just because* they are churches or religious institutions. That goes against the principle of the establishment clause in the First Amendment.

Speaking also to churches and religious institutions as directing the state, this, too, is not in keeping with the wall of separation. The role and function of any religious institution is to positively impact the lives of their members and students---who have voluntarily joined the institution through personal conviction of the institution's teachings, and agreement and alignment with the institution's mission and vision---through inreach, community outreach, and spiritual guidance and encouragement. Religious institutions step outside of their bounds when they seek to drive the civil authorities to make provisions for them beyond protecting the freedoms and rights that allow them to exist and operate. The day I show up to church service for worship and hear political views spouted from the sacred desk is the day I walk out of that church in search of another that

understands the meaning, value, and importance of keeping politics out of religion and religion out of politics. The Johnson Amendment was written and passed into law to ensure this mutual exclusivity.

As was stated in the response from the Pillar of Freedom writers: "Separation isn't a secular idea; men of faith"---that is, faith in God Almighty---"built it to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here." The Holy Bible also speaks plainly to this point: "Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's." Matthew 22:21. Jesus was not speaking of a unity or even a bridge between the things of Caesar and the things of God, for there is none. He made a clear distinction between them, and that distinction is so that both may be preserved. So one can conclude that God Almighty is the true Author of the principle behind the separation of the church from the state. And history has shown us again and again that when the two are bridged and fully united, national ruin is the sure result.

I echo the cry to please retain the wall of separation between the church and the state, because that is how both of them are kept free---free from ruining each other and from external corruption. And in a nation where freedom is the byword, I would imagine efforts would be redoubled to keep our nation truly free.

Thank you for your attention and appropriate response to these concerns.

Sincerely,
Jeanine Goodwin

PII

From: Alonso Gutierrez <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:51:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 13, 2026

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.

At this time, without sufficient information, I cannot support any of the 12 points recommended by the committee. The public has not been involved in ample discussion, awareness, or dialogue with the committee. It is always important to be aware of policy before moving forward to enact it. Separation of Church and State is clearly implied and reinterpreting it would be dangerous and unconstitutional.

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.

Respectfully,

Alonso and Maria Gutierrez

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:52:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

Greetings,

I hope this email finds you all well.

I'm positive there has been multiple emails sent regarding separation of church and state. I simply want to to encourage everyone to start, build, and/or strengthen your relationships with God. God is real. The Bible is Truth. Please be ready. Please read the quotes below.

Respectfully,
Karelle

From: RayNavarro7 <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – CHAPTER 2, SUB-SECTION, "BUILDING WALLS OF SEPARATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE - RAY NAVARRO
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:52:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission:

Thank you for your efforts in fighting for religious freedom(s) in the United States of America. Religious and civil freedoms are core pillars in the American experience.

I am commenting on chapter 2 of your report, "Religious Liberty and the American Story", in particular, the subsection titled, "Building Walls of Separation Between Church and State on p. 41.

There is indeed hostility against religion in the entertainment industry, educational institutions of higher learning, and in places of employment. While this hostility will always exist as a *social* phenomenon, laws that protect Americans' right to religious belief and expression without fear of repercussion are to be fiercely defended; I applaud your efforts toward such. But the uniqueness in American conversations about religious freedom is that "religion" almost always refers to the *Judeo-Christian* form (which also appears to be the most ridiculed). A simple Google search with the prompt, "How Many Religions Are in the World Today" yields the following: "There are an estimated 10,000 distinct religions worldwide. However, the vast majority of these are small, regionally based groups. Over 73% of the global population follows one of the four largest belief systems: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism." As such:

1. The right to believe and practice one's religion, those religions being described in the above Google search, are to be understood and included in conversations about defending religious freedom in the United States, not just Judeo-Christianity (as seems to be the tendency). No one religion is to be excluded at the cost of, or favored above another, by our government in these talks.
2. While the government legislates civil laws for the benefit of its citizens/residents to maintain law and order ("wielding the sword"), it is never the *religious* conscience for the same and should never establish religious laws. Each person, free to choose for him/herself, must worship, or not, the deity of their choice, without fear of threat, punishment, persecution, or legal action.
3. Especially in the last nearly fifty years, it has uniquely been the practitioners of Judeo-Christianity that have pushed for its version of religion in American political circles (i.e., Moral Majority, Christian Coalition, Christian Nationalism) as the answer for national revival/prosperity and have been redefining the phrase "Separation of Church and State" due to American history revisions. Case in point: David Barton's (Wallbuilders.com) revised version of the Founding Fathers' real intention of this wall of separation, namely, that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. Historians, legal scholars, and others have written books refuting his erroneous claims (Barton himself is not a trained historian).
4. The genius behind the American experiment IS a complete separation between Church and State: the state and its institutions are not to endorse any religion whatsoever as the birthright of or answer to America's prosperity or solution for its ills. Neither is the state to prohibit the free exercise of ANY religion by any person, public or private (as long as an institution is not endorsing a religion) so long as the legal rights of others are not trampled upon in the process. Each U.S. citizen/resident is to act, religiously, according to conscience; this is not the realm of the state. When state and church become united, both become corrupt, as history has shown. This is the path, I believe, that America is heading toward, by well-meaning, but misguided and misinformed American evangelical Christianity. Jefferson's wall of separation must stand.

Pennsylvania Avenue is not the origin of, nor answer to a spiritual renewal in America. Just laws must be continually enacted for all citizens, but matters of religion are to be the domain of the conscience. When a Church/Religion seeks the state for endorsement or recognition, it is not only a bad sign, but an unfortunate one for that religion (in this case, Judeo-Christianity) which claims divine power and guidance anyway, over a human agency.

Keep the Wall of Separation between Church and State; this one republican principle has been the real secret behind American prosperity and power.

Ray Navarro

From: Tricia Marrero <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty draft report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:54:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

I'm responding to this report and very much disagree with many aspects. I agree with the Pillar of Freedom response already submitted. Our founding fathers who drafted the Constitution and amendments ABSOLUTELY agreed and fought for the SEPARATION of church and state, Eve though the exact phrase is not listed. Our country was founded on the idea of religious liberty and freedom to practice religion/beliefs or lack thereof as each desires without fear of government interference or laws governing their conscience. This draft report distorts historical facts and our wonderful Constitution. Please reconsider this report and refrain from impeding our religious liberty/freedoms.
Sincerely,

Tricia Marrero from California

From: Elaine McGee <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:55:50 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am a U.S. citizen and a person of faith. I oppose the Commission's proposal to get rid of the wall of separation of church and state and replace it with a "bridge" between church and state. I believe in religious freedom for all. That is a principle that was strongly held by the founders of this country. Once the state gets involved with the church, the churches vie with each other for government money. The state then demands certain criteria in order to get the money, which eventually leads to a loss of personal religious liberty to believe as one chooses and to practice that belief.

I also believe that churches have no business promoting political figures at election times. Political presentations by political figures should be held in public places, not churches. Churches are intended to encourage the worship of God, not to promote or denigrate political candidates. So, don't repeal the Johnson Amendment. Enforce it! That's a protection for churches to stay out of politics.

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's response to the draft report of the Religious Liberty Commission. Please implement the suggestions made there.

Please maintain the separation of church and state which maintains religious freedom for all. It was initiated by Christians to preserve the freedom to worship as they chose. We want that freedom to continue.

Thank you so much for considering these requests.

Sincerely,

Elaine McGee
Bonners Ferry, Idaho

Sent from Outlook

From: Marlenea <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment-separation of church and state-Marlenea Simonds
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:56:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Marlenea Simonds

From: Beryl Hylton <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State (Beryl Hylton)
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:56:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission.

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

Sincerely,
Beryl Hylton
Port St. Lucie, FL

From: Mirko Heber <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment-religious liberty-mirko heber
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:56:52 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the presidential religious liberty commission:

I'm writing this letter so that my voice as an American citizen may be heard and that my stance may be made very clear. I was raised with an education that focused on history, both secular and religious, that created a foundation rooted in patriotism for this country that I believe was divinely set up by God! Our founding fathers, no matter their faults, were guided by God to give us these articles of law that govern this nation that we call the constitution and as Americans we hold so very dear! Men and women have given their lives for us freely because these governing documents give us a freedom to choose out of our own FREE WILL what we will do with that life that was given to us by the Creator and they chose to lay down their lives so that others may enjoy those freedoms for generations to come. FREE WILL is the only thing that can manifest true love, devotion and obedience among others. The first amendment with it's requirement that congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof is just one part of ensuring our unalienable rights to liberty given to us by our Creator. Within it lies a massive part of FREE WILL (liberty) because it protects us from repeating that which was carried on for centuries in Europe; bloodshed like no other for no other reason, but religious bigotry in between different sects because one though themselves more righteous than the last! This was something that was seen even here in the colonies and they learned from it! They understood that if the churches were to be able to use political power as they did prior to the revolutionary war and as had Europe for centuries, that we would be no better and the killing and bigotry would continue to no end! they understood that no man could be forced to worship God and if he was, it was no worship at all because the conscience can never be forced If it is to work properly!

Just look into Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre in 1572 which lasted two days. This is what happens when church and state join together. Also look at the Spanish Inquisition spanning from 1478 to 1834 with thousands and thousands of people dead, all in the name of Jesus, when Jesus never commanded any such thing to be done to those who even disagree. This is what happens when church and state join together. The phrase "separation of church and state" does not have to be in the constitution for the idea to be there. All we have to do is read plainly what the founding fathers said and to look plainly at history and how the unification of church and state has always brought these kind of massacres that span days, years and centuries.

We can not afford to build any kind of bridge between church and state, this would be in direct contradiction to the founding fathers and their words. At best it could plunge us as a nation back into the times of the colonies with religious persecutions, and at worst to the dark ages.

With my understanding of history and my belief in the statement that "history repeats itself" if history is not taught properly, I can do nothing but object to the government getting involved with funding religious nonprofit activities, because then they will be able to dictate the conscience of those individuals, no matter the denomination or belief. I object in the same fashion with the government funding religious education of any denomination, creed or faith not because I think that the government and it's officials cannot believe and have their own freedom of conscience, denomination, creed or faith and conduct themselves in such a manner to their conscience, but because I believe that it should be a private matter as was the belief of our founding fathers - even if it was not spelled out in our 21st century words. I also object to the repealing of the Johnson amendment which restricts church's medaling in political affairs. And I request at the same time that it be fully enforced! I also object to any special treatment given to the Jewish people and the state of Israel, just as

much as any other faith in this nation. Complete neutrality must be enforced and let the people make their spiritual and religious decisions from true free will like we've been doing since the founding of this nation!

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

Thank you for your attention to my concerns and objections.

Sincerely,
Mirko Heber
Jonesborough,TN

From: Andrew Cameron <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Andrew Cameron
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:57:19 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern,

Regarding the efforts of the Commission to unify church and state, I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

God bless,
Andrew Cameron

From: Kristen W <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Comission Proposal Comments
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:57:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Committe Members,

I have read the summary of your proposal and agree with the comments Pillar of Freedom submitted to you. The separation of church and state is an important foundation of our country and our constitution. I also believe that the Johnson Ammendment should continue.

Thank you,

Kristen Turner

From: Joan Fialho <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:57:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 13, 2026

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 believe this is leading to Sunday Laws and I am completely against it. It will be the downfall of our country to lead into a world government.

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.

Respectfully,

Joan Fialho

From: Roxanne Hastings <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] The Commission on Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:57:52 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Commission on Religious Liberty,

Due to time constraints, I will not have time to write my own thoughts. Please consider, instead, the comments of

~Pillar of Freedom~

It is my desire that you implement their suggestions.

Sincerely,Roxanne Hastings

From: Patricia Velasquez-Torres <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment- -Patricia A. VelasquezTorres
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:58:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,
Patricia A. Velasquez-Torres

From: Vaoese Silafau <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State – Vaoese Silafau
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:58:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission

My name is Vaoese Silafau. I was truly concerned 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 was built by believers to not only keep the church free, but ultimately it was built to protect the freedoms of the American people; the freedom to choose, the freedom of conscience.

History is clear about what happens when church and state join hands, and it isn't good for either one. Tyranny, ruling of one religious sect, and government funding towards religious entities that enforced government requirements above the law of God and freedom of conscience, have been dire consequences of this bridge.
Please don't build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects the church and the American people far more than it constrains it.

My thoughts went to a time when many people fled to find freedom due to the bridge of church and state. And because of this and the freedoms that many have fought to keep, I urge and request that the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced. I object to repealing the Johnson Amendment, which restricts church's political activities. Further, I object to funding religious non-profit activities and to funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses through the bridging of church and state.

PLEASE do not ignore our pleas. This is truly dangerous! I urge that you firmly stand against bridging church and state to protect the freedoms of the American people.

A truly concerned citizen of the United States of America,

Vaoese Silafau

From: Anna Sedillo <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty-Public Comment on Separation of Church & State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:58:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

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 asking you to no longer proceed with your recommendation of bringing Church/State together.

I have read multiple submissions, most notably, my husband, Mario Sedillo, and also that of Jonathan Zirkle, President of "Pillar of Freedom," and 100% agree with their assessments.

As a prophecy student, as well as a descendant of local Native American tribes, I am concerned to where this may lead. Not only does the US Constitution imply that "our nation shall make no law prohibiting our exercise of religion, press, etc." but also our local, tribal, state or federal government shall also not do so. Biblically, in Matthew 22:17-22 kjv Jesus Himself says, "Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way."

Proclaiming that America is founded on Christian principles, we should also do as Jesus did. He separated Church and State. Doing so, is not only "un-Christian" but goes against our Constitution, our founding fathers, our ancestors, and as history shows, will only end up in persecution, and/or death.

For these reasons, and many others, I respectfully urge you, as members of this prestiges, commission, to change your stance and acknowledge that although the term "Church and State Union" is not in our Constitution, the principles are.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity you have afforded me to voice my concerns:

Respectfully,

Anna Sedillo
Albuquerque, New Mexico

From: emailbill247 <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concerning the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:58:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Esteemed Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

I would like to share my personal concern for the preliminary findings in this report that was shared with the public.

Let me be clear that I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

History has shown us that the mixing of the State and the Church (any Church) has always lead to some extent of persecution for the common people (even if they share the religious views).

God does not work through coercion and I would ask that you take this into strong consideration before creating something that will erode our civic and religious liberties which are so dear to this great and awesome country.

Thank you, and my prayers are with you and your families. May God help us keep this government free from tyranny.

Sincerely,

William E. Jaeger

From: Brighter Days Farm <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:58:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

To The Religious Liberty Commission,

I would like to express my disagreement and opposition to the moves that are being made to unite church and state. Let the conscience of every man dictate to him as to when, where, and how he ought to worship.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Hunt
Sent from my iPhone

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – [Separation of Church and State] – [Marie Wagner].
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:58:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

I support the responses of Pillar of Freedom and Heritage and Hope Ministries.

From: Timothy Riesenberger <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Tim Riesenberger
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:58:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

Thank you for providing the opportunity for input on the Commission's draft report.

I am writing as a Christian and as a physician who has the privilege of caring for patients from many different faiths, cultures, and backgrounds. Every day I am reminded that every person possesses inherent dignity and deserves the freedom to live according to the dictates of conscience. Religious liberty is one of the foundational freedoms that makes our nation unique, and I appreciate the Commission's desire to protect that freedom.
As I read the draft report, however, I became concerned about recommendations that appear to encourage a closer relationship between church and state. While I strongly support protecting the free exercise of religion, I believe that religious liberty is best preserved when government remains neutral toward religion, protecting the rights of all without becoming closely aligned with any particular faith or religious institution.
The example of Jesus Christ has shaped my understanding of this issue. Standing before Pilate, Jesus declared, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Although He lived under an imperfect government, He did not seek political authority to accomplish His mission. Instead, He transformed lives by proclaiming truth, demonstrating compassion, and changing hearts.
That example remains relevant today. I believe the mission of the church is to faithfully proclaim the gospel, not to seek influence through governmental power. Likewise, the role of civil government is to safeguard the liberties of all its citizens, regardless of their religious convictions.
For this reason, I have reservations about recommendations that would expand government funding of religious organizations or further intertwine religious institutions with political processes. Such proposals may be motivated by good intentions, but history demonstrates that close partnerships between church and state often compromise the independence of both. Churches risk becoming influenced by political priorities, while governments inevitably find themselves making decisions about religious matters that belong to individual conscience.
As a physician, I have cared for people whose beliefs differ greatly from my own. I want each of them to enjoy the same protections that I enjoy—the freedom to worship, to refrain from worship, to change religious beliefs, or to practice their faith without coercion. Our constitutional commitment to liberty of conscience has made that possible, and I hope it will continue to do so for generations to come.

As a conscientious Christian, I personally have religious objections to certain medical interventions. And I encounter patients who do have the same, but perhaps in different ways such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian scientist.

Diversity is what makes America great, and we need to maintain this, and ensure that we respect people of all faith's and religious convictions.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for your work on this important issue.
Respectfully,

From: Naomi Ferrel <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State- Naomi Martling
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:58:51 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am a person of faith and I request that you leave the Johnson Amendment alone and keep the wall between Church and State.

I am very concerned with the “bridge” between church and state that is being proposed. I do not support changing or repealing the Johnson Amendment. I believe in religious liberty for the individual and the freedom to follow your conscience. Churches or religious groups are not individuals and should have no political sway in our government, otherwise religious groups with large monetary means would support certain candidates that sway the government in favor of their religious group. These potential laws would then hinder others religious freedom and freedom of conscience simply for the reason that their own religious group doesn’t have as large of monetary backing. It would also pollute the churches with politics and the idea that you can only be part of a religious group if you agree with them even in their political stances.

Please read the Pillar of Freedoms comments and response for they say it better than I can.

Thank you for your time,
Naomi Martling

From: kandp kenlebrun.com <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Maintain Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:59:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. I support the separation of church and state. And I speak for thousands of Americans.

Ken LeBrun

From: Starr Bidwell <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Starr Bidwell
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:59:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I'm writing as a citizen to ask you to reconsider all recommendations in your report that would weaken the separation of church and state. Using government money to fund religious activities is detrimental to the best interests of both churches and country.

Taxes should never be used to support church activities, including religious education.

Please keep church and state entirely separate.

Sincerely,

Starr Bidwell
College Place, Washington State

From: Brian Morgan <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:59:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

As an American citizen, and one who sincerely believes in the king James Bible and in our only true God in heaven. I am convinced that this country must continue to follow the one and only true God in heaven and keep church and state separate. As our Lord lead our forefathers in the beginning stages of America, and as their past experience taught them in their battles for freedom of religion, and freedom from persecution, which made this country so prosperous and great. How dare we now reverse the very distinct element that keeps any and every religious power from slowly but surely taking control over our government that we depend on for protection as we freely worship the true one and only God in heaven.
Furthermore, I agree with the statements of Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,
Brian Morgan
Edgefield, SC

From: Holly Lembcke <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment—Separation of Church and State—Karen Lembcke
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 16:59:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. Separation and state gives the ultimate freedom of choice and mirrors the God's Law of Liberty. As Jesus outlines the Christian duty in Mark 12:30,31–Love to God and man
Sincerely,
Karen Lembcke

From: William Bremner <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on RLC Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:00:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

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 (Hereinafter "RLC") Draft Report, Issued June 2026

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

Religious Liberty is one of the greatest national treasurers that we have. Changing one of the greatest principals we have .

While there are troubling situations that need our attention, sweeping changes
in the areas that we hold so dear
can lead to unintended consequences that can be disastrous.

Our founding fathers were not far from the time when people were imprisoned, tortured put to death those who disagreeed with the state. In the Old Word
the state became a tool the hand of the church.

I am writing this appeal right before the close of the time for comments. There are many people who have not heard of this report.

Because of the vital and profound effect this report can have on have on the lives of every American I urge that this report be delayed until these numerous subjects can be examined further and be given
their proper treatment.

The 1st and 9th points reguarding the establishment clause which has been at the heart of protecting Americans from government persecution.
This is all that can be written nowWilliam Bremner
Chattanooga TN

Get Outlook for iOS

From: JoAnn Hope <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT: Separation of Church & State - JoAnn Hope
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:00:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

I have read Pillar of Freedom's comments and agree with them.

Please retain the Johnson Amendment, and strengthen Religious Liberty for all Americans.

Thank you!

From: Gwendolyn Clayton <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY DRAFT REPORT - G. Clayton
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:00:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

To: Chairman Patrick, Co-Chairman, and members of the Religious Liberty Commission

I am responding to the subject Report as a concerned American. I am a citizen, a taxpayer, and a Christian. I am someone who believes in Jesus Christ and follows his teachings. As adherents of the world's largest religion, Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior of humanity. And our Religious Liberty and American independence were clearly stated, documented, and established in the writing and creation of the Constitution. And can be visibly seen in Washington on monuments written for our admonition.

Thomas Jefferson's most famous quote is from the Declaration of Independence:
"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with inherent and inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Why repudiate what the Constitution was built on?
Although it is correct that the principle of separation of church and state is not worded as such in the Constitution. But the intent and the principle are obvious. Repudiate means to reject, refuse to accept, or disown something. Is that what the intention is? This tactic is typically used when someone formally renounces a belief, denies the truth of an accusation, or refuses to fulfill a legal obligation – refusing to uphold. What a disastrous move that would be! With monuments that have visibly written the intent of the Constitution written on them not removed but denied and being refused to be upheld. How shameful and cruel!

Thomas Jefferson also wrote…
"Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man and his God. That he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship. That the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, or not opinions. I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declare that their legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof this building a wall of separation between church and state.
What right do you have?
NONE!
Separating church and state protects both civic equality and religious freedom. By keeping government out of religion, the state avoids religious favoritism, ensuring that minority faiths, agnostics, and atheists are not marginalized. Likewise, it keeps religious institutions free from political corruption and interference.
Every American of any faith—or no faith at all—has a fundamental right to follow his or her conscience and live according to their beliefs.
Our nation's Founding Fathers established this right as our First Freedom nearly two and a half centuries ago, and we intend to keep it that way.
Separating religion from the state is fundamental to protecting individual freedom, ensuring equality before the law, and maintaining democratic governance. It prevents

religious majorities from dominating minorities, shields human rights from religious dogmas, and fosters social harmony.
 Protecting Individual Rights: It ensures that citizens have the liberty to practice any religion, convert to another, or choose not to follow any faith at all without state persecution.
 Preventing Majority Tyranny: It stops the dominant religious group from using the state's power and machinery to suppress or discriminate against minority communities.
 Ensuring Equality Before the Law: By remaining neutral, the state guarantees that all citizens are treated equally, regardless of their belief systems.
 Promoting Inclusive Governance: It allows governments to focus on temporal matters—such as public welfare, development, and justice—without being influenced by specific religious doctrines.
Proponents argue that separation protects religious freedom, prevents government favoritism, and ensures laws are fair to all citizens, regardless of their beliefs. Conversely, some believe that religious values provide a vital moral.

Leave separation of church and state alone?

1. Separating religion from the state protects individual liberties, ensures equality before the law, and prevents religious coercion. It keeps government institutions neutral so that no single faith receives preferential treatment or infringes upon the rights of minority groups and non-believers.
2. Jefferson worked to prevent the corruption of government from corrupting a person's freedom of conscience. The First Amendment guarantees religious liberty by forbidding congress from establishing a religion or preventing the free exercise of faith.

Thomas Jefferson insisted, “Erecting a wall of separation between church and state is absolutely essential in a free society.”
The separation of church and state allows for a diverse and harmonious society where individuals are free to practice their faith and beliefs without fear, and where governance should be guided by reason, fairness, and the best interests of the people. Embracing the separation of church and state is vital for the well-being of our communities and the flourishing of democratic values in our world.
Leave well enough alone
America and Americans are being destroyed by those who are not thinking about the history of this country and what the power of some will be the destruction of all.

Thank you,
G. Clayon

From: Amanda Kay <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Draft Report6/26/26
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:01:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Becky Gomes <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENTS -SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE/-BECKY GOMES
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:01:50 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sent from my iPhone
I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments.
And I urge you, plead with you actually, to implement them!

Becky Gomes
Sacramento Area, California

From: Aaron Pinson <[redacted]>
To: [redacted], [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re:
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:02:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

On Mon, Jul 13, 2026, 3:58 PM Aaron Pinson <[redacted]> wrote:

> Dear Religious Liberty Commission- I appreciate your efforts to maintain religious freedom for everyone in America. I agree with Pillar Of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. Sincerely, Aaron Pinson Tulsa, Oklahoma

From: Karen Banks <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I agree
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:03:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Best of the Day,
Karen M. Brown

From: Kyle Family <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:03:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Ron Kyle

Trout Creek, Montana

From: Susan Wells <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Susan Wells
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:03:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hello,

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

Thank you and best regards,
Susan Wells

From: Harry Bennett <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:03:57 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the stance taken by pillar of freedom.

Harry Bennett

[redacted]

From: Jon Bettis <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concerns regarding RLC's draft report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:05:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Commission Members,

As a Christian and lover of freedom, I am very concerned with your draft report.

The separation of church and state has been fundamental to the success of our nation. And any blurring of those lines endangers the future of our great nation.

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

Sincerely,
Jon Bettis

From: Michele-Ann Shaw <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:07:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings.

Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. We are concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly

Michele

From: Karen Brinegar <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:07:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission :

As an American citizen I have been blessed to have been born and raised in America where I have had the free choice of Religious Liberty, and the choice of a Christian education. I feel America has been blessed by God because it offers this freedom to its citizens, our 1st amendment right. However there seems to be some confusion of this right. The right to keep church and state separate.

Only being informed today that we can respond and only having today to respond. I will say it deeply troubles me to have a proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a bridge. This separation was built by believers to keep the church free.
There are several proposals I have issues with, but not the time to express them today.
History has demonstrated that the blending of church and state is detrimental to both.

I urge you to please maintain the separation of church and state as I do believe this is how we keep both free.

Thank you for giving me the chance to respond. I would like to respond more but due to lack of time am unable to express myself fully.

Sincerely,
Karen Brinegar

From: Patti Escarza <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Committee
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:12:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Regards,

Patricia Escarza
Sent from my iPad

From: Clifford Laguerre Jr. <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Presidential Religious Liberty Commission draft report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:15:45 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

- Clifford Laguerre, Jr.

From: Holly Lembcke <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment—Separation of Church and State—Holly Lembcke—Corrected
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:15:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. Separation of church and state must remain separate to reflect the perfect Law of Liberty—God's government relies on the individual conscious choice of every man.
Sincerely,
Holly Lembcke
Lompoc, CA

From: David Burdick <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:18:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Holly Lembcke <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment—Separation of Church and State—Karen Lembcke—Corrected
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:21:10 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I agree with the Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. Separation of church and state gives the ultimate freedom of choice and mirrors God's Law of Liberty. As Jesus outlines the Christian duty in Mark 12:30,31–Love to God and man.
Sincerely,
Karen Lembcke
Lompoc, CA

From: Dawna Sawatzky <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commission rebuttal
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:21:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you for considering this information I found it very accurate and comprehensive. It expresses my thinking.

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

Hans Sawatzky DDS

From: "Nina Beety" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Cc: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL – NINA BEETY
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:28:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 13, 2026

Comments on DOJ Religious Liberty Commission draft report
by Nina Beety

The DOJ has provided little opportunity for comment on its draft Religious Liberty Report, foreclosing significant analysis and discussion of this long report and its many points and implications. It also provided virtually no notice to the American people, all of whom will be impacted by this and the regulations that will no doubt ensue. The following are just a few points and questions within the time frame DOJ provided.

Immigrants to the land that became the United States, including English Puritans, believed in freedom for their religion, but not freedom for other religions or people; Quakers and others were excluded and even hung. Spanish Roman Catholics slaughtered Lutherans on this soil for the crime of being Lutheran. Native American religious practices were banned until very recently. Exclusionary and discriminatory policies, including housing policies, have been enacted by local, state and federal policies, based in part on religious and philosophical or ideological beliefs. Some Americans considered other Americans unqualified for public office if they were Roman Catholic, for instance, and banned people of color and Jewish people from country clubs. Manifest destiny was adopted as a national policy based on the Doctrine of Christian Discovery and the belief that Americans had a God-given right to take the land that became the United States, no matter to consequences to others with other beliefs. Now that's being applied to the moon, other planets, and outer space. John L. O'Sullivan, an American attorney, said this in 1845 as:

> "the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us."

It was and is a religious and ideologically-based pronouncement creating policy and actions that led to death and destruction of many, to benefit the "right" people? The result of the separation of church and state doctrine is to base policies and policy-making on facts, laws, and equal rights which the Constitution establishes, creating a solid foundation for the nation.

From "12 Key Recommendations to Strengthen Religious Liberty for All Americans":

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

What is "proper"? Who are the arbiters of "proper"? What are the authorities that these arbiters rely on? Doesn't religious liberty mean that there are as many arbiters and definitions as there are Americans?

What is loyalty? How do personal loyalties affect governmental leadership responsibilities? Christian Sunday Schools and churches tell the story of Abraham who was asked by his God to kill his son. Abraham's decision to sacrifice everything and all other loyalties is regarded as exemplary by Christians and other religions – a willingness to do anything for his God. It is one of several stories in the Christian Bible used to illustrate this tenet that God comes first. Jesus also said that he didn't come to bring peace but a sword, and to divide people as a result of people following him. How does this type of religious loyalty impact national security? One can imagine scenarios when federal, state, or local officials feel called by God to commit a certain action, even though laws and procedures don't allow it. Is religious liberty the ability to act on the basis of what a person believes his or her primary allegiance or God calls him or her to do, not what the US laws say he or she can and cannot do? Is adherence to the laws optional? When people are in leadership capacities and government agency capacities, that question becomes more critical. How far does religious liberty extend?

The report narrowly raises questions of conscience, but does that apply to all issues? For example, if the military draft is reinstated, is it envisioned by DOJ and this commission that a person acting on the basis of his or her conscience will be freely permitted by law to say no?

There is strong evidence that the adherents of some religions currently have extreme liberty to commandeer US policies and practices, including in the US Congress, Pentagon, and State Department, and that US foreign policy is being dictated via Sunday School, church school, and pastoral injunctions and Christian Biblical and extremist dicta rather than by the US and international laws in place. How does the DOJ square these policies of indifference to international law and legal norms on, say, genocide, the national sovereignty of other countries, the use of unlawful munitions, the creation and use of biological

weapons and bioweapon labs in other countries, adherence to treaties? As can be seen from federal reactions to ICC rulings, the US government represents itself as immune from international rules, all the while claiming it represents the “rule of law” – a strange, non-legal term. Do religion and religious beliefs and ideologies liberate people from adhering to national and international laws and treaties, including when they are in governmental leadership positions? Is this religious liberty or religious and ideological promotion and license?

In these DOJ draft recommendations:
- Are all religions covered, whether they are mainstream or not?
- What is a cult? Do so-called cults get protection?
- Would the practices of a group such as the People's Temple in San Francisco be protected, even if people are killed?
- Would this report and envisioned policies change the way the Rajneesh group in Oregon was prosecuted, because they were poisoning people to promote their religious goals?
- Is Satanism a religion that is covered? Why or why not?
- Are earth-based religions given equal protection and liberty under this proposal?
- Are personal philosophies given equal protection and liberty?
- When different religions are in conflict over proposed policies and actions, who wins? Who picks the religion which comes out on top? Is it based on laws or personal beliefs and preference?
- Religious exclusivity – salvation only through a prescribed religious belief – can lead to unlawful actions. Is that permitted by the envisioned policies? And which exclusivity is permitted? All or only a few?
- Is freedom of conscience only allowed in vaccine matters? What about in refusing military duty, if the draft is re-instituted? What about actions that could be considered unlawful under state and federal laws?

The benefit of the separation of church/religion and state is that civil society, government, and Americans are protected by the neutral and secular state from the excesses, extremes, and dictates of a state-approved or powerful religion. The separation of church and state allows private practice of religion and a neutral public government, ideally protecting the rights of all and implementing laws fairly. Have there been abuses and failures to enforce? Yes. Is that a reason to abolish the church-state separation doctrine? No. In fact, competing ideologies, philosophies, and/or religions often duel, with one winning over the other. How does the current DOJ initiative eliminate that? Does it preemptively pick a winning side, such as happened in the early days of America? If so, there is just another set of winners and losers.

Given the unbalanced composition of the Commission, it appears DOJ has picked the next set of winners. That is not religious liberty. That is religious license.

Retain the separation of church and state as essential to a free society that implements its laws and rules fairly.

Sincerely,

Nina Beety
California

From: Maydelyn Andrade <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:30:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Maydelyn Andrade

From: Janice urrutia-dabon <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PILLAR OF FREEDOM
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:31:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Thank you in Advance

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Gary Ashford <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:33:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the stance of Pillar of freedom. Keep Church separate from State matters.

From: Jessica Johnson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:35:40 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings.

Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. We are concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

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

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

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

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

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

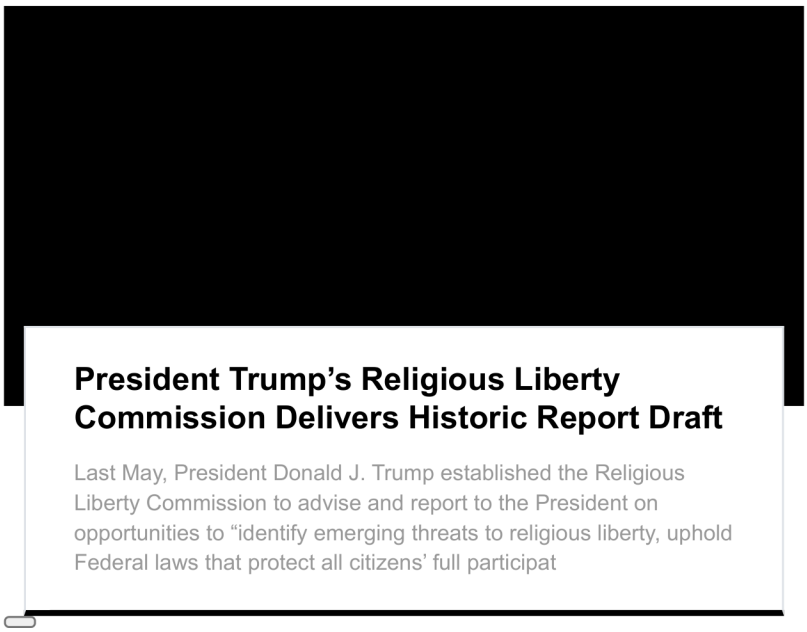
In his anonymous treatise published in the Boston Gazette, John Adams, later the second President of the United States, wrote that canon law was a tyrannical form of government, as was feudal law, but that the worst of all forms of governments was a union of the two. [11] And it was Madison who stated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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Jessica Marie Burnem

[1] President Trump's Religious Liberty Commission Delivers Historic Report Draft a



[2] Ibid, [Emphasis added].
[3] Why Dan Patricks latest church-and-state comments are going viral

Why Dan Patricks latest church-and-state comments are going viral

By Ahmed Humble

Dan Patricks latest church-and-state comments spark a constitutional debate online

[4] Pope Francis calls on social media platforms to censor more misinformation

Pope Francis calls on social media platforms to censor more misinformation

By Cindy Harper

Weighing in.

[5] Joel Webbon Says That Only Christians Should Have The Right To Vote

Joel Webbon Says That Only Christians Should Have The Right To Vote

Content warning: The following scene may include dehumanizing rhetoric, calls for discrimination or violence, misinformation, or other harmful language. Righ...

RWW News: Christian Nationalist Pastor Joel Webbon Says Women Should Not Be Allowed To Vote

RWW News: Christian Nationalist Pastor Joel Webbon Says Women Should Not Be Allowed To Vote

By Right Wing Watch

[6] Jeffersons Letter to the Danbury Baptists (June 1998) - Library of Congress Information Bulletin

Jeffersons Letter to the Danbury Baptists (June 1998) - Library of Congress Information Bulletin

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

[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

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Joseph Zamboni <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - CH. 10 - CONSCIENCE AND COERCION IN VACCINE POLICY
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:36:05 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: PVLA_Religious_Liberty_Commission_.pdf

PUBLIC COMMENT - CH. 10 - CONSCIENCE AND COERCION IN VACCINE POLICY

To: The Religious Liberty Commission, in the U.S. Department of Justice via email to: [redacted]

Re: Religious Liberty Commission, Draft Report, specifically, Chapter 10: Conscience and Coercion in Vaccine Policy

Date: July 13, 2026

The Pro-Vaccine Legal Alliance (PVLA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission.

Religious liberty is among our nation's most important constitutional freedoms. Protecting the free exercise of religion while respecting the rights and safety of others has long been a defining feature of American constitutional law. We commend the Commission for recognizing the importance of conscience protections and encouraging respectful accommodation where appropriate.

At the same time, the report would benefit from a more balanced discussion of the constitutional and public health principles that have historically governed vaccine policy. Many courts have opined on this topic, and provided us with a lengthy and comprehensive legal framework on the issue.

For more than a century, those court decisions have recognized that individual liberty, including religious liberty, is not absolute when the exercise of that liberty creates a substantial risk of harm to others.

Vaccination requirements have consistently been evaluated within this framework, balancing individual rights against the government's compelling responsibility to protect the health and safety of the public, particularly vulnerable individuals who cannot be vaccinated or who remain at elevated risk despite vaccination. The draft report largely presents testimony from individuals who experienced adverse consequences from vaccine requirements but provides little discussion of the legal framework that courts have repeatedly applied when reviewing such policies.

Nor does the report meaningfully address the government's responsibility to prevent outbreaks of communicable disease, protect healthcare systems, safeguard immunocompromised individuals, or maintain military readiness during public health emergencies. We respectfully suggest that the final report, if intended to guide future policy, should acknowledge these competing constitutional and governmental interests.

Similarly, the report's recommendations concerning restoration of employment, benefits, and military status for individuals who declined COVID-19 vaccination should recognize that these decisions occurred under unprecedented circumstances, were subject to evolving scientific evidence, and have already been extensively litigated in federal courts.

Reasonable people may disagree about the wisdom of particular policies adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, but retrospective policy recommendations should distinguish between disagreement with policy choices and constitutional violations.

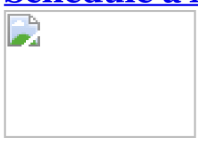
Finally, the report can be further strengthened by recognizing that religious liberty and public health need not be viewed as opposing values. Throughout American history, courts, legislatures, religious communities, and public health authorities have generally sought practical accommodations that protect sincerely held religious beliefs while preserving the government's ability to respond to communicable disease threats. That balance dates back to the nation's founding: during the Revolutionary War, George Washington ordered the Continental Army to be inoculated against smallpox because he understood that protecting the health of the community was essential to protecting the future of the country.

That same principle remains true today. Respect for religious liberty can and should coexist with strong public health protections that prevent outbreaks and protect vulnerable people. Indeed, tThe constitutional tradition is one of balancing important interests, not elevating one constitutional value to the exclusion of all others.

We respectfully encourage the Commission to consider a more comprehensive Chapter 10 to provide greater discussion of the constitutional framework governing vaccine requirements, acknowledge the longstanding jurisprudence recognizing the state's compelling interest in preventing the spread of infectious disease, and better reflect the balance that has characterized American religious liberty law for generations.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

--
Joseph Zamboni, Director
Pro-Vaccine Legal Alliance
American Families for Vaccines
Schedule a Meeting



Pro-Vaccine Legal Alliance

PUBLIC COMMENT - CH. 10 - CONSCIENCE AND COERCION IN VACCINE POLICY

To: **The Religious Liberty Commission, in the U.S. Department of Justice via email to:** [redacted]

Re: **Religious Liberty Commission, Draft Report, specifically, Chapter 10: Conscience and Coercion in Vaccine Policy**

Date: **July 13, 2026**

The Pro-Vaccine Legal Alliance (PVLA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the draft report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission.

Religious liberty is among our nation's most important constitutional freedoms. Protecting the free exercise of religion while respecting the rights and safety of others has long been a defining feature of American constitutional law. We commend the Commission for recognizing the importance of conscience protections and encouraging respectful accommodation where appropriate.

At the same time, the report would benefit from a more balanced discussion of the constitutional and public health principles that have historically governed vaccine policy. Many courts have opined on this topic, and provided us with a lengthy and comprehensive legal framework on the issue.

For more than a century, those court decisions have recognized that individual liberty, including religious liberty, is not absolute when the exercise of that liberty creates a substantial risk of harm to others.

Vaccination requirements have consistently been evaluated within this framework, balancing individual rights against the government's compelling responsibility to protect the health and safety of the public, particularly vulnerable individuals who cannot be vaccinated or who remain at elevated risk despite vaccination. The draft report largely presents testimony from individuals who experienced adverse consequences from vaccine requirements but provides little discussion of the legal framework that courts have repeatedly applied when reviewing such policies.

Nor does the report meaningfully address the government's responsibility to prevent outbreaks of communicable disease, protect healthcare systems, safeguard immunocompromised individuals, or maintain military readiness during public health emergencies. We respectfully suggest that the final report, if intended to guide future policy, should acknowledge these competing constitutional and governmental interests.

Similarly, the report's recommendations concerning restoration of employment, benefits, and military status for individuals who declined COVID-19 vaccination should recognize that these decisions occurred under unprecedented circumstances, were subject to evolving scientific evidence, and have already been extensively litigated in federal courts.

Reasonable people may disagree about the wisdom of particular policies adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, but retrospective policy recommendations should distinguish between disagreement with policy choices and constitutional violations.

Finally, the report can be further strengthened by recognizing that religious liberty and public health need not be viewed as opposing values. Throughout American history, courts, legislatures, religious communities, and public health authorities have generally sought practical accommodations that protect sincerely held religious beliefs while preserving the government's ability to respond to communicable disease threats. That balance dates back to the nation's founding: during the Revolutionary War, George Washington ordered the Continental Army to be inoculated against smallpox because he understood that protecting the health of the community was essential to protecting the future of the country.

That same principle remains true today. Respect for religious liberty can and should coexist with strong public health protections that prevent outbreaks and protect vulnerable people. Indeed, tThe constitutional tradition is one of balancing important interests, not elevating one constitutional value to the exclusion of all others.

We respectfully encourage the Commission to consider a more comprehensive Chapter 10 to provide greater discussion of the constitutional framework governing vaccine requirements, acknowledge the longstanding jurisprudence recognizing the state's compelling interest in preventing the spread of infectious disease, and better reflect the balance that has characterized American religious liberty law for generations.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

From: Natasha Fedan <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:41:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

Good afternoon,

Separation of church and state is essential for religious freedom in this country.

Religion cannot be practiced in schools. There is no good way to ensure religious freedom for ALL religions; including freedom from ANY religion, if religion is being practiced in schools.

Religion cannot influence healthcare mandates. If an individual chooses a healthcare course based on their religion, that is their choice. But it violates my religious freedom for the country to mandate that choice for my health.

This commission claims to study protecting freedoms and rights of pastors and religious leaders, teachers and students, and healthcare workers. I understand how religious freedom affects pastors and religious leaders. But why single out teachers, students, and healthcare workers? Religion has no place in those professions/roles. Personal beliefs are personal. Educators and healthcare workers choose their profession. If they cannot personally reconcile their religion with their profession, then, they need to choose one or the other.

Regardless, religion and faith are PERSONAL decisions. They are not and should never be mandated by the State or Country. That is what separation of church and State means. It is a wall, to allow for religious freedom. Not a bridge to connect religion and politics.

Thank you for reading my comment.

-Natasha M.

From: M H <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commission Decision
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:42:18 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

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

Marti Howland

From: Lisa W <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:42:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

On Friday, June 26, 2026, the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty released its draft report. This email is in responds to that.

I am so blessed to live in a country with religious freedom. That is what makes our country honored by God. I do not just want it for the faith I follow but ALL people of America.

I do agree with the **Pillar of Faith** respond. I love America please do not go back in time.

Sincerely,
Lisa Wroniak
Ellington, Ct

From: Monik Folkman <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State / Establishment Clause – Monik Folkman
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:47:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I submit this comment on the Draft Report in support of genuine religious liberty for all Americans, as protected by the First Amendment. While I appreciate the report's attention to challenges faced by people of faith, I have serious concerns about its critique of the "wall of separation" metaphor and push toward "bridges" that risk blurring essential boundaries.

The principle of separation, though the exact phrase "wall of separation" is not in the Constitution, is deeply rooted in American history and directly informed the First Amendment. Roger Williams, founder of Rhode Island, advocated for a "hedge or wall of Separation between the Garden of the Church and the Wilderness of the world" after being banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony for opposing religious conformity enforced by civil authorities. Rhode Island became a haven for religious dissenters, establishing early separation to protect both church purity and individual conscience.

Similarly, Virginia's Statute for Religious Freedom (1786), drafted by Thomas Jefferson and championed by James Madison, disestablished the official church and protected citizens from compelled support of religion or punishment for their beliefs. This statute explicitly rejected government coercion in matters of faith and served as a primary model for the First Amendment's religion clauses.

Many early colonists fled to America precisely to escape religious persecution under state-enforced religious laws in Europe and even some colonies. The Founders designed the First Amendment to prevent the repetition of such tyranny here—ensuring government neutrality so that no religion could be imposed through legislation. I strongly support individuals, including public servants, freely expressing their personal religious beliefs. However, I oppose any efforts to inject specific religious preferences or laws into public policy in ways that erode these protections or compel observance.

The report should reaffirm the balance: robust free exercise alongside a strong Establishment Clause that maintains separation and neutrality. This framework has enabled America's religious pluralism to flourish. Recommendations that weaken it risk undermining the very liberty the Commission seeks to defend.

Thank you for considering this perspective.

Sincerely,
Monik Folkman

From: Caleb Johnson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment- separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:50:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

Good afternoon,

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

Caleb Johnson

From: Lesby Jackson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:50:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

I believe in the true foundation of freedom so I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Thank you,

Lesby Jackson

From: Paulina Osorio <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:52:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Regards,

Paulina Osorio

From: Eileen Nudd <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:54:44 -0400
Importance: Normal

Sent from my iPhone

Did u all write to the Commission on Religious Liberty? We have about 40 minutes to get it in.

Heres what I wrote:

To the Commission on Religious Liberty,

Due to time constraints, I will not have time to write my own thoughts. Please consider, instead, the comments of Pillar of Freedom. It is my desire that you implement their suggestions.

Sincerely,

Eileen Nudd

From: bobbie matzoll <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:55:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I would first like to thank you for the time, effort and thoughtfulness you put into this report. I was unaware of the hearings being held in preparation for this report, I would have gladly submitted my testimony. With that being said, I will keep my experience and comments short. I was a 32 year proud member of the Los Angeles Police Department when the city mandated the vaccine to all employee. Throughout the pandemic, the city offered free testing to employees and it was not required. At this time I was assigned Training Division, in order to continue training, the recruits (at will employees) were mandated to test once a week. This testing was provided free of charge and was offered to employees if they wanted to test. When the city mandated the vaccine, employees could apply for a religious or medical exemption. Applicants for exemptions were required to test twice a week, with a vendor of the city's choosing, on their own time and were made to pay $65 per test. We were made to pay over $500 a month (over a $1000 for a married couple who both worked for the city) for something the city continued to offer free for vaccinated employees. This was obviously discriminatory and punitive. I put in an exemption and requested to with the recruits, the testing I had access to the entire pandemic, the request was ignored. I did what I swore to do and that was to defend the constitutional rights of those being persecuted for their religious beliefs or following doctor's advice. I was not allowed to voice my concerns to my command staff and was swiftly sent to a Board of Rights. The board is similar to a trial, the city has the burden of proof as to why my employment should be terminated, my League (union) attorney defended me and it is heard by a panel of three civilians. My panel found the provisions to the city's mandate to be discriminatory and punitive and wanted to return me to duty. The chief of police overruled their decision and terminated my employment. I was confident that this travesty would be corrected through our judiciary system, I could not have been more wrong and disappointed. The judges in my case and others, ignored facts, the law, the constitution and allowed blatant lies by the city attorneys to go unchecked. I and others have gone as far as our resources or options could take us. None of the brave men and women who took a stand against this unlawful provision to the city's mandate have been successful in our court system, a system who is supposed to protect us from government overreach, instead they are protecting it. My final appeals hearing was in October of 2025 and they notified me of their decision on December 22, 2025, the Remittirur was issued on Holy Thursday. They mock God and our belief in him. I could have retired and walked away but God called me to take a stand against this evil. He gave me the strength and courage to do so and so I continue on. After reading your report, I have a few thoughts on your recommendations on mandates and the legal system and judiciary.

1. No medical treatment, including vaccines, should be mandated, "one size does not fit all." There are risks and benefits to all treatments and there should always be informed consent. People should not be alienated from society due to a well informed choice or belief. It became clear that mandates are about power, money, control and not the well being of society. If you have to censor dissenting views what you saying is not the truth.
2. There was no recommendation on accountability for judges that do not follow the law or constitution, whether out of fear or allegiance.
3. You spoke about awards being given to those brave enough to stand against evil. An award without justice is like a participation trophy, "hey you tried, here's this nice trophy for trying. Better luck next time."
4. As a police officer, after every incident you debrief it, what went well, what did not and how can we improve and do it better the next time. I have not seen one report on the pandemic but since you are the Religious Liberty Commission, I will focus on the religious leaders during the pandemic and mandates. Where were you? Strip clubs, bars and liquor stores were deemed essential but churches and places of worship were not. A few were brave and risked going to jail and some did, where were the rest of you? You speak about being courageous and standing up against evil and how the enemy uses fear to control and coerce the masses. At a time in the world's history where people needed God the most, they were left standing in front of locked doors with his shepherds on the other side refusing to let them in. We who were brave enough to stand against these mandates looked to our religious leaders for support and we were told to get vaccinated. Places of worship, when they did finally open, had segregated the unvaccinated and were made to wear masks. I was hoping that this was addressed in your report but maybe I missed it. I do not mean to sound angry but if we do not want to repeat history we need to acknowledge our mistakes and failings. I have heard a few priests acknowledge this but nothing from the leadership.

Thank you again for this report and I pray, President Trump and his administration takes it seriously and follows your recommendations.

Sincerely,

Barbara Riggs

From: Mishael Jackson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:57:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Mishael Jackson
Citizen of Huntsville Toney Alabama

From: Sara Huston <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] "PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State -Sara Huston
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 17:59:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: John Tuthill <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:00:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern,
I wanted to voice my concern about the view that separation of church and state would not longer be the stand to be encouraged. I am a Christian and value not only my liberty but fellow citizens of different religions.

Sincerely,

John Tuthill II

From: Sharon McGrath <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:00:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments that church and state should be separated. Please implement them.

Sharon McGrath

From: Tamra M Hill <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:00:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Dear Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty:

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

We know from history the atrocities that occurred when church and state united.

Thank you for reading my short letter.

With kindest regards,

Tamra M Hill

From: Geraldine Francis <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State - Geraldine Francis
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:05:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." The church, which represents God, and the state are not two adjoined pieces of land or two groups of people who need to come together to create harmony.

God is the highest power and He does not want us to or require us to be dictators to either side, which is why a "wall" was built so that believers can keep the church free and church and state separate. The church and the state have two different agendas and a bridge will not merge them or strengthen the church, that God's job. When the church and state join hands it isn't good for either one.

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

Sincerely,

Geraldine Francis
Mt. Vernon, NY

From: Virdis Foster <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:11:42 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Virdis Foster

From: Kristal Morales <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission - Public Comment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:11:52 -0400
Importance: Normal

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 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.

"Let us be grateful for those who make us happy; they are charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."
~ Marcel Proust

From: Vivian Rabun <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Committee on religious liberty report - response
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:15:29 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Committee members, I am concerned with the report and the twisting of the history of the United States States versus the true history of religious freedom in our country.

Please do not change the constitution or the amendments. I fully agree with the Pillar of Freedom's response.

Thank you
Vivian Rabun

From: Jesse Wilson <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:17:39 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." The separation of church and state 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. I find the idea alarming.

History tells us that this move can lead to persecution of honest and harmless citizen. Remember, from 538AD to 1798 ad (the Dark Ages) many Christians were tortured and killed for their religious beliefs. With respect, I urge you do not build that bridge to link church and state.

Let's keep church and state separate to continue a free religious liberty country; USA to constitutional freedom.

Sincerely yours,
Jesse Wilson (State of Idaho).

From: Eric Louw <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Establishment Clause – Eric Louw
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:17:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission:

I write as a citizen of Berrien Springs, Michigan, to urge this Commission to hold firmly to both halves of the First Amendment's promise concerning religion: no establishment and free exercise for all. These are not competing principles, but two necessary implications of the same principle.

I'd like to make three points:

First, government possesses only those powers delegated to it by the governed. Yet no person can delegate his relationship with God. I may authorize another person to manage my property or represent my interests, but I cannot authorize anyone to believe for me, worship for me, or answer for my soul before God. Since this authority was never mine to surrender, no government I help constitute can rightly receive it.

This is not an external restriction placed upon government. It follows from the logic of consent itself. No government will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to answer for me. A power without corresponding accountability is therefore a power no government can rightly claim.

Second, any law touching religion, even one intended to favor it, undermines free exercise, including the freedom of those it favors. To legislate in support of a faith, the legislature must first define that faith. Every definition includes some and excludes others.

Even those included no longer practice entirely freely. They practice according to terms the legislature has established and may later revise. A man who writes his own creed into law also mortgages his future conscience. He makes it more difficult to follow truth if truth later leads him beyond the creed he once helped establish.

I do not want that bargain made in my name, whether for my convictions or anyone else's. The machinery created to favor one faith today will answer to whoever holds power tomorrow.

Third, coercion cannot produce genuine faith. It can produce only its counterfeit. Religious duty without authenticity and love is not multiplied virtue, but multiplied hypocrisy.

History repeatedly confirms this. Where Christianity has been legally established, the result has often been pride and indolence among the clergy, ignorance and servility among

the laity, and superstition and persecution among both. A faith that depends upon policing to survive has already made a troubling confession about its own vitality.

The wiser course is to leave religion to the family altar, the church, and the individual conscience, while keeping church and state permanently separate.

Protect free exercise for all, and keep the state out of the business of religion. These two commitments stand or fall together.

Respectfully,

Pastor Eric Louw

Ph.D. Candidate

Berrien Springs, Michigan

From: Janice Cole <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church and State Issue
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:18:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history." According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from

the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

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

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

We remain, Yours truly

Janice Cole

PII

From: Nae Booth <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw: PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation and State - Lenee Booth
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:20:24 -0400
Importance: Normal

From: Nae Booth <[redacted]>
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2026 3:18 PM
To: Mom & Dad AAA Booth <[redacted]>
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation and State - Lenee Booth

July 13, 2026

Via Electronic Mail to [redacted]

Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty

US Dept of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW

Room 5706

Washington, DC 20530

PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Lenee Booth

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

I was concerned to learn that the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge". Respectfully, this would erode the very freedom the Commission claims to defend; it would actually open the door for government money and political favors to flood in – thus bringing the corruption of the political process into the churches. This should be frightening to everyone as there is no doubt the political system is corrupted. Those who composed and signed the Constitution recognized the value of religious freedom and while the words "separation of church and state" were not specifically used, the concept of protection of religious liberty was definitely weaved into the

Constitution: "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" – this can be understood so easily by anyone with even a small command of the English language. No civil laws can be made that dictate a certain religion and no laws can be enacted that take away your right to practice your religion = separation of church and state. (And no, that does not allow individuals to create a personal religion that breaks firmly established civil laws that deal with common sense things such as murder, rape, stealing, etc.).

I believe that religious liberty is THE greatest source of American strength, citizens being able to exercise their individual freedom of conscience without interference from any earthly governmental or ecclesiastical power. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments to the Commission (please review them carefully). I especially want to note where it is quoted:

> "the (*Commission*) Report goes on to continually overstate the case by saying that the "wall of separation" ideology creates a wall between personal faith and public life. While this may be true when the idea of a wall of separation is misconstrued and weaponized by secular atheists, it is not true that the wall of separation erected by the Constitution and so often referred to by generations of leaders who have gone before us is a wall between personal faith and public life. The true wall of separation is between the state and the church. It is there so that a person can freely exercise their personal faith and freely engage in the public sphere, without prejudice or persecution. To deny that there is complete separation of church and state in the Constitution, aka "the wall," and to deny that the wall can serve a useful purpose in protecting individual freedom is un-American and counter to both our experience and the knowledge and intent of our forefathers. The wall of separation is not a wall between religious people and public life; it is a wall between ecclesiastical power and civil power, protecting both religion and civil freedom."

The separation of church and state needs to be understood for the freedom it affords. Along that same theme, the recommendation of the Commission to repeal the Johnson Amendment is quite concerning. The Johnson Amendment prohibits churches from engaging in partisan politics, which as was noted earlier opens the floodgates of corruption from the political process into the churches. Instead of repealing the Johnson Amendment, we need the Commission to reverse its flawed recommendation and instead recommend its enforcement, as it is already being dismantled by non-enforcement.

The Commission is requesting that their recommendations be adopted by the US and posted everywhere so citizens be taught that the Constitution neither creates nor requires the separation of church and state. This false ideology will ultimately result in oppressive religious legislation and will roll back the freedoms we enjoy in this nation. We will no longer be the majestic, inspiring, awesome FREE country that we are now. America will do best to forever maintain a complete separation of church and state.

Sincerely,

Lenee Booth

Lenee Booth

Mio, MI

From: "Elizabeth S." <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State-Freedom of Choice
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:24:34 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments and ask that you implement them.
There are points that the Religious Liberty Commission has not included or considered.

From: Maria Ponce <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:26:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

I dont agree with this.
PLEASE Keep State & Church SEPERATE.

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: EDWIN MARLYS MATHIS <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:30:29 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Marlys Mathis

Sent from my iPhone

From: Hwa Sook Lee Newman <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:31:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

I came to this country for religious freedom and democratic values,and declared this is my soul country that I will bury my body.
Leave the separation between church and State as is. Thank you.
Sent from my iPhone

From: bkrshome <[redacted]>
To: rlc <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:32:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

After reviewing the content of the above referenced report, we have serious concerns that the freedoms we hold dear in this country could be in serious jeopardy, and that freedom for all may become freedom for the chosen. Therefore, we agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments which have been forwarded to you. Please implement them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Donald & Rosemari Baker

From: Frances Hollis <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:37:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom Commment, Liberty of Freedom committee on separation of church and state.
Frances Hollis Torres
Lake Worth Beach, Fl

From: flor Guzman <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty committee
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:38:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While 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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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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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,

From: Pretty Scarf <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty 7/13/26
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:39:04 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Thank you

EJ
Waynesboro TN

From: "Gabriel G." <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Gabriel
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:41:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I believe founders of this nation, such as George Washington, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, Roger Williams, and William Penn had a large impact on the forming of our constitution, directly or indirectly. They supported separation of church and state while recognizing God and His providence that had formed and blessed this nation.

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

Gabriel
Albuquerque, NM

From: Mishael Jackson <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to Religious Liberty Commission Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:42:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Mishael Jackson

From: Viena Cid <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church & state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:42:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillars of Freedom comments. Please implement it.

Viena Cid

Sent from my iPhone

From: hazel brereton <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to Religious Liberty Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:43:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

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i am very troubled at the religious liberty given to President Donald Trump. I believe eventually there will be some conflict with State enforcing laws that will affect our religious beliefs.For this reason i agree with Pillar Of Freedom's response and kindly asking you to carefully consider their response and implement them, Thanks in advance for your kind consideration.

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Gary Scull
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:49:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

As a patriotic American with deeply held religious convictions, I am concerned about some of the recommendations in the commission's draft report. Our country was founded in part out of a desire and need for a place where people could experience freedom of conscience to worship God according to their convictions. History has shown that when the government becomes involved with religion, inevitably one or the other tends to dictate their demands to the other. I believe that maintaining the separation of church and state is crucial to both entities. I am also in favor of the Johnson amendment and would like it to be fully enforced. I don't think religious institutions should be politically active or that government should be funding religious institutions or activities.

I also stand with and agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments.

Sincerely,

Gary Scull

Berrien Springs, Michigan

From: jed norte <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:49:26 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Madison stated that "The number, the industry, and the morality of the Priesthood, & the devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from the State." [10] And he was right. If the Johnson

Amendment is removed, religionists who want civil power will publicly stump and promise their votes and congregational dollars in exchange for political favors, and the politicians will be doubtless all too eager to reciprocate in the form of legislation that the religionists desire, provided they will aid their attempts to gain office.

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

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

Jed Norte

From: N Moore <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on the Draft Report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:49:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

July 13, 2026

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

To the Religious Liberty Commission Members:

I take issue with the Commission's proposal to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge" that increases government funding of religious activities, repeals the Johnson Amendment, re-educates the citizenry into belief that separation of church and state is unconstitutional, etc. Here is why...

US "democracy" is already on life support. To chip away at the wall of separation via any proposed "bridge" will cement the tyranny now well established through ever-increasing surveillance of private citizens, ever-increasing censorship, ever-larger and more lawless corporate monopolies, ever more creative wealth transfers that promote the ever-widening wealth gap, and ever-increasing centralization of power.

Also, when religious groups obtained ruling authority in early US history before the Constitution, they exhibited the same might-makes-right imbalance as any foreign leader this country has ever derided as a dictatorial crackpot. Referencing the accurate history and reasoning given in the letter from Pillar of Freedom, mingling church and state is a slippery slope.

Though the ideology of merging church and state resurged under the guise of Christian Nationalism, the glossy, reasonable-sounding, supportive arguments will not change its bent toward abject moral failure. Turning a blind eye to history, or powermongers choosing to revise or rewrite history altogether, does not turn aside the evil consequences that will, after a time, follow if the Commission's proposals go unrevised. Further merger of church and state will entomb the skeletal democracy we have left; then, the headstone of "The Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave" will read "Here lies The Great Experiment, the World's Most Pitiful and Spectacular Failure."

Do not continue down this road. Instead of weakening our Constitutional separation of church and state by the Commissions detrimental recommendations, please turn back. Do recommit to strengthen and uphold the entire Constitution, instead of hastening its demise.

Respectfully,
Natalie Moore

From: Dale Northrop <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State findings by the Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:49:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

Th Whom It May Concern,
I am protesting against the findings of the RLC and am very concerned about how it will be used against those who may not agree with the government when they take up religious legislation such as blue laws and days of rest. Although the constitution does not expressly use the words “separation of church and state”, the principle is there and our founding fathers knew it and expressed that this was the case - several, not just Thomas Jefferson. Therefore, even though you are saying that you are upholding the constitution, you are destroying its very foundation of freedom for all and I object in the strongest way possible. Please do not go any further with this!
Sincerely,
Dale Northrop

Sent from my iPad

From: Jennifer Knowles <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:51:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing to express my utter disgust with this current government. Today, I specifically want to talk about the fact that this current regime is trying to ignore the constitution and force religion into schools. But, only one religion. There are over 100 religions and some people DO NOT have any religious beliefs.
So are we now forcing EVERYONE to be Christian?
That is going to cause a fight we haven't seen since the Civil War. And Americans WILL fight it. Or they will remove their children from public schools. Our schools are already struggling to teach children what they need to know, now we are adding religious learning nobody wants or needs?
That's what churches are for.
KEEP RELIGION OUT OF SCHOOLS!

Jennifer L. Knowles

From: Brooks Fuller <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments for the Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 18:56:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

God has blessed America and drawn to her shores the intelligent, hard-working and God-fearing from many countries, as they fled the religious persecution of Europe. But alas, Puritans and others used such methods to control conscience here also!

Wise men like Roger Williams (founder of Rhode Island) and William Penn (founder of Pennsylvania) showed a better way, and their states became popular. History shows it!

Our Creator gave us unalienable rights, so to Him only, we owe worship (the 1st 4 of His commandments. The last 6 of these commands describe our duty to our fellow humans (the only
safe area for civil legislation). Godly leaders are wonderful, but religious bigots who force their ideas on all others (esp. the vulnerable minorities) will destroy America.

May God guide your decisions!

The Fullers

From: Cadorna Morris <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Seperation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:03:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Sincerely,

Cadorna Morris-Dixon
Pine Grove, CA

From: Elliot Gonzalez <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment separation of church and state Elliot Gonzalez
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:08:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,
Elliot Gonzalez
Houston, Texas
Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: jamaljulie06 <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty - Separation of church & State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:11:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Separation of church and state is what I stand for.
Please implement all of them.

Sent from my Galaxy

From: Scott <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Religious Liberty Commission Report - Scott Ritsema
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:14:13 -0400
Importance: Normal

As president of Belt of Truth Ministries, which has received over a million views on YouTube, I align with the statement made by Pillar of Freedom regarding the recent report by the Religious Liberty Commission.

The First Amendment, without a doubt, separates church and state. The fact that extreme left-wing policies have been pursued under the guise of separation of church and state, tarnishing this wonderful Jeffersonian principle of America's founding, does not mean that the power of the Establishment Clause to protect religious freedom should be diminished.

Any historically literate religious liberty report must cite the contrast between Massachusetts Bay colony and Rhode Island - and which approach was adopted by the framers of our Constitution. It was, without a doubt, the latter. The old world unification of church and state, which the Puritans hung onto for quite some time, was finally rejected by our founding fathers.

If the wall of separation between church and state is torn down, and religion becomes legislated, then inevitably, doctrine will be legislated, and the persecution of the past will return.

Instead, let us return to the Jeffersonian republican ideals that our nation just celebrated. Thomas Jefferson, the primary author of the Declaration of Independence should be heard. "Wall of separation between church and state" is Jefferson's phrase. It is sad that a man used by God to make such an important contribution to this country's principles is now being essentially smeared.

God bless America. Thank you for considering the thoughts of citizens including Christian leaders throughout this land.

Sincerely,

Scott Ritsema

From: Synnovang <[redacted]>
To: Rlc <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment - Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:14:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Doug Clark <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:15:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

On Mon, Jul 13, 2026 at 1:45 PM Doug Clark <[redacted]> wrote:

> I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments, please implement them.
> One of the main foundings of this country was separation of church and state for religious freedom of it's citizens.
> Best Regards,
> Douglas Clark

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – In Favor of Keeping Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:17:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

I've been made aware of the draft report and perused a small portion of it and have also read several responses from Pillar or Faith and agree with Pillar of Faith's responses and am requesting that you implement Pilar of Faith's comments.

This country was built on religious liberty as expressed in the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of the first amendment. History has proven what happens when that liberty is impeded.

From: Linda Hollifield <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:23:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Thank you,
Linda Hollifield

Sent from my iPhone

From: Toni Thomas-Wilson <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation Of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:23:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom It Concerns,

I do not agree to this change of our constitution. Church and state need to remain a self governing.

[redacted]

From: Janet Linda <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Cc: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT: Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:24:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear commission

Please respond to my gmail ([redacted]) as well as here. Thank you

I janet linda. a natural born American, born on the land of New York, expect you at all times to obey the laws of our Constitution of 1789 and of our Declaration of Independence. We, as a nation expect the strong separation between church and state and to rid this nation of religious politics. I also believe our first Amendment guarantees freedom of expression of our beliefs and as long as there is no harm done to property or persons, expressions should be freely made, free of tyranny. Our nations history called for peaceful protests and one's ability to express their desires as long as it does not harm another (burning churches, synagogues or mosques) but with the increase in disdain for harmful invasions, comments are bound to follow.

Above all, we must be rid of all tyranny and communism in this country (leftist states) and then I believe more peaceful protests will ensue.

We need to rid this world of false propaganda to remove the hate so that love ❤️ can prevail. That takes reconditioning.

If groups won't assimilate, they must return to a country that allows for war. America wants peace, not hate and war.

Cleansing of America is an important first step and then peace will follow.

Please we must remove politics from spiritual institutions. I believe all religions should receive a cleansing as tgey by their very creation olfrom the Vatican cause divisiveness and conflict.

We must change the entire meaning of religious freedom as its basis is that God and Heaven are within us all and no religion is better than any other. Instill this and we minimize conflict and hate.

I thank you for letting me participate.

By: Janet Linda. All Right Reserved

Sent from my iPhone

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Terri Todd
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:24:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

Thank you for your work and your thoughts.

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

Sincerely,

Terri Todd

From: "C.H. " <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State – Pastor Rochelle Webster
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:30:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I was troubled to read that the Commission wants to replace the wall of separation between
church and state with a "bridge." With respect, that is exactly backwards — and as a pastor and 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 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,
Pastor Rochelle Webster
San Diego, CA

From: "Joan M. Guye" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:34:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please do not implement a national day of worship. America is special because she gives her citizens a choice. Choice about worship is vital. Please do not join church and state. Keep them separate!!!! Continue to regulate the adherence to the last 6 of God's Holy Law, but please let my choice of how I keep the first 4 Commandments be a personal one.

Warmly,
Joan M Guye

From: Lisa Jphnston <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:42:47 -0400
Importance: Normal

I believe that we need to continue following what the founding fathers of our nation originally set out for us as a nation. The reason that our country came into being was because of other countries not having the separation of church and state and people having the desire to worship as they pleased.

I am a religious person who believes that we need to continue having separation of church and state. Having that separation allows us to be the land of the free and the home of the brave,

Funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses goes against our freedom of religion in this country. It would be wrong for the government to promote any one religion over another.

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

sincerely,
Lisa Johnston

From: Kevan Brooke <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:47:59 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with pillar of freedoms comments.

From: Rick Craven <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church & State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:48:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

I am also troubled to hear that the Religious Liberty Commission wants to replace the "*wall of separation*" between church and state with a "*bridge*." The founding fathers, in making this great nation as we have known it to be, from the 1600's, this thought process is backwards from its original intent. As a person of faith, I find the ideas being considered alarming.

That wall was not built by secularists to keep religion down. It was *built by believers to keep the church free*, and as a result bless the nation we recognize as the United States of America. This bridge that is being considered, doesn't strengthen the church; it opens the door for government money, even allowing select religious groups and political favors to march right in, until churches are competing for grants, giving political favors to a few bodies of believers, resulting in ostracizing other convictions of faith communities, resulting in answering to politicians instead of to God.

Please don't put your blood on this idea and build that bridge. Keep the wall. It protects the freedom of conscience and individual churches far more than it constrains it.

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

Sincerely,

Rick Craven

San Bernardino, CA

From: Kerry Hansen <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment on religious liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:48:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission,
America was founded on the principle of separation of church and state. Our founding fathers knew the history in Europe where the established church controlled governments which lead to persecution for hundreds of years. They did not want the same persecution to take place in America.
We should not legislate morality. Every individual has the right under the first amendment to the Constitution to either worship God or a higher power according to their conscience or not believe in God if they so choose; "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise there of."
As an American citizen I know we have been blessed by God to have the freedom of choice to worship Him or not without fear of persecution from the government.
We need to protect the religious freedom of every citizen; which is one of many freedoms we so often take for granted.
We need to remember the famous statement that Abraham Lincoln wrote in a letter to Henry L. Pierce and others on April 6, 1859, "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under a just God, cannot long retain it."
Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I pray that you will make decisions which will secure citizens' religious liberty.
Kerry Hansen

From: Robert Kamieneski <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of church and state.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:50:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Sirs: I understand that there is a movement to bring church and state together once again. While the constitution may not directly use the term separation of church and state it is clear that Thomas Jefferson used wording that is clear his goal was to keep church and state separate.

History is replete with examples of the dangers of combining churc and state. The reformation is one such example that ended in the loss of thousands of lives because of the combination of church and state. Men and women were burned at the stake, tortured, be-headed etc by religious zealots by a church and state government. The papal system is an example of that type of history. At the time the possession of a Bible was cause for a death penalty. While it true that many deaths were the direct result of church sponsorship death decrees, it was during a time that church and state were combined. Never in history has the combination of church and state been a positive issue for those seeking Biblical truth. We should always seek freedom of conscience for all, deplete of a church or governmental or combination of both pushing an agenda that goes contrary to one's beliefs.

For this reason I encourage your committee to remind it's efforts at trying to combine church and state and to remember that our country was established based on freedom of conscience.

Thank you,

Bob and Ruth Kamieneski

[redacted]

From: Earl Finley <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Earl Finley
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:53:58 -0400
Importance: Normal

Good evening,

Religious liberty belongs to all Americans, regardless of the religion each American chooses to practice. It is not just for Christians or a list of government-recognized religions. Religious liberty is for everyone.
The recommendations proposed to protect religious liberty are nothing more than a mask to remove the legal barriers that keep specific Christian parties from using their influence in the political arena. We are not experiencing the persecution on the level Christians daily experience in the 10/40 window. We have the power to share our faith now as we should. Our faith is not a political tool but a means by which we prepare the world for the return of Jesus. I strongly urge you not to give the church power to appeal to the state lest the state gain the power to appeal to the church.

With regards,

Earl Finley

From: davis jonelle <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Freedom Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:56:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the position set forth by PILLAR OF FREEDOM. Church and State must not undermine the foundational principles of this great nation 250 years in the making.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Tom Dooly <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:56:29 -0400
Importance: Normal

The "force" that is driving the agenda of the attack on separation of Church and State can be nothing less than with the intent to DESTRY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
The reason our forefathers came to this "new land" was to get out from under the control of the Government being OVER Religion. It is so basic, it is difficult to discuss, since the two entities "State" and "Church" are absolutely OBVERSE from each other, albeit BOTH are made up of the same thing, that is PEOPLE. We the people of the USA control our destiny. IF this agenda is implemented, we "The People" will have to absolve the Government, and build another "Government" as our Constitution allows us to do so as to have a more perfect Union.

KEEP and SUPPORT "Separation of Church & State".
Geary Thomas Dooly, aka Tom Dooly

From: PEK LEONG <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Presidential Religious Liberty Draft
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:57:42 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

with respect and sincerity,
P. Leong

From: Wendy Nixon <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:57:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

I submit these comments as a Bible-believing Christian who is deeply grateful for the blessing of religious liberty. I appreciate the Commission's stated desire to protect the free exercise of religion, and I share the conviction that every person should be free to worship God according to conscience, free from coercion or discrimination.

Where I respectfully differ is in the means by which that liberty is best preserved.

As I have read the Commission's report, I have become concerned that several recommendations would lessen the distinction between the responsibilities God has assigned to civil government and those He has assigned to His church. My concern is not based primarily upon constitutional history or political philosophy, but upon the consistent testimony of Scripture.

Jesus Himself recognized both the legitimacy and the limits of civil authority. When asked whether taxes should be paid to Caesar, He replied, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17). In a single sentence, Christ affirmed that civil government has a legitimate sphere of authority while also declaring that some things belong only to God. Rather than merging those spheres, He distinguished them.

The apostle Paul likewise teaches that governing authorities are ordained by God to maintain justice, restrain evil, and preserve civil order (Romans 13:1–7). The church, however, has received a different commission. Christ commanded His followers to preach the gospel, make disciples, care for those in need, and proclaim His kingdom. Nowhere does the New Testament assign that spiritual mission to civil government, nor does it instruct the church to accomplish its mission through the power of the state.

Throughout Scripture, a clear pattern emerges whenever those distinct responsibilities become intertwined.

In Daniel 3, King Nebuchadnezzar used the authority of the state to require an act of worship. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego refused because worship belongs to God alone.

In Daniel 6, civil authority prohibited prayer to God. Daniel accepted the consequences rather than surrender the worship and allegiance that belonged only to his Creator.

When the apostles were commanded to stop preaching in the name of Jesus, Peter answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). He did not reject civil government; he recognized that its authority has God-given limits.

The same pattern appears throughout the biblical record. Jezebel employed the authority of King Ahab to advance false worship and persecute God's prophets. Religious leaders enlisted Roman civil authority to condemn Christ and later to persecute His followers. In each case, civil authority became entangled with religious purposes in ways that violated the limits God had established.

These are not isolated stories. Together they reveal a recurring biblical principle: throughout Scripture, God carefully distinguishes the authority of civil government from His own authority over worship and conscience.

The New Testament likewise reveals how Christ intended His kingdom to advance. He never sought political office. He never appealed to Caesar to finance His ministry or establish His teachings through civil authority. Before Pilate He declared, "My kingdom is not of this world." His kingdom advances through truth, compassion, sacrifice, persuasion, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

As a Christian who accepts the prophetic message of Scripture, I also recognize that this biblical pattern reaches its culmination in Revelation. The Bible's final conflict centers upon worship and conscience and echoes a pattern already seen throughout the biblical record. For that reason, I oppose measures that bring religious authority and civil power into closer institutional partnership. I do not suggest that the Commission intends to compel worship or violate conscience. I do believe, however, that Scripture gives Christians sound reason to reject proposals that lessen the distinction between civil government and the church.

For these reasons, I oppose recommendations that would redefine the relationship between government and religion by encouraging greater institutional partnership between the state and religious organizations, including proposals concerning government support for inherently religious activities and the removal of long-standing safeguards intended to preserve the institutional independence of churches from partisan political campaigns. I fully support equal treatment under the law and vigorous protection of every person's free exercise of religion. But equal protection for religion is not the same as governmental support of religious activity or closer political alignment between churches and the state. I believe Scripture supports the former while warning against the latter.

The church does not need the power of the state to fulfill the mission Christ entrusted to it. Likewise, government best fulfills its God-given responsibility when it protects the equal rights and liberties of all people without becoming entangled in the spiritual mission of religion. Both institutions are ordained by God, but each best honors Him by remaining faithful to the responsibilities He has assigned.

The Commission's report asks how religious liberty can best be preserved in America. As a Bible-believing Christian, I respectfully submit that the answer begins with the pattern God Himself has revealed in Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible consistently distinguishes the responsibilities of civil government from the mission of His church. Whenever those responsibilities become intertwined, Scripture records conflict over worship and conscience. For that reason, I oppose proposals that lessen this distinction, even when they are offered with the sincere intention of strengthening religious liberty.

Such a distinction is not hostility toward religion. It is one of the biblical safeguards of genuine religious liberty and freedom of conscience for people of every faith and for those of none.

From: Theodore O <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Theodore Orlet
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 19:58:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

My ancestors were subject to severe religious persecution (including extermination for those who didn't or couldn't flee) in Europe because they sought to follow their conscience in regard to their understanding of the Bible.

Approximately a century earlier across the Atlantic here in this land of freedom, groundwork was being laid by pioneers of religious liberty, like Roger Williams, for a nation that would guarantee perpetual liberation from religious tyranny by maintaining a mutually exclusive spheres of church & state wherein neither shall dictate to the other.

I was troubled to read that the Religious Liberty 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,

Theodore Orlet
Newark, Ohio

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:06:51 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

Obadiah Holmes, in the Massachusetts colony, for the "crime" of religious dissent. Obadiah Holmes was not whipped by atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lastly, we object to the recommendation of the Committee that the Johnson Amendment be removed. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are mindful of Our Lord's words that we "render to Caesar what is Caesar, and to God the things that are God's." [9] Jesus Christ established the principle of the separation of church and state and taught that what belongs to God cannot be rendered to Caesar. The application of this teaching is that religionists, ambitious for civil power, and politicians, ambitious for their endorsement, are to be kept separate

in the American system of politics, as the Constitution requires. The union of church and state results in the corruption of both, a result that neither should desire, and neither can afford.

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,
Alina A.

From: Deisy Lorena Bustamante <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thoughts on the Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:11:37 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing with deep respect and sincere concern regarding the recent conclusion of the Religious Liberty Commission suggesting that there is no separation between Church and State.

History provides abundant evidence that whenever religious institutions become closely aligned with civil power, both religious freedom and human dignity suffer. Scripture itself establishes a distinction between the responsibilities of God and those of civil government. Jesus said, *"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's"* (Matthew 22:21).

Throughout history, the union of religious authority and political power has repeatedly resulted in persecution and violence. Our Lord Jesus Christ was condemned through the cooperation of the Jewish religious leaders and the Roman civil government. In later centuries, countless Christians suffered persecution under religious systems that exercised civil authority. In Spain, museums dedicated to the Inquisition stand as reminders of the persecution carried out under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. England's history likewise illustrates the tragic consequences of monarchs imposing their religious convictions through governmental power, leading to the suffering and death of thousands whose only "crime" was to worship according to their conscience.

These painful lessons shaped the ideals upon which the United States was founded. Many of the Pilgrims fled the religious oppression of the Old World, seeking a land where every individual could worship God according to the dictates of conscience. The principle of separating Church and State became one of America's greatest contributions to the protection of religious liberty. It demonstrated that a nation can uphold moral values while allowing every person the freedom to believe, worship, or not worship without coercion.

Weakening this separation, or granting greater political influence to religious institutions, does not strengthen faith. Instead, it risks repeating mistakes that history has already warned us against. Such a course could lead to several serious consequences:

1. The politicization of the Church, causing its mission to shift from proclaiming Christ to pursuing political influence.
2. Favoritism toward certain religious groups, allowing governments to privilege churches that align with political interests while marginalizing or discriminating against those that do not.
3. Growing public distrust of religion, as opportunistic individuals use religious institutions for political advantage rather than genuine service to God and humanity.

Perhaps, as Christians, we should humbly acknowledge that our greatest failures have not been the absence of political power, but our failure to fully reflect the character of Christ. We have not always loved our neighbors selflessly, cared for those in need without expecting anything in return, or proclaimed the Gospel through lives transformed by God's love.

The work of changing hearts belongs to the Holy Spirit, not to the civil government. When the Church looks to the State to accomplish what only God's Spirit can do, we shift our trust from God's power to human authority. In doing so, we demonstrate a lack of faith in God's transforming power and risk seeking the approval of earthly powers rather than trusting in the Lord alone.

I firmly believe that the Holy Spirit is still able to transform lives today. His work is accomplished through love, truth, and persuasion—not through coercion. Respecting every person's freedom of conscience and freedom of worship is not a weakness of Christianity; it is one of its highest expressions.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission to preserve and defend the historic principle of separation between Church and State, recognizing it as one of the strongest safeguards of genuine religious liberty for people of every faith, and for those of none.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

From: "D'Mariae Banks" <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:13:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

D'Mariae Banks

From: Chuck ODell <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:14:46 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: Keep_Sabbath_Free.docx

Dear [Recipient Name],

Please find the attached letter concerning the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Commission.

Best regards,

Chuck ODell

[redacted]

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While we are mindful of the Committee's labors, which resulted in the 12 recommendations released June 26, certain of which we agree with, we write to voice our concerns and objections to the Committee's first and ninth recommendations [1] and its obviously insufficient consideration of the warnings of the Founding Fathers of the dangers of a union of church and state or the many lessons of history regarding same. The Committee recommended that the Department of Justice "issue guidance clarifying the proper understanding of the Establishment Clause and separation of church and state." At the formal release of the Committee's recommendations on the same day, Committee Chair Dan Patrick publicly stated that "the separation of church and state is not in the constitution" and that the phrase "has no constitutional basis."

As citizens and 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.

DOJ-RLC Comment-022666

We are concerned that the Committee neglected to take into account the impact of the separation of church and state on the other rights codified in the First Amendment. Free speech and freedom of the press, for example, owe their flourishing in the modern world in large part to the separation of church and state in America. Prior to the protections in the First Amendment, the Roman Catholic Church for centuries maintained a list of banned books called the Index Librorum Prohibitorum. The books were subject to confiscation, and the possession of them resulted in the punishment of the owner. Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, David Hume and Edward Gibbon, and many others, all at the behest of the Roman Papacy, which is itself a union of church and state. Free speech in the Western world is the legacy of those who risked the wrath of a unified church and state, often at the cost of their lives. We would also ask that the Department of Justice consider the repeated modern calls from the papal power today for the censorship of the internet and the suppression of free speech, contrary to the First Amendment.
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.

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

DOJ-RLC Comment-022667

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

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.” 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

DOJ-RLC Comment-022668

devotion of the people have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the Church from the State." 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. 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 O'Dell
Concerned Citizen and Follower of Christ.

DOJ-RLC Comment-022669

From: Valrie White <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:19:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

Religion is a matter which lies solely between Man and His God not by a commission of Government. Religion cannot be dictated and forced, freedom of choice is to be respected. God does not force us to love or serve Him. If worship is forced that's not Godly Love, and is surely not Christian.

From: Chuck Penn <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Chapter 5 – College Students
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:35:12 -0400
Importance: Normal

I commend the Commission for preparing a thoughtful and historically grounded report. I respectfully encourage the Commission to continue emphasizing that the liberties secured by the Bill of Rights represent constitutional judgments ratified by the sovereign People of the several States and therefore should be interpreted according to their original public meaning rather than continually rebalanced through changing public policy.

Public colleges and universities should remain places where religious viewpoints receive the same constitutional protection as every other viewpoint. Equal protection of liberty of conscience is consistent with both the original understanding of the First Amendment and the proper role of public institutions.

From: Chuck Penn <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Chapter 10 – Conscience and Vaccine Policy
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:40:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

I commend the Commission for preparing a thoughtful and historically grounded report. I respectfully encourage the Commission to continue emphasizing that the liberties secured by the Bill of Rights represent constitutional judgments ratified by the sovereign People of the several States and therefore should be interpreted according to their original public meaning rather than continually rebalanced through changing public policy.

Periods of emergency do not suspend constitutional liberties. The freedoms secured by the Bill of Rights—including liberty of conscience and the free exercise of religion—reflect constitutional judgments already made by the People and should not be displaced absent clear constitutional authority.

From: Chuck Penn <PII>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <PII>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Chapter 13 – Barriers to Religious Liberty in Public and Private Sectors
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:42:40 -0400
Importance: Normal

I commend the Commission for preparing a thoughtful and historically grounded report. I respectfully encourage the Commission to continue emphasizing that the liberties secured by the Bill of Rights represent constitutional judgments ratified by the sovereign People of the several States and therefore should be interpreted according to their original public meaning rather than continually rebalanced through changing public policy.

The report appropriately recognizes that threats to religious liberty may arise from both governmental action and unlawful private discrimination. Faithful enforcement of constitutional protections according to their original public meaning strengthens both civil society and the rule of law.

From: Chuck Penn <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Chapter 14 – The Path Forward
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:43:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

I commend the Commission for preparing a thoughtful and historically grounded report. I respectfully encourage the Commission to continue emphasizing that the liberties secured by the Bill of Rights represent constitutional judgments ratified by the sovereign People of the several States and therefore should be interpreted according to their original public meaning rather than continually rebalanced through changing public policy.

The report wisely encourages renewed appreciation for America's first freedom. Continued fidelity to the Constitution's original public meaning—including the protections for religion, speech, peaceable assembly, petition, and the right to keep and bear arms—honors the constitutional settlement adopted by the sovereign People rather than inviting continual rebalancing of liberties they have already secured.

From: Brianna LeBlanc <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:43:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

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," - Thomas Jefferson

Separation of church and state is nothing something you can use as a mouthpiece to make fake national Christians feel better about their complete lack of disregard for the parts of the Bible they don't agree with. Leave it alone

Brianna LeBlanc

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Frank Fischer <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Response to Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:45:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Commision Members,
I am deeply concerned regarding the suggested solutions for the correction of Christian persecution. When church and state are called upon to unite in the promotion and protection of Christians, it is a step toward oppression of the Christians that cannot, for conscience' sake, go along with the majority opinions of the politically connected churches.
Roger Williams fled persecution and potential death because of his opinion that freedom of conscience before the law is the deepest right of every person, believer or unbeliever. He was a devoted Christian who saw that only freedom of choice can bring about a true commitment to Christ. Any other approach would be like only forcing hypocrisy.
It is less than honest for the Commision to say that the separation of church and state was not the intent of Roger Williams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and many others when they wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. They understood and clearly stated that oppression is the inevitable result of mixing these two powers. Jesus never supported such an arrangement. He declared to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, then would My servants fight."
If we truly want to be a Christian nation then we will follow His example and look to God alone for the support of our institutions and the promotion of our doctrines.
May God help us!
I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them!

Sincerely,
Frank

From: Blessed Assurance <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Establishment Clause – Barington Blake
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:47:50 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing as a private citizen who believes deeply in both halves of the First Amendment's promise on religion, and I ask you to hold that belief firmly as you deliberate. I have seen, in my own community, what happens when government begins to lean toward one church's preferences over another's: those who do not go along with the prescribed doctrines are quietly pushed to the margins, treated as suspect rather than as fellow citizens. That is not a hypothetical risk. It is the ordinary result of state and church joining hands, and it is the reason I write today.

My first concern is drawn from Christian teaching itself, not from secularism. When Christ said that we are to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's, he drew a line no government may cross. Civil authority exists to judge whether an act injures a neighbor; it has no competence to judge whether an act honors or offends God. Any commission recommendation that puts government behind a particular scripture, prayer, or religious display asks the state to rule on a question that belongs to God alone. That is not too little respect for religion. It is a violation of the very distinction religion itself teaches.

My second concern is about the nature of delegated power. Our government holds only the powers the people gave it by consent, and no person can delegate to another his own relationship to God. I cannot authorize a legislature to believe for me or answer for my soul, so that power was never handed over in the first place. What was never given cannot now be claimed. This is why the First Amendment did not invent religious liberty; it simply recorded a limit that was already there.

My third concern is practical and historical. Force cannot produce faith. A law can march a body into a pew, but it cannot put love of God into a heart, and history shows that state-favored religion breeds pride and laziness among clergy and hollow conformity among the people. Fifteen centuries of established Christianity left a record of bigotry and persecution, not renewal. A faith that needs the state's help to survive is confessing something troubling about itself.

My final concern is the one closest to my own experience. Any law favoring religion, even one favoring my own convictions, robs me of the freedom to change my mind later. It also hands a tool to future majorities who may not share my beliefs at all. The believer who welcomes government backing today may be building the very instrument that persecutes his children tomorrow.

Protect free exercise for all, and keep the state out of the business of religion. The two commitments stand or fall together.

Respectfully,
Barington Blake

From: Melissa Yates <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:56:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

atheists. He was whipped by Puritan bigots who did not believe in the separation of church and state. We respectfully request that the Department of Justice consider this history in the issuance of public guidance on the subject.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,
Melissa Yates

From: Chris Evens <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:58:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

More context from history of erosion of Freedom.

I am seeing some parallels in regards to what is happening within our country to the Republic of Rome. I don't have citations in front of me at the moment and won't have time to find any due to the restricted time frame to push this through, under the radar. The republic of Rome, while still having persecution in states and outposts. This is evident in the writing of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. Though my understanding is there is plenty of other documented instances where this collaborates the Biblical text. Another aspect indicates the gradual erosion of personal freedoms in telling others how to think. This is a natural pattern of any conquering nation over another in that History is rewritten to show themselves in the best light. This history is then taught through their schools or other propaganda making the country believe the nations version of events. Our country has largely had a Christian underlayer for the first 175 or so years. While I am certain there were some freedoms that were taken over before that, it wasn't until the Great Depression that government was starting to take over what the church formerly did. And that is supporting the less fortunate. This has become the current Welfare system causing reliance upon government more and more allowing government to direct beliefs in small ways. Government has become enablers for people that don't want to work. Example was my, at the time, wife's co-worker, who had another child, went out on maternity leave and never came back because she received more government subsidy not working than she did if she decided to work herself even part time. Since the Great Depression, neighbor helping neighbor has become less and less a priority citing that all are trying to work. Minimum wage going up is not helping either as the cost of living keeps going up. You need two incomes to support yourself in today's society unless you are in the upper income categories which is a minority. All of these feats are making citizen reliance upon Government higher and higher. The last major point that supports this is also mirroring the Republic of Rome when LGTPQ rights were forced through. That was one of the last things as I understand it, before the Romen Republic fell and became an Empire. Due to all of these natural factors, we need to keep our eyes tight on the separation of Church and State in all the factors listed in the Pillars of Freedom post or we risk repeating history again.

Next aspect of note. Removal of the Johnson Amendment. I believe that this will eventually completely merge Church and State in the sense that Churches will eventually be backing candidates which will come with KickBacks to the church. Much like we are already seeing today in corporate America. Beliefs will change to match the narrative in a church. Also the other effect would give a conduit of Tax Deductions for Candidates running for public office.

I am also hearing and seeing things that are very disappointing in regards to this commission. A commission should consist of all viewpoints and take all viewpoints into consideration. We shouldn't be removing or ex-communicating members of the committee based upon their belief.

Last point I want to point out is that this seems to be pushed into a report rather fast while we are in the Iraq War. Our country's focus is in the Middle East and not on the home front allowing this to get pushed through supposedly legally. I would suggest having another month of time available at least and make sure more publicity is put in place so that a more natural review process can take place.

Thank you for your time.

Chris Evens

From: Mimi Kiest <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty!!! Rather God Given Liberty!
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 20:59:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

Mimi Kiest

From: Mary Strong Rodriguez <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 21:02:03 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern:

“I agree with Pillar of Freedom’s comments. Please implement them.”

Mary Strong-Rodriguez

From: Leigh Whatton <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 21:06:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the statements made by Pillar of Freedom .
There can only be religious freedom when there is separation between church and state. History shows this to be true.
Leigh Whatton
Sent from my iPhone

From: Berniece Griffin <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 21:10:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Sent from my iPhone

From: Diane Bowls <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I object to the 1st and 9th recommendation.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 21:51:38 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing to voice my "concern" and "objection" to the Committee's 1st and 9th recommendations.

This is to let you know that I am not in agreement with the above matter.

Respectfully submitted.

From: Kevin Attride <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State - Response
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 21:53:55 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

I respectfully request your wise and careful protection for our nation's foundation of separation of church and state. This critical cornerstone made this nation great and prosperous. We must protect our freedoms at all cost: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof".

"Give me liberty, or give me death!"
- Patrick Henry

"Forced worship stinks in God's nostrils."
- Roger Williams

"It was demonstrated that the principles of the Bible are the surest safeguards of national greatness. The feeble and isolated colonies grew to a confederation of powerful States, and the world marked with wonder the peace and prosperity of 'a church without a pope, and a State without a king.'"
- EG White

"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's."
- Jesus Christ (Luke 20:25 KJV)

Kevin Attride
Cell [redacted] | [redacted]

From: Barbara Calhoun <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 21:55:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

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: "Carlos R." <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Separation of Church and State - Carlos R Rosario
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 21:56:49 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Commission,
I am writing to express my strong support for the comments and recommendations submitted by Pillar of Freedom.
Specifically, I want to highlight my opposition to the Commission's efforts to weaken the separation of church and state.

The proposal to repeal the Johnson Amendment directly violates the spirit of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Allowing tax-exempt churches to endorse political candidates and funnel tax-deductible donations into political campaigns forces taxpayers to indirectly fund partisan politics and destroys the constitutional boundary between church and state.

From: Chad Stephens <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:06:33 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

Sincerely,
Chad Stephens

From: greg gregyacoubianlaw.com <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Chapter 14: The Path Forward – The Legal System and the Judiciary
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:15:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

To Whom It May Concern;

I agree that the legal system needs improvement.

Since late-2021, I have represented several police officers and firefighters in California who were terminated from government employment and subject to multi-year, government-led litigation, simply for defending their legal rights in connection with mandates. In fact, a Petition for Writ of Certiorari was brought before the United States Supreme Court in one such case (which was denied), two cases (one police officer and one firefighter) are still pending at the California Court of Appeal, and one administrative appeal is still pending the hearing officer's decision.

I agree with the recommendation that private rights of action be created for religious liberty claims. I think you'll agree that this may be challenging due to sovereign immunity.

I also strongly agree that protections for religious liberty are only as strong as the judges who adjudicate religious liberty disputes. I feel that the alarm expressed by Justices Thomas and Alito about federal judges applies with equal force to state judges who will also look for excuses to avoid deciding controversial cases. I think finding a workable solution may also be challenging.

I think government attorneys would benefit from training where a panel of government employees who were fired for simply protecting their legal rights can address them directly during a Q&A. This is definitely workable with agencies open to reason.

I also think that protections for government attorneys who decline to engage in this kind of litigation where other government employees are simply defending their legal rights in good faith would be helpful. I think this is also workable.

God bless,
Greg

PII

PII

PII

From: Michelle Macklin <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:15:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the importance of preserving the Constitutional principles of religious liberty.
The First Admendment to the US Constitution provides two equally important protections. It prohibits the government from establishing a religion, while also protecting every individual's right to freely exercise their faith.
It states:
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free exercise thereof.
These protections has served as the cornerstone of American liberty since our nation's founding. They ensure that no citizen is compelled to support, participate in, or adhere to any particular religion, while safeguarding the freedom of every person to worship or not to worship, according to the dictates of their own conscience.
The Constitution principle has long been recognized as a safeguard against government interference in matters of religion. This protects both religious institutions from government control and government from becoming an instrument of religious authority.
The Consitution provides equal protection to ALL, ensuring that the government neither favors nor discriminates against any religion, as well as those who have no religious affiliations.
Public office, like all citizens, are free to hold and express their religious beliefs. However, when acting in their official capacity, they are obligated to uphold the Constitution and govern in a manner that respects the rights of every American.
The enduring strength of our Republic lies in it's commitment to liberty of conscience. Perserving these Constitutional principles ensures that Americans of every faith-and those with none- continue to enjoy the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

From: Alana Van Putten <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT- Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:17:32 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

The wall of separation of church and state must hold. As a person of faith, I believe the words of Christ that we must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God, the things that are God's.
History shows us that when the wall falls between church and state, religious persecution follows and liberty of conscience is violated. Preserving this liberty among others has been the saving grace of America. Lastly, I agree with the comments made by Pillar of Freedom. The wall must hold.

Alana Van Putten-Laguerre

From: Barbara Calhoun <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:21:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

[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: Barbara Calhoun <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:23:35 -0400
Importance: Normal

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to President Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. While 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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Founding Father, "Father of the Constitution", and fourth President of the United States, James Madison, contradicted Chair Dan Patrick's claim that the separation of church and state is not in the Constitution. Madison stated that "Strongly guarded as is the separation between Religion & Govt in the Constitution of the United States, the danger of encroachment by Ecclesiastical Bodies, may be illustrated by precedents already furnished in their short history." According to James Madison, the separation of church and state is in the Constitution. As to whether James Madison, who is the principal author of the Establishment Clause, or Dan Patrick, is the greater authority on this subject, we think it not difficult for reasonably minded people to ascertain.
Certainly, the Founding Fathers were all aware of the persecution of the Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and others in some of the colonies. They had seen firsthand the ear croppings, whippings, imprisonment, and hangings in Massachusetts and other colonies.

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

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

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

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

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

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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,

Barbara Calhoun

[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: kathy <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – kathy henricksen
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:23:53 -0400
Importance: Normal

PLEASE, keep church and state separate. Sorry no time to give my personal views.

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

Kathy Henricksen
Washington State

From: deidre lavettesblessedtravel.com <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Gwiin Correa
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:29:10 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Commission's draft report.

As a Christian, I cherish religious liberty and freedom of conscience. I believe every person should be free to worship according to the dictates of their conscience without government interference. That is why I strongly support the constitutional separation of church and state.

History has shown that when government and religion become intertwined, both are harmed. The church should never become dependent on government funding or political influence, and the government should never favor one religion over another. Keeping these institutions separate protects the freedom of every American, regardless of faith.

I respectfully oppose recommendations that would weaken the separation of church and state, including expanding government funding for religious activities and repealing the Johnson Amendment. These proposals risk eroding one of the foundational principles that has safeguarded religious liberty in our nation.
Please preserve the constitutional separation of church and state. It is one of the greatest protections for both our government and our churches, ensuring that each remains free to fulfill its proper role.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Respectfully,

Deidre Reaves
Jersey City, NJ

From: Saritza Mickelboro <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:30:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – saritza Mickelboro

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Sincerely,
Satitza Mickelboro
Platte city Mo

From: Andrew Tremper <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty, and separation of church and state
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:31:17 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I wish each one of you good health and happiness.

I am writing to you because I am very concerned about the recent draft report, stating that a bridge should be built between church and state. We have but to review history of less than 250 years ago to the see the fruits of mixing church and state, with the utter ruin brought to France after many years of the church dictating the state. Many thousands of innocent lives were lost during the French Revolution and many millions lost during the dark ages when papal dictates ruled over the state for 1260 years.

Here in America the wall between church and state 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.

I encourage each one of you to study the scriptures while praying for guidance of the Holy Spirit, for clarity on this matter.

Blessings to each one of you.

Regards,
Andrew Tremper.

From: Shelley Jaquez <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:37:41 -0400
Importance: Normal

To: The Department of Justice

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the recommendations of the Religious Liberty Committee submitted to Donald J. Trump on June 26, 2026. It is a difficult to draw a line that determines where the freedom of one person or organization becomes a restriction on another. If all churches held the exact same beliefs, this wouldn't cause much of a problem. However, true religious freedom means that each person and organization is allowed to live according to their conscience even if it differs from the majority or may not be perceived as benefiting the "common good". When a country or governing body creates an agreed upon set of beliefs, standards or religious rules, they are putting themselves in the place of God. Dissenting individuals and organizations will always end up suffering some sort of persecution if there is a government sponsored religion.

I understand that our country has fallen away from God and it is imperative that individually and as a country, we humble ourselves, repent and turn back to God. This can only be accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit. This is not the role of our government. If the US, or any country, goes down this path, history WILL repeat itself with religious persecution. Just 6 short years ago, Covid-19 showed us how quickly governments took away freedoms when they thought it was in the interest of "the common good". Let us not bate the hook of government overreach with each man's liberty of conscience.

In the words of Ronald Regan, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for and protected, and handed on for them to do the same or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

Thank you for carefully and prayerfully considering your role in setting government policies and defending our religious freedoms.

Shelley Jaquez
Lincoln, Nebraska

From: Janice Stephens <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Janice Witt-Stephens
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:40:23 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the Commission's recommendation to replace the wall of separation between church and state with a "bridge." As a person of faith and United States of America citizen, I have valued the religious freedom found in this country. Our forefathers crossed the Atlantic to escape religious persecution and experience it in this new land. Why after 250 years should this separation be replaced with a "bridge"? If it ain't broke, don't fix it. A bridge is to facilitate movement back and forth. Separation keeps each side in their respective place. I am opposed to government funding to religious organizations including religious non-profit activities and funding of religious education and religious clubs on public campuses, and believe that a "bridge" will ultimately lead to government meddling in religious organizations. Even though I am a Christian, I advocate freedom for people of all faiths.

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

Janice Witt-Stephens

From: American Sikh Council <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Input for the American Sikh Council (ASC) on the Presidents Religious Liberty Commission Report!
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:41:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

On behalf of the American Sikh Council (ASC) we wanted to share our input after reviewing the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission Report.

1. Religion as an Indispensable Support: Religion is the bedrock of ethical and moral principles on which most of the world rests as functioning societies. The First Amendment of the US Constitution gives full freedom to any citizen to practice their faith freely and fully without interference by the government. The US government which is run by overwhelmingly members of the Judeo-Christian faith(s) who also make and enforce the laws, can and have impinged on the religious rights of practicing Sikh Americans in various areas of society., i.e., schools, workplace, healthcare, military, etc.

2. Religious Liberty and the American Story: *"Give me liberty or give me death!"* was famously stated by Patrick Henry on March 23, 1775. But the holy Sikh religious scripture known as the 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib' was formalized in 1604 and its 422nd anniversary is being celebrated this year across the world. The Sri Guru Granth Sahib is replete with verses stressing that every man/woman is a sovereign and without religious liberty, life is not worth living. Furthermore, to achieve true religious liberty, everyone —high or low, regardless of class or creed, caste or color, ethnicity or nationality—should have equal rights of liberty and freedom to follow and profess the religion of their choice without impinging on any other. It is no small feat that in the last millennia and unparalleled in the annals of religious history that the 9th Sikh Prophet-Enlightener Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib voluntarily accepted torture and a public beading to accept martyrdom in order to save the Kashmiri Brahmin Hindus who begged him to save them from being forcefully converted to Islam by then Mughal regime. Aurangzeb the Muslim emperor murdered the 9th Sikh Prophet-Enlightener in 1675. Most fundamentals of the Sikh religious ideology are diametrically opposite of the Hindus. Yet, in the name of religious liberty and true interfaith brotherhood Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib chose to give his life so that others may live freely to practice their faith as they choose, even though he did not agree with their religious ideology.

   Respecting the religious principles of Sikh Americans including their articles of faith which are intrinsically a core part of their overall identity in every private and public space is and will be a true example of following the First Amendment to the letter and essence.

3. Faith-Based Institutions and the Enduring Fight for Religious Identity, Mission, and Integrity: Followers of every religion are always very proud of their own respective faiths, but if everyone believed and followed the Platinum Rule, they would make sure that their fellow human beings who may follow a different faith are also given the same respect even if there is only one of them. In summary even the littlest person in the room must be acknowledged and given the same respect as the mightiest person, allowing them the same privilege so that they can thrive as their best self, not cower or be embarrassed to practice their religion openly, while studying as a student, working as a professional in society, fighting as a soldier, or lying sick in a hospital, etc. It behooves all faith-based institutions to stand and fight with anyone whose religious rights are being trampled on, but especially minorities who are vulnerable to majoritarian pressure and coercion to fall in line with the Judeo-Christian rules. Furthermore, there seem to be no Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Bahai or Native American representative(s) in the core group which drafted this report.

4. Students Don't Check their Rights at the Schoolhouse Gate: Sikh American school going students are victims of the worst bullying versus any other ethnic or religious group currently in America. More than 80 percent of Sikh school students are bullied because of their religious beliefs, which include the articles of faith that they wear. The national average for bullying in schools has remained around 20 percent but Sikh American students are bullied 3 to 4 times more, making miserable the lives of turban-wearing children across America, who go to school in order to study and thrive, instead are stressed 24/7 and barely survive, with many cutting their hair to fit in because the schools either do not do enough to help or simply pretend not to understand. [*Ref: Bullying of Sikh American Children – Through the Eyes of a Sikh American High School Student by Karanveer Singh Pannu*]

5. The Fight for Faith on College Campuses: On college campuses all it takes is a call to 911 and report, "A man with turban is carrying a knife"! A Sikh man or woman who is 'formally initiated' into the faith does carry a religious article of faith called the 'kirpan,' which is a ceremonial blade that is sheathed and can be carried openly strapped across the body. The Kirpan is a reminder to stand up for others and self in order to defend the rights of the meek and weak and then for defense of self, but only when all other means fail. So yes, Sikhs have been practicing the right to bear arms since 1699, as part and parcel of their religious identity, even though the Second Amendment stated the same much later.

6. The Rights and Roles of Parents and Teachers: Parents have the primary right and responsibility to guide their child's religious beliefs, values, and practices. Teachers, on the other hand, are responsible for respecting the religious diversity of students and creating a safe learning environment. While teachers should not impose their personal beliefs on students, they should promote mutual respect and understanding. By working together, parents and teachers help ensure that religious liberty is protected while establishing harmony within the school community.

7. America's Warfighters Deserve Better: Sikhs have over five and half centuries of history, fighting religious oppression, intolerance and injustice. Sikhs understand religious liberty very clearly as ruling regimes from two major religions (Islam and Hinduism) persecuted and committed mass genocides, all to primarily erase the physical religious identity of the Sikhs. First in 1746, then in 1762 and most recently from 1984–1998, several hundred thousand young Sikh men were murdered in modern India. Sikhs recognize the right for everyone to practice their religion freely without fear. The First Amendment is inherent in the core Sikh principles.

Sikhs have served and sacrificed throughout their history in militaries, fighting for the common good, in wars around the world including WW I and WW II. Over half a million turban wearing Sikh soldiers volunteered and served in both the great wars. Over 83,000 died in battle and over 109,000 were wounded in battle while fighting to defend the liberty of the West. Not one Sikh soldier wore a helmet or abjured their faith. No one ever questioned their religious attire then, but today each and every Sikh American is put through the grinder, when entering the military. Religious accommodation is given on a case-by-case basis for an individual, rather than accepting a Sikh with his/her religious identity. This is not only hypocrisy but outright illegal as it directly violates the precepts of the First Amendment. If a man or woman's God given religious identity (for a Sikh) drives them to serve their country and be willing to die for it (which many will willingly do), then why should they check their religion at the doorstep of the military barbershop. It is little wonder that extremely few Sikh Americans apply for military service, as no one wants to be humiliated and put through the painful process of trying to get 'religious accommodation,' waiting for weeks or months while the military thinks they are doing a special favor by obliging them. The US military is missing out on thousands of fine fighting Sikh men and women simply because some politicians think that the 'Beard is Weird and Turbans are Strange'! Unfortunately, some politicians driving policy regarding 'religious liberty' have blinders on, not realizing that 'Jesus Christ' was a Middle-Eastern, brown-skinned man who as a religious prophet had a dark beard, dark long hair and wore a turban on his head. All religious heads and kings over the last few millennia wore head coverings, which were turbans. So, turbans and head coverings have always been the norm and not the exception. Western modernity created and managed to erase and whitewash the 'turban' out of Judeo-Christendom in such a way that the overwhelming majority of its own followers

today are ignorant about their own religious history and especially about the important religious attire; especially the turban(s)of their founding prophets.

The American Sikh Council (ASC) works with youth across the nation and is creating a pipeline of candidates who can get into all three military academies, but the impediments for Sikh American applicants in particular, due to the completely unnecessary 'religious accommodation' barrier, cause so much stress and embarrassment while creating the impression among the rest that some kind of special privilege is being given to Sikhs, which is completely untrue—i.e., if the principle of religious liberty is applied equally and properly to 'all'.

8. Religious Liberty for Religious Leaders: Practicing one's faith and leading the followers of each particular religion is the prerogative of every religious leader by having complete religious liberty to do so, provided it does not impinge on any other directly or indirectly.

9. First Do No Harm – Religious Liberty in Healthcare: Sikh men and women have been repeatedly subjected to humiliation when their religious rights and HIPAA rights have been violated. An unconscious (or conscious) man (or woman) who is hurt or needing medical attention—i.e., who needs a bandage on the head, face, or body or an IV on the body—must be asked permission instead of being shaved without consent. According to the Sikh Religion shaving or cutting any hair is a serious religious violation. Therefore, this is cause for much misery and hurt to the patient whose religious liberty has been violated. Very few across nation in the Healthcare services are aware of this lingering issue.

10. Conscience and Coercion in Vaccine Policy: From a Sikh perspective there is no general prohibition against vaccination. Many Sikhs therefore view vaccination as consistent with values of compassion and responsibility. At the same time, Sikhs uphold the principle of safeguarding others' rights so in that aspect, Sikhs believe everyone should have the freedom over their bodily autonomy.

11. Anti-Sikh Hate: No religion can be targeted by ethnicity, religion, religious identity, or color, etc. 'Anti-Sikh hate' is currently very high, but never tracked properly and accounted for, since local police departments most of the time do not like to post or account crimes against Sikhs as 'Hate Crimes' as it does not reflect on the township's public image and secondly, if the police department does not send the data to the FBI, it never gets accounted in the FBI's national database. As an example, since 9-11 there have been several thousand cases of hate crimes including murders but the numbers in the FBI database are negligible. There are many more reasons, but the above two are the glaring ones. Sikh American men in particular are very distinguished and highly visible due to their uncut beards and turbans covering their long uncut hair. Therefore, Sikh (men and women) are very visible and easy targets for bigots across the spectrum. Sikhs are the only major religion whose male followers in particular (and female who are formally initiated) are mandated to tie turbans over and around their head to cover their uncut hair. Additionally, turbans are not only religious attire but also very intimate personal attire.

12. Faith Under Fire in America's Houses of Worship: Langar (community kitchen) is an integral part of Sikh religious service. Sikhs welcome literally everyone into their 'gurdwaras' (houses of prayer) without proselytizing, rather using every opportunity to create camaraderie through interfaith brotherhood and sisterhood, without impinging on each other's religions for over five centuries. Sikhs worldwide, continually serve millions of meals for free not only inside gurdwaras but outside helping others at every opportunity, whether during a flood, or an earthquake, a disaster or any other calamity. United Sikhs is a large US Sikh NGO which operates worldwide providing disaster relief, to hundreds of thousands, without any bias.

13. Barriers to Religious Liberty in the Public and Private Sectors: In the public and private sector the 'glass ceiling' has been applied to many minorities but especially to Black Americans, then the Hispanic Americans, many others and then all women. But there is an existing even lower ceiling called the 'turban ceiling' which is unknown and never spoken about because there are only approximately 750,000 – One million Sikhs in America out of the population of 330 million. Sikh Americans are the largest ethno-religious community in the US which is self-employed, not because they like being self-

employed, but primarily because of the intense job-discrimination which still exists due to the physical persona of turban-wearing men (primarily) and women, who are shunned to some extent in corporate environments across the nation. There has never been a class action lawsuit brought about by Sikh Americans through the EEOC or other avenues to highlight this blatant violation, but hundreds of thousands of educated and qualified men and women suffer quietly because lawsuits are expensive, drawn out and can take their toll, therefore avoided. That does not mean that everything is okay, rather religious liberty and 'unbiased' equal opportunity are missing and are not being followed to the letter of the law.

14. The Path Forward: Moving forward many issues need to be tackled in order to make sure religious liberty actually works.

a. First, there must be unbiased application of the First Amendment.

b. Second, representatives of religious minorities, such as the Sikhs, Native Americans, Baha'is, etc., must be included in any official process with the seat at the table, without which true inclusion and understanding of religious liberty becomes a farce.

c. Third, religious liberty training must be given to employers of every sector, military, public, private, healthcare, schools, colleges, etc.

d. Fourth, religious accommodation should not be the exception but the norm, whereby a religious neophyte or follower or practitioner of any faith should not be subjected to special accommodation and humiliated, but accepted 'as is' in any workplace with his or her whole religious self being present, provided it does not impinge on their work performance in any way or shape.

e. Fifth, religious liberty underpins the spiritual well-being of those that practice their faiths diligently trying to be good upstanding humans and citizens, therefore in country that was built on people (primarily from Europe) escaping from religious persecution, today are the ruling majority have forgotten what their own forefathers went through. The formation of this Presidential Religious Liberty Commission is very timely in reminding everyone of the critical importance of making sure that the tiniest of minorities (religious and non-religious) are given absolute equal religious accommodation regardless of what may or may not fit the common norm created by society through and with the assistance of a very religiously sensitive and mature group of lawmakers.

f. Sixth, rules and laws around religious liberty must be rethought and rewritten to be in-line with actual freedom to practice one's faith in the workplace, rather than creating rules/laws which single out people like Sikh Americans who have to individually apply for special religious accommodation, making life even more difficult and stressful because of another hurdle.

We hope the input shared here will be useful and bring meaningful change to establish genuine religious liberty for all Americans, especially for minorities and those living on the margins. True acceptance occurs only when religious practitioners of any kind can bring their whole selves to the workplace without needing special religious accommodation, this should be the norm across the board, not the exception, whether it be a clean-shaven European-American man or a full-bearded, turban-wearing Sikh American. Neither should require an exception as, if the former can be accepted, then so should the latter, because both are completely normal in our society. Laws governing religious liberty cannot be based on the whim and biases of a few powerful individuals who can skew the scales in the favor of the governing majority, rather it should be based on foresight, collective strength, societal coherence through genuine respect for under-represented religious minorities, who can be the country's biggest asset if their religious identities are truly respected in every which way.

Respectfully,

Kavneet Singh

American Sikh Council (ASC)
(Formerly World Sikh Council - America Region)
[redacted]
PII
www.americansikhcouncil.org

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From: Ardie Gallant <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:49:29 -0400
Importance: Normal

I was disturbed by the report. The simplest way I can think of to get my thoughts about is PLEASE DON'T BUILD A BRIDGE. Any common sense will point to what happens when government gets involved. Even a bridge would eventually, probably sooner rather than later, turn into a wall. The bigger the distance between government and religion the better for all. Remember what FREEDOM - in this case religious freedom — means.

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

Thank you.

From: Vickie Lowe <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State.
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:49:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: JR Hennessey <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 22:56:48 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

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

union of church and state. We are concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

/s/ Rondajean Foulks

From: Temple <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:01:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

To: Dept. of Justice:

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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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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,

/s/ Jean Wrye

From: Sheryl Skinner <[redacted]>
Cc: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:17:01 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

It seems like we are sliding backwards instead of moving forward as a Protestants nation.

I believe that the government and the church has 2 distinct role. The government cannot legistrate morality or force people to worship God. Religious people and Christians are 2 different entities.

Christians are followers of Jesus who taught love and freedom of choice. Religious people believe certain things in the Bible along with their traditions and their own personal ideologies that goes against Biblical principles.

Everyone has been given the freedom of choice by the Creator God. The government should not
fund religious non-profit activities, or fund religious education and religious clubs on public campuses.

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,

Sheryl Skinner
Watertown, NY

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer

From: Barbara Christiansen <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT Separation of Church and State. Barbara Christiansen
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:28:21 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission :

I am quite disturbed by the Religious Liberty Commission's decision recently. I have seen what religion from the government looks like in the Netherlands. True religion comes from the heart.

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom statement.

The United States has enjoyed prosperity and that is partly due because we have had religious freedom in this country. This is what makes our country great. Please do not tear this down.

People need to be able to worship according to their beliefs, and to be able to teach their children what they believe without an interference from the government which Bible would be used which creed which 10 Commandments would be used?

I agree with the pillaroffaith.org statement.

Please reconsider the recent decision.

Sincerely,

Barbara Christiansen
Hager City, WI
Sent from my iPad

From: John Learned <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - DRAFT REPORT - John Learned
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:32:55 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I am disappointed that your draft report states that there should not be separation of church and state. I believe that if you look into the history of religious Liberty in this country thoroughly, you will find that this country was founded on and the founding fathers firmly believed in religious freedom and the separation of church and state. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them.

Sincerely,
John Learned

From: Janis Keener <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty Draft Report
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:34:22 -0400
Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern,

I would like to register my support for, and agreement with, Pillar of Freedom's comments and objections regarding abolishing the separation of church and state, repealing the Johnson Amendment, and allowing government funding of religious education, clubs, and activities.

I believe these actions are contrary to the founding principles of our country and the very reason for its existence.

I am a christian, but I also believe that every person should have the right to freely practice their religion -- or to choose no religion at all -- according to their own conscience. Matters of faith are deeply personal and should never be dictated by the government or by anyone other than the individual.

Thank you for considering my comments.

With Respect,
Janis Keener

From: Carolina D[redacted]
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:39:15 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would ask the Department of Justice in its formulation of public guidance on the separation of church and state to remember the religious persecutions carried out at the behest of John Calvin in Geneva against religious dissenters such as Michael Servetus, who paid with his life for his writings and teachings.

Servetus was executed by a union of church and state. We are concerned at the public statements of those who would create such a system in America. [5]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Carolina D.

[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: Calvin Fischer <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Recommendations to Religious Liberty Commision
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:41:16 -0400
Importance: Normal
Attachments: To_the_DOJ.pdf

Please refer to the attached letter, thank you.

FORCE IS THE LAST RESORT OF EVERY FALSE RELIGION!

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS TO 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 I and others 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.

To begin with, I would like to make this observation about the Constitution of the United States. I am hearing it said more and more that the Constitution makes no statement pertaining to the separation of church and state. In Article. V. I wish to quote the following: "The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified…."

Next I would like to refer to Amendment I. "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 got petition the Government for a redress of grievances." This Amendment was ratified effective December 15, 1791.

Putting Article V together with Amendment I, this principle clearly denies the Government the right to make a law restricting, prohibiting, promoting, or requiring any religious observance, in other words, this Amendment I creates a separation of functions of the church and the State, where neither encroaches upon the other.

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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I sincerely sign this with the expectation that it will be give due attention by you, the Department of Justice, and that you will rule according to our Constitution of these United States,

Calvin J. Fischer _____

[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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[8] James Madison, Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments
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[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: Maria Nebblett <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:41:28 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. Please implement them. I oppose the findings of the commission. Being an immigrant from Cuba, living in the US since 1970, I experienced personally how important separation of church and state is for the protection of everyone's freedoms. Please protect that separation!
Gratefully,
Maria Nebblett
Sent from my iPhone

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:53:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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

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

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

The reference to the wall of separation between church and state is not only mentioned by President Thomas Jefferson in the letter to the Danbury Baptists, which, of course, it is. [6] What is often left out of the narrative is that Jefferson said that he personally believed that the principle of the separation of church and state is codified in the Constitution. Therein, Jefferson wrote: "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their

legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State." [7]

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

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

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

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

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

We remain, Yours truly,

Carrie Vance (USA)

From: Dawn Sauerwein <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:59:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

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

From: Phoebe Hines <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission (A Statement on Religious Liberty and Christian Faith)
Date: Mon, 13 Jul 2026 23:59:11 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the White House Religious Liberty Commission,

I am writing to express my appreciation for your work in examining and preserving religious liberty in the United States. As a Christian, I believe that religious freedom is a fundamental human right that reflects the God-given dignity and conscience of every person.

My faith teaches me that genuine belief cannot be compelled by force. The freedom to worship, pray, share one's beliefs, and live according to deeply held religious convictions is essential not only for Christians but for people of all faiths and backgrounds. Religious liberty allows individuals and communities to practice their beliefs peacefully while contributing positively to society.

I am concerned about the challenges that arise when religious freedom is weakened or restricted. Without robust protections for religious liberty, individuals may be pressured to act against their conscience, faith communities may face limitations on their ability to serve others according to their beliefs, and public discourse may become less tolerant of differing viewpoints. History demonstrates that societies flourish when people are free to practice their faith without fear of discrimination, coercion, or government interference.

Religious freedom also strengthens social harmony by encouraging mutual respect among citizens with diverse beliefs. Protecting this freedom ensures that people of faith can participate fully in civic life while remaining true to their convictions.

As a Christian, I believe that religious liberty is not merely a legal principle but a moral one. It safeguards the ability of individuals to seek truth, worship God according to their conscience, and serve their communities with integrity. I encourage the Commission to continue defending these freedoms and to ensure that religious liberty remains a cornerstone of American life.

Thank you for your service and for considering my perspective.

Respectfully,

Phoebe Hines
Avon Park, FL

From: April Moss <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT - anti-semitism - April Moss
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 00:02:30 -0400
Importance: Normal

Hello. I appreciate this effort to secure our religious freedoms. I have a concern about the suggestions concerning anti-semitism however. I do not believe that the government should police this issue. To join with the FBI or any government agency or develop a task force to look for anti-semitic activities is an overreach of power that can be too easily abused.

Sincerely,
April Moss

From: Kory Meidell <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment (Separation of Church of State) Kory Meidell
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 00:10:06 -0400
Importance: Normal

What has made America Great? Liberty to practice religious freedom as according to one's best understanding.

The intentions of the religious liberty commission may be pure. Indeed, many of the recommendations are good. And yet there are "blind spots" evident when suggesting that the government has a place in religion and the church. How many of the pioneers risked it all to come to this land primarily out of desire to escape a sword held by a state hand which was informed by specific religious views?

In Russia in 2025, I was arrested and convicted of breaking their "religious freedom" laws, for giving away a little tract with Bible verses and commentary on Bible subjects. How is it that laws supposed to support religious freedom, end up actually repressing that liberty? As soon governments enter the arena of endorsing a certain religion or denomination, then by default, it suppresses whatever is not deemed orthodoxy. Therefore, in Russia, anything not orthodox is condemned. Religious freedom there, means freedom to never hear another perspective, even another Christian perspective. Free speech becomes the next of the liberty dominoes to immediately fall next. To lighten the mood, I jokingly asked "how much time in Siberia are we talking here?" referring to my punishment for telling another person of the saving power of Jesus Christ. I got cold stares in response. They were dead serious. Thankfully, in previous interrogations, the FSB decided that I was not a threat, and actually advocated for a lighter sentence for me. Instead of the fate of other Christians who had been imprisoned for similar actions, I was allowed to pay a fine. If I couldn't pay it in cash right then and there, then prison was my destination also. Thankfully, God worked a miracle, and someone paid my fine in the few hours of the day remaining. I was allowed to go free. Only two days later "free" meant having tails everywhere I went, then "random" traffic stops and more arrests and interrogations. All this because I shared pieces of paper with different perspectives than the Russian Orthodox.

What guarantee to prevent similar events here in America, does this commission believe it can offer, when it follows some of the same paths of Russia and so many countries that lack God given liberty? Does this commission believe it can deny the most obvious conclusion from the evidence of tens of centuries of the most grotesque violations of human rights done by those who genuinely believed they were carrying out good policy which were based upon united church state philosophy?

Russia is far from the only country to oppress people who share non "approved" views. India, China, and Turkey, are a few countries that I have the same type of concerns with, when there. Do we really want policies that would make America, which by following Biblical principles of liberty became the greatest achievement of humanity, into another instance where the government failed by naively abandoning principles of freedom in exchange for religious control?

What makes Muslim states so problematic? Is it not a church state union?
What makes socialist states so problematic? When it's understood that socialism is a species of religion, is it not also the problem of a form of church state union?

Best intentions cannot out-do best principals. Government control cannot change the natural human heart into righteousness, only God can do that. Does this commission believe it can fulfill the roles and prerogatives that God alone is worthy of?

From: Rita Whightsil <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Draft Report of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission, June 2026
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 00:28:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

America fought for religious freedom from Europe 250 years ago.

I request that the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced.

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

Thank you for your consideration,

Cindy Hough
[redacted]

From: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – [Draft Report] – [Presidential Religious Liberty Commission]
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 00:56:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

Please refer to the Pillar of Freedom's comments and take all of them into account. Do not weaken the separation between church and state as it is historically what has made our country great. Countries that are in a world of hurt right now are those that try to mingle organized religion and state (Iran, Afghanistan). History has shown in the past the dangers of collusion between church and state in Europe and these dangers are what lead to the founding of our country with its freedoms.

I am a church-going member and I object to the government funding religious non-profit activities. I object to the government funding religious education and religious clubs on public campuses. I object to repealing the Johnson Amendment, which restricts church's political activities, and request that the Johnson Amendment be fully enforced. I desire complete neutrality in the government's relationship with religion.

My comments would be more organized if it were not for the fact that I just learned of the proposed changes of the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission today and the deadline for comments today.

From: Heather <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Recommendations of Religious Liberty Commission
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 01:03:00 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Department of Justice, I am writing to comment on the recent report made by the Religious Liberty Commission. I love my country and the freedoms it offers. One of those freedoms I appreciate the most is the freedom to worship according to my conscience and how God desires. I have the peace of knowing that I may bring my children up to live and serve God. I can worship each week with like minded believers.
But I am concerned that my freedoms may be restricted if the church and state do not remain separated. Please consider carefully and prayerfully the following letter, which I agree with completely.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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,"

[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://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=2f92a977-4a224cf7-2f958d92-74fe486959fc-b5436c19db801b9d&q=1&e=d8a70cbf-afb9-4b79-9870-a11573658097&u=https%3A%2F%2Freclaimthenet.org%2Fpope-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://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=061a44cf-63aaa14f-061d602a-74fe486959fc-8952ff6fce23bae1&q=1&e=d8a70cbf-afb9-4b79-9870-a11573658097&u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.masshist.org%2Fpublications%2Fadams-papers%2Findex.php%2Fview%2FPJA01dg2
Sent from my iPhone

From: M Appeal <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 01:19:19 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Presidential Commission on Religious Liberty,

I support the document submitted by
Pillar of Freedom.

Our country deserves to honor the foundation it was built on. Let us never forget that government should never control religious groups.

Sincerely,

Glenn Hansen

From: James Aldrich <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Establishment Clause – James E Aldrich
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 01:40:27 -0400
Importance: Normal

To the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am writing as a private citizen from College Place, Washington, because I believe the two religion clauses of the First Amendment are not in tension but are a single principle, and I want to explain why I think any commission recommendation touching religion must respect that. A law favoring religion is not a gift to believers; it is a precedent that will outlive the majority that wrote it. Once government concedes that religion is a proper subject of legislation, everything else becomes a contest over who holds power next. A. T. Jones put this to a Senate committee in the plainest terms: "It is impossible to frame a law on the subject of religion that will not prohibit the free exercise of religion." Any such law must define the religion it favors, and any definition excludes someone. Jones went further and said that even a believer who welcomes a law favoring his own faith has robbed himself of the free exercise of it, because he has traded the liberty to keep searching for truth for a legislature's permission to hold his current views. He would have opposed a law enforcing his own day of worship as firmly as one enforcing anyone else's, and that consistency is the test I would ask this Commission to apply to itself.

I also ask the Commission to weigh what state sponsorship does to religion itself, not only to dissenters. Coercion can fill a pew; it cannot put belief in a heart. Forcing outward observance, one of these older tracts warns, "will not make Christians of them; it is possible it might make hypocrites of many, but Christians of none." History bears this out on a large scale: Madison surveyed fifteen centuries of establishment and found the fruits to be "pride and indolence in the clergy; ignorance and servility in the laity; in both superstition, bigotry, and persecution." A faith worth having must be worth professing without government help; as one writer put it, a religion "not of sufficient value in itself to pay men for professing it" is not worth the state's support either. Grant's own counsel still seems right to me: leave religion to the family, the church, and private choice, and keep church and state forever separate.

I would also urge the Commission to remember that rights protected by our Constitution do not originate in popular vote. If a majority can grant religious liberty, a majority can revoke it, and then it was never a right at all. Our founding theory holds that conscience answers first to the Creator, and that constitutional government exists especially to protect the minority from the majority, since the majority can already protect itself at the polls. Jones told the Senate committee, "the people, I care not how many there are, have no right to invade your relationship to God, nor mine." A congressional report from 1829 said the Constitution regards the conscience of a single dissenter as sacred as that of the whole community. Popular support may justify a highway; it cannot justify a religious policy, because religion was never submitted to a vote.

Finally, I would ask the Commission to consider the pattern of history studied in The Two Republics: Constantine's first Sunday law, issued while he still held a pagan priestly office, filled the church with converts of convenience, drew the state into settling religious quarrels, and ended in the Inquisition. The Donatist controversy taught a hard constitutional lesson, that a government which takes sides in religion loses the very peace it exists to keep. The mechanism was not accidental. As Jones wrote, "if the first step be taken, the last step is then as certainly taken; for the last step is in the first." No one today proposes anything like the Inquisition, but no one ever proposes it at the first step either. The danger is not that a mild measure today equals the last step; it is that the last step is already contained in conceding that government may define and promote religious duty.

Protect free exercise for all, and keep the state out of the business of religion. The two commitments stand or fall together.

Respectfully,
James E Aldrich
College Place, WA

From: KT Carter-T-D <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Cc: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 01:47:09 -0400
Importance: Normal

Download Attachment
Available until Aug 12, 2026

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (via email)

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

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

Unfortunately, the Committee makes no mention of the censorship in this context of Galileo and Kepler, Kant and Locke, John Milton and Maimonedes, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, David Hume and Edward Gibbon, and many others, all at the behest of the Roman Papacy, which is itself the epitome of 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 petition and request 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 OUR 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, as well.

The Roman Church was not alone in this persecution, either. We would respectfully petition and request 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 petition and request, 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 ***dis****establishment 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, and 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.

Respectfully submitted,

DKTCTD, Citizen by birth of the United States of America, and Great, Great Grandchild of Citizens of the United States of America

P. S.: Pertinent hereto (and attached immediately hereinbelow) is a downloadable file specific to the nature of the instant issues at hand. Note that the nature of this file changed the course of history, similar to what is presently attempted. May God grant its readers wisdom from above, and not the "wisdom" or foolishness of mere mortal man:

The following excerpt by Alonzo T. jones (A.T. Jones) also addressed the subject issues presented hereinabove before Congressional Hearings in 1888. His position changed the course of history and defeated, in essence, the same issues attempting to usurp the authority of God.

Click to Download
Religious Liberty Library - No. 04 - The National Sunday Law (1892) 2.pdf
0 bytes

[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: Erin Bilvado <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RequestUphold separation of church and state / Critical to the strength of our democracy
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 02:11:43 -0400
Importance: Normal

As a citizen of the United States, I respectfully urge you to uphold and protect the longstanding principle of the separation of church and state—a cornerstone of our nation's founding and constitutional democracy. This principle has helped preserve religious freedom, protect individual rights, and ensure that government serves all citizens, regardless of faith or belief. It also ensures that elected officials and employees of the government do not let religious direct government decisions/actions, which are governed by the constitution and the laws of this nation. Maintaining this separation is essential to safeguarding our democratic institutions and reinforcing America's leadership as a model of freedom and pluralism.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to upholding the principles upon which our nation was founded going back to our Founding Father’s. Thank you so much.

Erin Bilvado

[redacted]

From: Shaw Deiago <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: PUBLIC COMMENT: Separation of Church and State: Deiago Shaw
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 03:58:52 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

I am not a citizen of the United States, but I am an admirer. As a citizen of another country, I must state how disappointed I am in this move by the U.S. government. The U.S. is a trendsetter; whenever it does something, the rest of the world follows. This move can be dangerous for Christians overseas, as well as for fellow Americans who reside in non-Christian countries such as China, India, the Middle East, and Muslim nations. For instance, a Christian Saudi citizen living in Saudi Arabia would not survive if his country were to carry out such a thing, given the beliefs of the Muslim leaders there.For over 70 years, the U.S. has been a beacon of freedom. To see this change implies that freedom, both in the States and worldwide, will become reminiscent of a bygone era—when freedom was only a fragment of the imagination.

The bridge to unite church and state should not be encouraged. Looking back at early U.S. history, the Puritans who fled Europe to escape persecution tried to create a society that favored their own religion. Yet, with the arrival of Christians from other denominations, they began to persecute their fellow Christian brothers and sisters. The once-persecuted became the persecutors. This is what happens when you unite church and state, because there will always be beliefs and views that those in power do not share with Christians of different denominations. If we are to be frank, it was Jesus who said that we are not to strike others, but rather turn the other cheek; thus, to strike someone else for their views is considered a sin.

Whenever governments have a stake in churches, they usually put their own best interests first, which more often than not goes contrary to the words of God. Furthermore, when leaders have a change of heart upon receiving office and a favor is owed, they may be required to go against their conscience and the word of God.

Please keep church and state separate. Today, I trust your intentions are hopefully pure, but this move in the hands of the wrong person—over whom we have no control over who that will be in the future—will decimate the world and the freedoms we enjoy today.

Sincerely,

On Mon, 13 Jul 2026 at 16:53, Shaw Deiago <[redacted]> wrote:

> Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission:
>
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>
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because there will always be beliefs and views that those in power do not share with Christians of different denominations. If we are to be frank, it was Jesus who said that we are not to strike others, but rather turn the other cheek; thus, to strike someone else for their views is considered a sin.

Whenever governments have a stake in churches, they usually put their own best interests first, which more often than not goes contrary to the words of God. Furthermore, when leaders have a change of heart upon receiving office and a favor is owed, they may be required to go against their conscience and the word of God.

Please keep church and state separate. Today, I trust your intentions are hopefully pure, but this move in the hands of the wrong person—over whom we have no control over who that will be in the future—will decimate the world and the freedoms we enjoy today.

Sincerely,
Deiago Shaw

Kingston, Jamaica

From: Tirza Young <[redacted]>
To: [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT – Separation of Church and State – Tirza Young
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 04:57:05 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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. I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. The separation of church and state is paramount to religious freedom for all, as established by our nation's founding fathers.

Churches or other religious nonprofit organizations that take government money or step into partisan politics become loyal to the source of their funding, which leads to the corruption of politics and compromising of religious beliefs. Separation of church and state was first put in place by people of faith, who had endured religious persecution at the hand of the state, to protect faith, and it's the reason religion has stayed strong here. Please keep church and state separate. That is how we keep both of them free.

Sincerely,
Tirza Young
Fredericktown, Ohio

From: Oneka Hicken <oneka.hicken@gmail.com>
To: "RLC@usdoj.gov" <RLC@usdoj.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Separation of Church and State
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 08:47:46 -0400
Importance: Normal

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

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

Oneka Hicken
City of Lake Worth

From: Joey Casanova <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Separation of Church and State
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 10:36:14 -0400
Importance: Normal

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Joey Casanova** <[redacted]>
Date: Mon, Jul 13, 2026 at 8:13 PM
Subject: Separation of Church and State
To: <[redacted]>

RLC,

Hello may the God of Heaven bless you and our great nation as it has for the last two hundred and fifty years and I hope that this does not change. But I see a change coming because what I am understanding and hearing from you all, is that there shouldn't be a separation of church and state. When this is precisely what has made our country great, the freedom to worship whomever and as our conscience tells us. Maybe we aren't all interested in worshiping God but that's what I like about God He says in His word "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with Me" (Revelation 3: 20). You see God does not force His way in or for that matter anyone to worship Him, it is a choice to serve Him, your choice. He gives us free will to do as we want. And, I love that about God it is my choice. So I plead with you to keep these two entities separate for another two hundred and fifty years if possible. Although I don't think you will because you don't seem to understand Scripture. God offers salvation only to those who want it and He pressures no one ever it's a free choice for us to make. So, I ask you all to prayerfully commit to the Lord for His answer on this matter. May God Bless you my brethren.

A follower of Christ Jesus
Jose Casanova

From: Steve Mord <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Church & State
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 11:26:36 -0400
Importance: Normal

I agree with the Pillar of Freedom comments.
In God We Trust
Steve Mord

From: Lynn Carrillo <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 11:33:07 -0400
Importance: Normal

I am writing to respectfully object to Recommendations 1 and 9 because they fail to acknowledge the historical reasons for the disestablishment of religion and the constitutional principles articulated by our nation's Founders.

The American commitment to religious liberty was born from hard-earned historical experience. James Madison, often called the "Father of the Constitution," consistently argued for a strong separation between religion and government, warning of the dangers of ecclesiastical influence over civil authority. Likewise, Thomas Jefferson, in his letter to the Danbury Baptists, described the First Amendment as "building a wall of separation between Church and State," emphasizing that the legitimate powers of government extend to actions, not opinions or matters of conscience.

History provides sobering examples of what can occur when church and state become intertwined. William Tyndale was executed for translating the Bible into English. The Roman Catholic Church's Index Librorum Prohibitorum suppressed books and ideas, while figures such as Galileo and Johannes Kepler faced censorship. Michael Servetus was burned at the stake in Calvin's Geneva. Obadiah Holmes was publicly whipped in Puritan Massachusetts for practicing his faith, William Penn was repeatedly imprisoned, and Roger Williams was banished for advocating religious liberty. These examples demonstrate that religious persecution has often arisen from alliances between religious and civil authorities, not from governmental neutrality toward religion.

Such unions have historically corrupted both church and state while suppressing freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and liberty of conscience.

I am particularly concerned about Recommendation 9 regarding the Johnson Amendment. Jesus taught, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21), recognizing distinct roles for civil government and matters of faith. Madison likewise observed that separating church and state increased the number, industry, morality, and devotion of both clergy and congregants by allowing religion to flourish free from political influence.

Removing the Johnson Amendment would create incentives for religious leaders seeking political influence and politicians seeking religious endorsements to exchange support, votes, and favorable legislation. Such arrangements risk corrupting both religious institutions and government, echoing John Adams' warning about the dangers of uniting ecclesiastical and civil power.

Most importantly, worship is a matter of individual conscience and free choice. God Himself grants humanity the freedom to choose whether to love and worship Him. Genuine faith cannot be compelled by law or government. Many of America's founders and early settlers came to this country seeking refuge from religious persecution, and history repeatedly demonstrates that when church and state are joined, religious liberty suffers.

Our Constitution protects both religious freedom and governmental neutrality because these principles preserve the integrity of both institutions. Maintaining that balance remains essential to safeguarding the liberties that have benefited people of every faith—and those of none.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,

Lynn Carrillo

From: Glenda Hammond <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Religious Liberty Commission Report-[your name]
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 13:50:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

The principle of separation of church and state stands as a fundamental pillar of our democratic society, vital for safeguarding individual liberties and ensuring equitable governance. This doctrine is rooted in the understanding that government must maintain strict neutrality in matters of religion, thereby protecting both the freedom of individuals to practice their chosen faith without interference and the equally important freedom from being compelled to support or adhere to any specific belief system. Upholding this crucial separation prevents the imposition of religious dogma on public policy, fosters a truly inclusive environment where diverse convictions can coexist peacefully, and ultimately fortifies the foundations of a just and pluralistic nation.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

From: Antonio Huerta <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment: Separation of Church and State
Date: Tue, 14 Jul 2026 17:05:19 -0400
Importance: Normal

These two must remain separate. We need to have our full rights protected.

From: vincent cherry <[redacted]>
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Wed, 15 Jul 2026 14:02:20 -0400
Importance: Normal

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Via EMAIL: [redacted]

RE: RECOMMENDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We respectfully request, therefore, that the Department of Justice not adopt recommendations 1 and 9 of the Committee and that it adopt recommendation 1 of the Committee that it convene a public hearing, with written and oral submissions from the public, to more comprehensively study the

question of the separation of church and state in history, and in American history in particular, a study which we would enthusiastically support.

We remain, Yours truly,

From: Fran Janis <[redacted]>
To: "[redacted]" <[redacted]>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pillar of Freedom - Separation of Church and State/SENDING AGAIN!!!
Date: Wed, 15 Jul 2026 17:55:54 -0400
Importance: Normal

I SENT THIS IN ON MONDAY, AND IT CAME BACK TO ME UNDELIVERABLE!! SO HERE GOES AGAIN!!

"I agree with Pillar of Freedom's comments. And want my name added to this letter.

I agree that Church & State need to be separate. I've lived in the US for 82 years and born & raised. I want to continue enjoying my Religious Freedom as it is very special to me. I do not agree with the proposal that President Trump has drawn up. Please do not take away our Religious Freedoms!!

I'm praying about this and for our Nation, under Liberty for **all!**

Sincerely**,**

Frances Janis