

DEFEND OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The Constitution of the United States grants all American citizens the right of religious liberty. It specifically mentions freedom of religion, not freedom from religion. Inherent to every American is the free exercise of religion without retribution, restriction, or restraint. No cultural movement or government officials should be able to coerce compliance when it goes against personal religious conscience and freedom.

In the past few years, religious beliefs, expressions, and convictions have been under a constant barrage and are quickly being outlawed and erased.

Government agencies, universities, businesses, and other entities have targeted the precious freedoms that millions of Americans hold dear. Look no further than the Supreme Court case involving Coach Joe Kennedy, a high school football coach who was fired for post-game silent prayers on the 50-yard line. Thankfully, the Supreme Court overruled the lower court's decision to uphold the denial of Coach Kennedy's religious freedom. But more cases regarding religious freedom are likely to come up in the near future.

The radical Left has created a culture in which it is deemed permissible to infringe on religious freedom. As a result, prayers are no longer welcome at school or on sports fields. Senior citizens and college students have been rebuffed for holding Bible studies and prayer meetings in common-access activity rooms. And, for months during the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals were not permitted to gather to worship their God in their own churches.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity for power-hungry federal officials and governors to unilaterally shutter houses of worship for months. At the same time, liquor stores, casinos, abortion clinics, and other genuinely nonessential

businesses were allowed to remain open. Many leaders cited public safety concerns while brashly persecuting those seeking to express their constitutional right to religious freedom.

America carries a deep-rooted moral and social responsibility to uphold and defend religious freedom domestically and abroad. Unfortunately, the current administration has refused to shine a light on religious persecution throughout the world, which has diminished America's example and legacy as a global harbinger of democracy and freedom. As America moves forward, it must always remain a safe haven for all to exercise faith free of government oppression and undue prohibition.

THE FACTS

- ★ More than 80% of the world's population lives in countries where religious liberty is threatened, restricted, or banned.
- ★ 81% of Americans believe Coach Joe Kennedy should not have been fired for silently praying after football games in Bremerton, Washington.
- ★ 64% believe military personnel should not be fired from their jobs for declining the COVID-19 vaccine.
- ★ 44% think the American legal system is hostile to religious expression.
- ★ 64% would side with their beliefs over the government.
- ★ 55% think teachers should be allowed to lead prayer in public schools.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Oppose any government or employer medical

mandates that violate the ability of religious believers and organizers to act, or not act, in accordance with their personal convictions and core values.

- ★ Ensure uninterrupted access and the ability to practice one's faith in a place of worship no matter the circumstances happening in the world, including pandemics.
- ★ Vigorously enforce the federal law's robust protections for religious freedom and conscience protection.
- ★ Advocate for judicial nominees who hold an originalist constitutional philosophy and defend and uphold the importance of the First Amendment, specifically the right of religious freedom.
- ★ Protect houses of worship and faith-based groups from being forced to hire employee candidates who disagree with their tenets and convictions.

REFERENCES

- AFPI's Constitutional Litigation Partnership files lawsuit with Alliance for Free Citizens to challenge Biden Administration's unconstitutional OSHA vaccine mandate, America First Policy Institute (Nov. 2021).
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- Motion of the America First Policy Institute, United States District Court, Northern District of Texas, Fort Worth Division for leave to file brief amicus curiae, America First Policy Institute (Nov. 2021).
- On 400th anniversary of Thanksgiving, the Biden Administration attempts to destroy religious freedom by Bethany Kozma, America First Policy Institute (Nov. 2021).
- Vaccine Update: Religious Exemption Database by Garrison Grisedale, America First Policy Institute (Feb. 2022).