

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.

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DEFEND OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS

Our Founding Fathers understood it was critical for our Constitution to recognize the right to self-defense, one of the first laws of nature. Throughout U.S. history, the individual right to keep and bear arms has remained as a means of resistance and self-preservation against the volatile threat of tyranny. Today, the Second Amendment is under attack as the radical Left continues to chip away at the important rights it enshrined for all American citizens.

During the last two years, pandemics, riots, and an increase in violent crime have caused millions of Americans to gain a new appreciation for the Second Amendment's role in preserving life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Thirteen million Americans became new gun owners during this period, and many now recognize the importance of being able to protect themselves during uncertain times.

The previous administration wasted no time reversing policies that infringed upon Americans' Second Amendment rights. In 2018, the President signed the Fix NICS Act, improving the government's ability to enforce existing gun laws without creating a greater burden for the average gun owner. And all three Supreme Court Justices appointed between 2017 and 2020 concurred in a landmark decision affirming Americans' right to carry firearms in public for self-defense.

Unfortunately, the current administration is hostile to the notion of an armed citizenry in its own country. The administration has collected nearly one billion records of law-abiding Americans' firearm purchases, and the collection and storage of these records could one day be used to confiscate Americans' privately-owned firearms.

Most recently, President Biden signed into law a bill

that bribes states to adopt their own legislation enacting what are commonly known as "red flag laws," or Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO). These orders enable judges to have an individual's guns confiscated, merely on the suspicion that they are a danger to themselves or others. If not properly constructed, red flag laws not only infringe on the Second Amendment, but they also neglect due process, punishing you for a crime you did not commit and declaring you guilty until proven innocent.

Additionally, the current administration has proposed rules that would alter the legal definitions of firearms — turning millions of Americans into felons overnight — without the approval of Congress. On any policy issue, it is the legislative branch, not executive agencies and bureaucrats, that is entrusted with lawmaking. The repeated calls from many on the Left for universal background checks and bans on commonly owned firearms and accessories from many on the Left have demonstrated their contempt for the Second Amendment — and just how little they know about modern firearms. These measures and others will not reduce gun violence. They will only disarm and penalize innocent Americans. This view is supported by research, including a Department of Justice-funded 2004 study of the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban.

Our Nation must stay committed to ensuring that the right to keep and bear arms is not eroded into a privilege of a few. Policies that embrace this right as a virtue of our Republic are needed to guarantee that the American people can exercise their full constitutional liberties.

THE FACTS

- ★ 46% of American adults have a gun in their households.
- ★ One in five American households purchased a gun between March 2020 and March 2022.
- ★ In a separate poll, more than one in three American adults say that they or someone in their household owns a gun.
 - Of those Americans, 61% say they feel safer because someone in their household owns a gun.
- ★ One-third of gun owners have used a firearm to defend themselves or their property.
- ★ 30% of gun owners—approximately 24.6 million individuals—have owned an AR-15 or similarly styled rifle.
- ★ Americans use their firearms defensively more than half a million times each year, according to an estimate by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Encourage “constitutional carry” and concealed carry reciprocity across all 50 states.
- ★ Oppose “red flag laws” and ERPOs without abundant due process protections that provide individuals with the swift ability to challenge any order that may deprive them of their constitutional rights.
- ★ Oppose efforts that target law-abiding gun owners in limiting when, where, and/or with what weapon they can defend themselves.
- ★ Restrain the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) from abusing their powers, and from complicating the lives of gun owners, dealers, and manufacturers with onerous rules.
- ★ Pursue litigation against existing laws including, but not limited to, bans on commonly owned firearms and accessories that are clear infringements on Americans’ Second Amendment rights.

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STOP BIG TECH FROM ENCROACHING ON OUR FREE SPEECH

Social media technology has given Americans a public voice like they never had before. Americans increasingly follow the news, debate current events, and keep in touch with friends online. Unfortunately, Big Tech is using its ownership of America's communications infrastructure to control America's public discourse and silence viewpoints that conflict with its agenda.

Big Tech censorship affects millions of Americans. Nearly half of Americans say they personally know someone who has been temporarily or permanently banned from a social media platform. And more than 100,000 Americans reported cases of online censorship to the America First Policy Institute in 2021. Three-quarters of Americans now believe Big Tech companies intentionally censor views they dislike. It is not hard to see why. Big Tech prominently deplatformed President Trump but continues to host several murderous dictators, including Vladimir Putin.

This online censorship is a serious threat to free speech. Major corporations should not get to decide who can speak online or what they can say. Unfortunately, federal law protects this censorship to some extent. Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act was passed to protect minors from obscenity online, but many courts have interpreted Section 230 to protect platforms from liability when they take down any content.

The best solution is to require Big Tech platforms to act as common carriers to receive Section 230 protections. Common carriers such as telephone companies must accept all customers without discrimination, and they cannot deny Americans service because they do not like their phone conversations. The courts have long held that common carrier

requirements are compatible with the First Amendment.

Online platforms can be similarly prohibited from viewpoint-based discrimination. Congress can certainly condition Section 230 protections on major platforms not censoring their users. If Congress does not act, the Federal Communications Commission could unilaterally narrow Section 230 protections for platforms that engage in "bad faith" content moderation.

However, under the current administration, the federal government seems unlikely to protect online free speech. The White House has openly admitted that it is asking social media platforms to remove what the administration deems "misinformation."

In the absence of federal action, states can combat online censorship. The America First Policy Institute has developed model state legislation that would regulate major social media platforms as common carriers. The model legislation protects citizens from deplatforming and viewpoint-based discrimination, and it is designed to be consistent with the First Amendment and Section 230. States that want to act can prevent Big Tech from censoring their residents.

THE FACTS

- ★ 73% of Americans believe social media sites intentionally censor viewpoints they find objectionable.
- ★ 46% of Americans personally know someone who was temporarily or permanently banned on social media.
- ★ More than 100,000 Americans reported cases of online censorship to the America First Policy Institute in 2021.

- ★ 65% of Americans believe people should be able to freely express their views on social media, including views that others find offensive.
- ★ The Twitter accounts of Vladimir Putin, Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban Spokesman of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Ayatollah Khamenei of Iran, Bashar al- Assad of Syria, and Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro all remain active, while former President Trump’s account remains banned.
- ★ YouTube’s “Elections Misinformation Policy” prohibits posting “Content that advances false claims that widespread fraud, errors, or glitches changed the outcome of any past U.S. presidential election.”
 - However, YouTube has not taken down numerous videos in which Hillary Clinton claims the 2016 election was stolen from her. For example, a YouTube video in which Hillary Clinton says, “Trump knows he’s an illegitimate president,” remains active.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Allow major social media platforms to receive Section 230 legal protections only if they act as common carriers—companies that accept all customers without discrimination.
- ★ Issue regulations from the Federal Communications Commission that narrow Section 230 protections for companies that engage in bad faith content moderation.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Regulate major social media platforms as common carriers.

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HONOR THE SANCTITY OF EVERY INNOCENT HUMAN LIFE

The Founding Fathers established our Nation with the belief that our Creator endows every human being with the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Today, this reverence and respect for human life, a cornerstone of any civilization, is under relentless attack. However, with the recent decision by the Supreme Court to overrule *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, America has arrived at a critical inflection point. In its decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, the Supreme Court pushed the issue of abortion rightfully back to the states, presenting an opportunity for ‘we the people’ to pass state legislation protecting life.

Seventy-one percent of Americans believe that abortion should be illegal in most or all cases after the first trimester. Additionally, more than 65% of Americans believe that abortion-related laws should be left to individual states to legislate.

However, progressive politicians who are out of touch with American values continue to advocate for unrestricted abortions. The United States Senate recently held a vote in which 49 Senators voted to extend no-limits abortion to all 50 states. It is currently legal in six states plus the District of Columbia. And a radical movement is seeking to extend traditional abortion to infanticide. In Maryland, proposed legislation would allow for infanticide up to 28 days following the child’s birth.

At the same time, the Biden Administration has required American taxpayers to use their hard-earned paychecks to unwillingly fund abortions, even when many of them strongly oppose the practice because of their religious beliefs. This requirement conflicts with the Hyde Amendment, which was specifically created following the *Roe v. Wade* decision to prevent taxpayer dollars from funding abortion services.

A 2022 poll shows that a majority of Americans

oppose surrendering their hard-earned taxpayer dollars to fund abortions. Furthermore, “Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Americans either “oppose” or “strongly oppose” using tax dollars to support abortion abroad, including 59% who self-identify as pro-choice.”

The original Hyde Amendment applied to Medicaid-funded abortions and contained only a limited exception if the mother’s life was in jeopardy. In subsequent years, Congress expanded the Hyde Amendment’s language protecting taxpayers from financing abortions. The language now includes additional funding streams such as TRICARE, the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, and the Peace Corps.

Since the amendment’s original enactment in 1976, American presidents have maintained Hyde Amendment provisions in their federal budget proposals every year. Unfortunately, the Biden Administration has broken decades of precedent by excluding the Hyde Amendment from its federal budget proposal, instead calling for direct taxpayer funding for abortions both domestically and abroad.

Despite the overwhelming push of the media, the progressive movement, and the executive branch, the message from the radical pro-abortion agenda is not winning. Instead, the anti-life coalition has experienced a sharp decline in nationwide support for unrestricted abortions in recent years.

THE FACTS

- ★ 71% of Americans agree that abortion should be illegal in most or all cases after the first trimester.
- ★ Three-quarters of Americans believe that “doctors, nurses, or other healthcare professionals who have religious objections to abortion should not be forced to perform them.”
- ★ A majority of Americans believe organizations that

have religious objections to abortion should not be legally required to provide insurance coverage for abortion.

- ★ 73% of Americans either “oppose” or “strongly oppose” using tax dollars to support abortion abroad.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ End all federal funding that supports Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers, domestically and globally.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Redirect funding to crisis pregnancy resource centers to promote term delivery and life.
- ★ Directly protect the life of the unborn by ending late- term abortions, and require all health centers to provide and educate on all options that promote life, including adoption.
- ★ Require ultrasounds prior to any abortion for accurate pregnancy dating, including chemical abortion accessed through telemedicine or in-person visits.
- ★ Ensure parental consent for any pregnancy-related medical support or activity for women under the age of 18 (minors).

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DEFEND FEMALE ATHLETES AND PRESERVE FAIRNESS IN WOMEN'S SPORTS

American women and girls, including our female athletes, deserve a fair chance to work hard to pursue their dreams. Allowing biological men to dominate women's sports accomplishes the opposite of fairness and undermines female achievement, thereby disincentivizing female athletes from working hard to reach their goals. This unfair movement by the Left undercuts the essence of our longstanding American tradition: hard work, determination, and honesty.

In January 2021, the Biden Administration issued an executive order expanding the longstanding definition of "sex" to encompass more than purely biological males and females. The expanded definition now includes abstract concepts such as "gender identity" that have particular impacts on competitive women's sports. Camouflaging the order as an initiative to "combat discrimination," the current administration's federal policy harms female athletes and robs them of athletic opportunity by blurring biological truths. Additionally, some governors have even vetoed state legislation that would ensure fairness in women's sports.

The most prominent example of the consequences of these actions is swimmer Lia Thomas, who made recent history as the first transgender woman to win an NCAA swimming championship. After competing on the University of Pennsylvania's male swim team for three years, Thomas has taken advantage of the NCAA's anti-woman policies and shattered records as a biological male identifying as a woman and competing on the university's women's team.

This rewrite of biological reality will continue to result in the male domination of female spaces. It will also continue to erode female privacy within restrooms,

locker rooms, prisons, and shelters, putting women and girls in danger. A glaringly anti-woman agenda has been thrust onto the American people, effectively robbing women and girls of fairness in sports and distorting biological reality.

This radical agenda is anti-science. Proponents actively encourage biological males to compete on and dominate teams not of their biological sex when scientifically, males and females are built and operate differently. When it comes to athletic competition, there are many instances when no amount of training or talent can overcome the biological differences between the sexes. Policies that allow biological men to compete on women's teams fail to address several remaining disparities between the sexes, including immutable characteristics such as physical size, muscular structure, and height.

Simply put, it is not bigoted to recognize biology, reality, and science. A solid majority of Americans, 62%, are united in the belief that athletes should compete on teams based on biological sex. We must not turn our backs on hardworking female athletes who are deserving of a fair chance.

THE FACTS

- ★ 62% believe that biological men who identify as women should not be allowed to participate in organized women's sports programs.
- ★ 66% of Americans agree that it should be against the law to perform a sex-change surgery on anyone under the age of 18.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Direct all executive departments to define “sex” to reflect science as biologically male and female, rejecting “gender identity” and “gender orientation” as the definition of sex.
- ★ Support federal safeguards for educational and athletic institutions to designate teams based on biological sex to protect women in sports.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Encourage attorneys general to bring litigation against the federal government if the federal government redefines sex to include “gender identity” under Title IX or any other regulation.
- ★ Support state safeguards for educational and athletic institutions to designate teams dependent upon biological sex to protect women in sports.

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