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“The Adventist Church does not endorse, support, or oppose any political party or candidate seeking elected office.”



North American Division Issues Policy on Political Campaigning in Church

The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists has issued a policy on the Church and political activities. The policy begins with this: "Recognizing that God has ordained distinct and separate roles for the Church and civil government, and that He has entrusted to the Church the mission of proclaiming the gospel of Christ to all people, the Seventh-day Adventist Church safeguards itself against entanglement in partisan political activities." The policy:

1. The Church does not endorse, support, or oppose any political party or candidate seeking elected public office. Administrators, pastors, teachers, and other employees, along with church office-holders and individual church members, shall not use their position, office, pulpit, classroom, or any other church forum to speak either in favor of or in opposition to a political party or candidate for elected public office.

2. Churches or other Adventist entities are not encouraged to host candidates for public office

during elections. However, if they do so they must not favor one candidate over another. In making church facilities available for such events, caution should be exercised to avoid actual or perceived endorsement of one candidate or party over another.

3. If hosting government officials, care should be taken not to act or speak in ways that convey political endorsement or support, or which compromise the Church's political neutrality.

4. The Church has the right to speak on issues that may touch on questions of public policy but should do so in a way that does not endorse or oppose any office holder, political party, or candidate.

5. Each Church employee and member should prayerfully determine what political activities they will engage with as private individuals.

6. The Adventist Church holds these beliefs and policies separate and apart from any legal or tax requirements.

Placing Patron Saint Statues on City Building Preliminarily Barred

A newly built public safety building in Quincy, Mass., is the proposed site of two 10-foot bronze statues of the Catholic patron saints of police and firefighters. Quincy taxpayers filed suit, saying that Article 3 of the state constitution requires equal treatment of religious sects.

A Massachusetts state trial court has issued a preliminary injunction barring the placement of the statues, and the case of *Fitzmaurice v. City of Quincy* will proceed. In barring the statues, the court decided the Lemon test applies to this type of claim in the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights,

saying, "The Complaint here plausibly alleges that the statues at issue convey a message of endorsing one religion over others The statues, particularly when considered together, patently endorse Catholic beliefs"

Defendants claimed the statues have a secular purpose of inspiring police officers with their display, and that the display neither endorses or prohibits any religion, but the court recognized that, "It is impossible to strip the statue of its religious meaning to contrive a secular purpose"

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- A recent 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling enforced that Louisville, KY, can't compel wedding photographer Chelsey Nelson to take photos or write blog posts that celebrate a view of marriage she doesn't believe in. She had filed suit in 2019, after learning that Louisville's Fairness Ordinance restricted how she could express her faith at her privately owned studio.

- Oklahoma's new State Superintendent of Schools is reversing the policy of his predecessor's plans to distribute Bibles to every Oklahoma classroom, saying, "We...have no plans to distribute Bibles or a Biblical character education curriculum in classrooms..." The former plans are the subject of pending litigation in the Oklahoma Supreme Court.

- Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has filed suit in a Texas state trial court against the Galveston School District and its board members, seeking to order them to display copies of the Ten Commandments in every classroom as mandated by Texas law, saying, "Defendants are openly violating the law in Texas." Eleven other school districts have refrained from posting after a district court allowed it, but Galveston was not part of that suit.

SCOTUS Refuses KY Clerk Plea

In the ongoing saga of Kim Davis, former county clerk in Kentucky, the Supreme

Court of the United States (SCOTUS) has turned down a request to reconsider its

2015 decision recognizing a constitutional right to same-sex marriage.

Davis had submitted a petition to have the ruling of a federal appeals court reviewed. That ruling upheld an award of \$100,000 to a gay couple after she refused to issue them a marriage license. That petition also asked for an overruling of the 2015 decision.

Davis' county clerk job description included issuing marriage licenses. It is important to note that she was working for the government, not a private company. And, because of acting on behalf of the government, her actions were not protected by the First Amendment.

NEWS OF THE WORLD

Many Killed in Nigeria

Christians in Nigeria are facing death, displacement, and kidnapping from jihadist groups, and are "gradually being wiped out," according to news sources.

"If nothing is done in the next few years, Christianity will cease to exist in Nigeria," said Emeka Umeagbalasi, the founder of the local International Society for Civil Liberties & Rule of Law.

A human rights lawyer said

anonymously, "'Gradually, Christians are being wiped out and churches have been destroyed."

There are conflicting reports on the number of deaths, and statements casting doubt from the Nigerian government, but the State Department has said it is "deeply concerned about the levels of violence against Christians and members of other groups in Nigeria."

New Chair Named to Head Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), which figures prominently in religious discrimination cases, has a new chair. Andrea Lucas, a member of the EEOC since 2020, and acting chair since January 2025, has been appointed officially as chair by President Donald Trump.

Lucas' bio says that she prioritizes evenhanded enforcement of civil rights laws for all Americans, including "rooting out unlawful DEI-motivated race and sex discrimination; protecting American workers from anti-American national origin discrimination; defending the biological and binary reality of sex and related rights, including women's rights to single-sex spaces;

protecting workers from religious bias and harassment; and remedying other areas that have been historically under-enforced by the agency."

Additionally, the U.S. Senate has confirmed Brittany Panuccio as an EEOC member, which brings membership back to a quorum. It

had lost its quorum when President Trump removed two Biden-appointed commissioners in January.

Public Prayer Request Denied

The U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) has denied to review *Cambridge Christian School, Inc. v. Florida High School Athletic Association*. Previously, the U.S. 11th Circuit Court of Appeals had rejected free speech and free exercise claims made by a Christian school.

The school, which was playing in the FHSAA state championship football game, was not allowed to use the stadium's public

address system for a pre-game prayer. The 11th Circuit found that pre-game PA announcements at state championship games are considered government speech; therefore, government control of its own speech does not violate rights of private individuals. SCOTUS allowed this to stand by denying review.

The school requesting prayer was in a public state game.

Have you ever wanted to travel back in time? Now is your chance. Join the celebration as our nation turns 250 years old. Plan to attend the 2026 Religious Liberty Conference. Join us in Colonial Williamsburg, VA, as we explore the largest living museum in the world and eavesdrop on our nation's founders as they fight for independence. We will also explore religious liberty from a biblical perspective and learn what our founding fathers envisioned for our first freedoms.

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