

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1 Separation of church and state “a lie”

PAGE 2 10 Commandments in Texas

PAGE 2 National Day of

PAGE 2

PAGE 3

PAGE 3

PAGE 3

PAGE 4

2026 | Volume 3

Separation of church and state has been attacked by the Religious Liberty Commission, despite America’s longterm protection of it.

Federal Religious Liberty Commission Call Church, State Separation “a Lie”

The Religious Liberty Commission (RLC), formed by President Donald Trump, attacked the long espoused policy of separation of church and state at their April 2026 hearing, another step which has led civil rights groups to warn that the RLC is trying to make Christian nationalism into public policy.

“It is time to set the record straight: there is no such thing as ‘separation of church and state’ in the Constitution. For too long, the anti-God left has used this phrase to suppress people of religion in our country,” said Dan Patrick, lieutenant governor of Texas and RLC chair. He went on to say that separation of church and state is the “biggest lie that’s been told in America since our founding.”

Patrick also recommended that posting a one-page announcement stating “the separation of church and state is the biggest lie told in America since our founding” be required for all schools and business bulletins

boards. Another recommendation from the commission was to create a system of public education that teaches that religious liberties stem from the Bible.

The RLC was formed to “secure and promote religious liberty for Americans of all faiths.” However, Christian nationalists disagree on how this is to be done, both with Seventh-day Adventists and with many others, including faith-based and secular, who uphold the separation of church and state. The first group wishes to increase religiosity in public and in government, while the latter seeks to maintain church/state boundaries.

Faith groups outside of Christianity, those espousing secularism, and all minority denominations — Adventists in particular, due to their long-held beliefs pertaining to end-time persecution over worshiping differently — will be vigilantly watching and evaluating the actions of the RLC, which has now been renewed for another year by the President.

Federal Court Allows Texas to Place 10 Commandment Poster in All Classrooms

A federal appeals court ruled that Texas is allowed to require public schools to display the 10 Commandments in classrooms. Schools can post donated or state-funded copies without violating the U.S. Constitution, the First Amendment's Establishment Clause, or the Free Exercise Clause. Court opinion was divided in a 9-8 decision, however.

The law mandates that all elementary and secondary schools display a poster or framed copy in a "conspicuous place" in every classroom. It places 16x20-inch minimum size requirements, as well as specifying a typeface large enough to

be read from anywhere in the room.

Challenges to the law arose from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and numerous multi-faith families, who argued that it endorses a specific religion, violates the separation of church and state, and is unconstitutional.

There had been injunctions blocking school districts from placing the posters, but the court's decision will lift those. It is expected that the case could continue to the Supreme Court of the United States. If it does, it will challenge high court precedents that had previously banned such displays.

National Day of Prayer Sparks Religious Liberty Debates

The Rededicate 250 rally, a National Day of Prayer event, was held on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. on May 17, 2026. It was billed as a "National Jubilee of Prayer, Praise & Thanksgiving" aimed at rededicating the United States to God.

Timing of the nine-hour event — which featured worship music, historical tributes, and video messages from the President and members of his Cabinet — coincided with the 250th anniversary of the Continental

Congress declaring May 17, 1776, a National Day of Fasting and Prayer.

Public debate has been sparked, as civil liberties groups and some faith organizations criticized the event, saying that it blurred the lines of separation between church and state, and that it promoted a Christian nationalist viewpoint. Critics also point out the exclusion of non-Christian faiths, and remind that, even among

Christians, only a narrow and conservative segment is represented.

Supporters of the event say that it defends the traditional values of the nation's moral foundations. They also argue that public prayer events, even those backed by the White House, are expressions of First Amendment rights. And, they say that the events are held on public land, participation is voluntary, and there is no infringement on others' rights.

- *A self-proclaimed citizen journalist was removed from demonstrations at the Kansas Capitol because of his t-shirts and signs that included, "Rolling with Jesus and my AK" and "Deport Feminist [censored] First Then Illegals." He filed suit, saying his Christian rights under Kansas RFRA were violated, but a federal district court dismissed his claims as not violating his religious rights.*
- *Nebraska's Supreme Court has ruled that a divorced father may enroll his children in a church camp during his parenting time, even though the mother has sole custody. The court noted that both parents were raised in the church, and the children attended when they were married. The mother did not want it allowed because of the church's teachings on women being subservient to men. However, the court did not find evidence that allowing the children to attend the church camp would pose "an immediate and substantial threat to a child's temporal well-being."*
- *The Department of Homeland Security is seeking eminent domain rights to 14 acres of land of Las Cruces Diocese in New Mexico, for the border wall. The Diocese will defend under the Free Exercise clause and RFRA.*

Secretary of Agriculture Accused of Proselytizing Employees

The Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins has been accused of proselytizing federal employees by referring to Jesus Christ frequently in work emails. Seven USDA employees and the National Federation of Federal Employees have filed the lawsuit, claiming a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

"Secretary Rollins' practice and policy of subjecting agency employees to proselytizing messages conveys the expectation that USDA employees share in the



Secretary's religious beliefs, even when doing so would betray an employee's own beliefs," the lawsuit said. "It is exactly the sort of government-sponsored religious coercion, religious sermonizing, and denominational preference that the Establishment Clause prohibits."

Past emails have included mentioning "gratitude towards a loving God" at Thanksgiving, "God gave us the greatest gift possible" at Christmas, and "greatest story ever told" accompanied by a description of Jesus' resurrection at Easter.

Employees have also expressed that they feel co-

erced and unwelcome if they believe differently. One employee stated she was told it could "create trouble" for her if she asked to be removed from the email list.

Religious expression is protected, and federal employees may certainly engage in private religious speech. However, the Establishment Clause keeps government from favoring one religion over another, in addition to its other dictates.

A USDA spokesperson said in a statement of response: "While we do not comment on pending litigation, we will keep the plaintiffs in our prayers during this process."

SCOTUS Declines to Hear Preschool Case

In May the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) chose not to hear the appeal in *Foothills Christian Ministries v. Johnson*.

The case pertained to the California Child Day Care Facilities Act. Licensing rules require that all enrolled children be able to choose which religious services they want to attend; preschools must post signage outside their facility that informs parents that their child is "free to attend religious services or activities of his/her choice" and entitled to "visits from the spiritual advisor of his/her choice." Basically, the rule could be construed to ask religious preschools to

promote religions other than their own.

Foothills Christian Ministries argued that, as a religious institution in a single denomination, this violated their First Amendment free speech and free exercise rights. The 9th Circuit, however, sided with California's argument that the statute is neutral and generally applicable, and does not show hostility toward a particular religion, and so should stand as is.

By declining to hear the case, SCOTUS allows the ruling of the lower court against the three churches to remain in effect, so the state regulations will still be enforceable.

NEWS OF THE WORLD

Tribes Sue for Drilling Halt on Sacred Lands

Nine Native American tribes across Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota have filed suit, *Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe v. U.S. Forest Service*, in a federal district court in South Dakota. The tribes are challenging an approval given by the federal government to drill for graphite in the Black Hills National Forest.

The tribes listed 60 points of complaint, including several pertaining to their religious rights. The area, Pe'Sla, is considered to be a sacred

site because of its location. It is in the middle of the area where the tribes involved in the suit originated, and they consider it central to their existence. They use the land for religious purposes, including prayer and ceremonies, as well as using it for tradition and cultural activities and youth camps.

Additionally, the tribes say the drilling project will damage historic, archaeological, and cultural sites, as well as land, water, fish, wildlife, and other resources.

Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Public Affairs and Religious Liberty
P.O. Box 923868
Peachtree Corners, GA 30010

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CHATTANOOGA, TN
COLLEGE PRESS

Celebrating America & Religious Liberty 250 Years

SUNDAY-THURSDAY,
AUGUST 16-20, 2026

Williamsburg Lodge, Autograph
Collection, 310 South England
Street, Williamsburg, VA



Join us to honor 250 years of America's journey and the fight for religious freedom! Reflect on the values that have shaped our nation and its commitment to religious freedom, and honor our heritage and the principles that have guided us for centuries. We'll have engaging discussions, insightful speakers, and meaningful connections with fellow attendees. See you there!



Registration

Early Bird: \$225 (Full Access)
ends June 8

Registration: \$300 after June 8

*Visit the registration page for
additional ticket pricing.*



Lodging