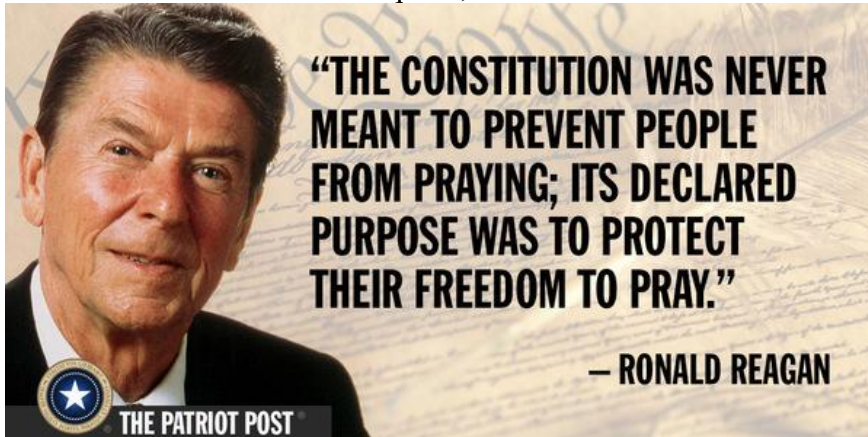


ATHEIST HYPOCRISY AND THE ASSAULT ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Attacks on faith have increased dramatically in recent years, but there's still hope and reason to fight.

Caroline Camden Lewis · Sep. 20, 2017



Knowing the perils of disease, shipwreck and discomfort, the Pilgrims boarded the Mayflower in search of one thing: religious liberty. While many died on the voyage, and half of those who made it here died in the first winter, they knew that their lives were but “stepping stones” for the next generation’s freedom to practice Christianity. Their journey had taken them from an underground church in Scrooby, England, to an escape in Holland. However, as Holland’s secular society began corroding the hearts and minds of their children, they realized that a voyage to the New World was worth the risk. The Plymouth landing in 1620 stands as one of the earliest pieces of our country’s quest for religious liberty.

Today, almost 400 years later, the United States has become an increasingly difficult place for a Christian to work, be educated, and to serve his or her country. This has happened despite the statement found in the [First Amendment](#) of the Bill of Rights: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” In fact, First Liberty Institute’s 2017 [report](#) notes that in the past five years, documented attacks on religious freedom have increased 133%. In the past year, attacks have increased 15%. These attacks take place across broad sectors of the public arena — education, religious institutions and the U.S. military.

A case from the public arena, *Barton v. Balch Springs*, involved a Texas senior center in which city officials told the senior citizens that they could not pray before meals, listen to messages with religious content, or sing gospel music because public buildings do not allow religion. The senior citizens filed a lawsuit, and the government officials threatened to take away their meals if they won because praying over meals paid for by the government violated the “separation of church and state.”

In *Pounds v. Katy I.S.D.*, a school district in the Houston area banned religious Christmas items and religiously themed Valentine’s Day cards. School officials told one student that she could not answer the question “What does Easter mean to you?” with “Jesus.” A federal court ultimately ruled against Katy I.S.D. for its hostility to religion and for violating the student’s constitutional rights.

In *Sterling v. United States*, Montifa Sterling, a Marine Corps lance corporal, placed three notes in her cubicle that referred to the Bible verse: “No weapon formed against you shall prosper” (Isaiah 54:17). While her supervisor allowed the other service members to display personal items, he ordered Sterling to remove the notes. Sterling believed that her First Amendment rights protected her ability to post the notes, so when she found them in the trash the following day, she reposted them. As a result, Lance Corporal Sterling was court-martialed. The highest U.S. military court, the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, believed the note to be minor and thus unworthy of religious protection. First Liberty Institute is appealing the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

These examples, a small selection of more than 1,400 [documented](#) incidents, illustrate the direct assault on the constitutional rights of Americans. A combination of misinformation among the populous and lobbying efforts by atheist groups such as the Freedom from Religion Foundation, the American Humanist Association and the American Atheists have resulted in prayers being banned, Ten Commandments displays being made illegal and veterans memorials with crosses being torn down or moved.

The [American Atheists](#) claim to not be a religion, yet require equal representation of their “non-religion” at interfaith events and councils. Additionally, college campuses routinely list humanists, secularist, free-thinkers and agnostics among other religious groups. They claim to believe in nothing, but in fact believe in a *lack of belief* and have faith in a *lack of faith*. Atheists claim that Christians force their religion on others. Yet atheistic secularism has been forcing students, military personnel, ministers and workers to adhere to their lack of belief standards or suffer the consequences. Far from learning to “coexist,” as many bumper stickers advertise, atheist lobby groups seek nothing less than to persecute and destroy all religions except their own lack of one. Their rejection of religion *is* their religion and their unrelenting desire to “convert” the rest of us is unconstitutional, intolerant and wrong.

In terms of the quest to totally eradicate religion, the Soviet Union at least communicated its objectives honestly: to destroy religion and establish an atheist, secular state. A state church or a state “non-church” both qualify as an establishment of a religious state. Are atheist lobbyists, then, not the greatest offenders of their own unconstitutional demands of others?

The Pilgrims came here for religious freedom, not freedom from religion imposed on them by atheist lobby groups. The right to “not be offended” does not outweigh the right to practice one’s religion. Ironically, people rarely ask Christians if it offends *them* to have their child told he cannot pray. Christians have a right to believe in God, just as much as atheists have a right to believe in nothing. The assault on religious liberty only gains victory if people of faith choose fear over courage. As Ronald Reagan stated, “Evil is powerless if the good are unafraid.” While courage may cost social standing, job mobility or favor among others, ultimately standing tall in the face of evil gives others courage and reminds us of our purpose: to do the right thing, despite the consequences.

If you are experiencing religious persecution and need legal representation, contact these non-profit law firms:

[Alliance Defending Freedom](#)
[First Liberty Institute](#)
[Becket Fund for Religious](#)