



Establishment of the Religious Liberty Commission

Administration Policy:

President Trump issued an Executive Order (EO) titled [Establishment of the Religious Liberty Commission](#) to identify threats to religious freedom and reaffirm the U.S. government's strong commitment to protecting religious liberty under the Constitution and existing laws.

The Religious Liberty Commission (the Commission) will include up to 14 members appointed by the President. Appointees will have experience in various sectors including private industry, education, religious organizations, and state governments. The EO also establishes three advisory boards to support the Commission – an Advisory Board of Religious Leaders, an Advisory Board of Lay Leaders from religious congregations, and an Advisory Board of Legal Experts.

The Commission will sunset on July 4, 2026, in honor of the 250th anniversary of American independence. If extended, members could be reappointed for two-year terms and remain in place until successors are named.

The EO requires the Commission to issue a comprehensive report on the state of religious liberty in the United States. The report should include analysis of constitutional and legal foundations, the role of religion in American society, current domestic threats, strategies to safeguard religious freedom for future generations, and public education efforts to promote peaceful religious pluralism. The Commission's focus areas would include:

- Rights of pastors and faith-based institutions.
- Attacks on houses of worship.
- Debanking of religious groups.
- Religious expression in schools, the military, and workplaces.
- Conscience protections in healthcare and vaccine policies.
- Parental rights in education, including religious schooling.
- Voluntary prayer in school.
- Religious symbols on government property.
- Freedom from government retaliation for religious exercise.

The EO also directs the Commission to advise the White House Faith Office and Domestic Policy Council, including recommending executive or legislative actions to defend religious liberty, and identify opportunities to collaborate with the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom on global religious freedom efforts.

Background:

- Executive Order [13798](#), signed by President Trump on May 4, 2017, established a policy of protecting religious liberty and directed federal agencies to provide guidance on the requirements of laws protecting religious freedom.
- In 2017, President Trump's Department of Justice issued a memorandum directing all Department of Justice components and U.S. Attorneys to implement interpretive guidance on federal religious liberty protections, as instructed by Executive Order 13798. The guidance mandates their incorporation of multiple religious liberty principles into litigation, policymaking, and agency operations, with particular emphasis on compliance with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).
- [RFRA](#) was enacted by Congress in 1993 to protect individuals' free exercise of religion from government interference. It prohibits the government from substantially burdening a person's exercise of religion unless it demonstrates that the burden is the least restrictive means of furthering a compelling governmental interest.
- A fact sheet from the White House can be found [here](#).