

# RELIGIOUS FREEDOM SUNDAY

January 13, 2019 | For more info visit [frc.org](http://frc.org)



“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free”  
Galatians 5:1a NKJV

On January 16, 1786, the Statute on Religious Freedom was enacted by the Virginia legislature and is the basis of Religious Freedom Day. Thomas Jefferson drafted the legislation, which ended the state-church in Virginia by freeing residents from paying taxes to support clergy of the favored denomination, and it protected the civil rights of people to express their religious beliefs without suffering discrimination. Jefferson considered it one of the three greatest achievements of his life.



*Thomas Jefferson*



*Rev. Muhlenberg*

Members of the first Federal Congress, who drafted the Bill of Rights in 1789, built on George Mason's Virginia Declaration of Rights in 1776 and Jefferson's Statute in establishing the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom. Interestingly, Rep. Frederick Muhlenberg, the Speaker of the House who oversaw the process in that chamber, was a Lutheran Pastor and his is one of two signatures on the Bill of Rights ratified by the states and added to the U.S. Constitution in 1791.

Today, our first freedom – the freedom to believe and live according to those beliefs – is as precious as ever to most Americans. It is also under fierce assault. From wedding vendors and T-shirt makers to public servants, educators and members of the military, people are seeing their religious freedom eroded at a frightening pace. More and more Americans are realizing that if we don't use our freedom to defend our freedom, we may lose our freedom.



*Cake Artist Jack Phillips:  
Punished for standing for his faith.  
Photo: Alliance Defending Freedom*

Thankfully, every U.S. President since 1993 has declared January 16th to be Religious Freedom Day and calls upon Americans to observe this day through appropriate activities in homes, schools, and places of worship. So let us recognize this unique time to be grateful to God for our freedom of religion in America, an inalienable right granted by Him but also protected in our U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights. Let us stand firm in our liberty!

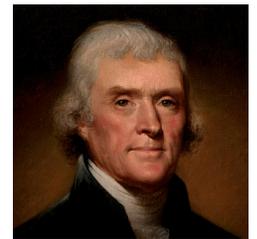
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*Application Points | For more info visit [FRC.org](http://FRC.org)*

### 1. PRAY FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM TO BE VALUED IN PUBLIC LIFE

Scripture commands that we are to pray for those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-4). Ask God to help leaders see that religious freedom is an unalienable right, a right that does not have to be forfeited when believers conduct business, engage in public speech, serve in office or teach in public schools. Ask God to soften the hearts of judges, elected officials, and public servants to the plight of those who are being harassed because of their deeply held beliefs and strengthen their resolve to defend the religious freedom of all Americans.

“Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.”

**Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom**  
*January 16, 1786*

### 2. PROMOTE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM DAY IN SCHOOLS

Educators and administrators should celebrate Religious Freedom Day without fear. Gateways to Better Education has some excellent resources for educators. Visit [GTBE.org](http://GTBE.org).

### 3. PROMPT CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT TO PROTECT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN POLICY AND LAW:

Rep. Mike Kelly (R-Pa.) and Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.) sponsored the *Child Welfare Provider Protection Act, (Inclusion Act)* which protects faith-based adoption and foster-care agencies from government discrimination forcing them to either affirm views of marriage against their beliefs or close. This has happened in places like Illinois, California, Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts. State versions of this bill have become law in nine states, but federal action is needed. Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.) and Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) have introduced the so-called *Equality Act* to change twenty-five separate provisions in law by incorporating “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” under existing civil rights protections such as race, age, national origin and religion while explicitly excluding the Religious Freedom Restoration Act from being applicable in a dispute over such cases. Contact your elected representatives and urge them to support religious freedom legislation—such as the *Inclusion Act*—and urge them to oppose legislation that undermines faith—such as the so-called Equality Act. Call (202) 224-3121 for your U.S. Representative and Senators or visit [FRC.org](http://FRC.org), then Contact Officials.

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