



Protecting the Equal Rights  
of Nonreligious Americans

July 19, 2022

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McConnell,

As organizations that represent secular Americans, we noted your acknowledgment of us in the conclusion of your recent floor statement: “Americans of any faith *and no faith at all* can celebrate that we have a brilliant majority of originalist, textualist justices who will defend all of our constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and apply what the Bill of Rights actually says.” We disagree with every word in that sentence.

We are not celebrating “a brilliant majority of originalist, textualist justices” who appear to believe that the Establishment Clause violates the Free Exercise Clause.

We are not celebrating that states are mandated to provide taxpayer dollars to discriminatory religious schools providing religious instruction in programs meant to provide a public education to rural students.

We are not celebrating a decision that blatantly misrepresented the facts of the case to allow a school employee who publicly led a majority of his football team in prayer to continue this coercive practice on the 50-yard line. Your statement that “[a] man was fired by government bureaucrats for praying” is so misleading that it does not deserve inclusion in a speech on the Senate floor.

Even your summary of the church-state separation issues leading up to this court term is exaggerated and alarmist. You described our efforts to ensure that faith-based organizations that receive federal funds to provide childcare will not discriminate against participants of different faiths and nonreligious people as “a sweeping ‘Toddler Takeover’ that was written to squeeze out faith-based childcare providers and secularize early childhood in this country.” Ideally these issues would be considered too important to be mischaracterized in such disparaging terms.

The number of Americans you could fairly categorize as nonreligious is significant and growing. According to a June Gallup poll<sup>1</sup>, nineteen percent of adults do not believe in God, a new high, and the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/poll/393737/belief-god-dips-new-low.aspx>



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numbers are highest among young people. Speaking for many of those 49 million Americans, we are not celebrating the ideologically biased decisions of a Supreme Court majority that, quoting Justice Sotomayor, “elevates one individual’s interest in personal religious exercise... over society’s interest in protecting the separation between church and state, eroding the protections for religious liberty for all.”

While we thank you for finally acknowledging the existence of such a large and rapidly growing segment of the American people, such gratitude is tinged with extreme regret to see you do it in a way that so blatantly misrepresents the facts of the Supreme Court cases, the fundamental meaning of the Bill of Rights and the Establishment Clause, and the critical interests of the non-religious in secular government and education.

Sincerely,

**The Secular Coalition for America**

American Atheists

American Ethical Union

American Humanist Association

Atheist Alliance of America

Black Nonbelievers

Camp Quest

Center for Inquiry and the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science

Cultural and Secular Jewish Organization

Ex-Muslims of North America

Foundation Beyond Belief

Freedom From Religion Foundation

Freethought Society

Hispanic American Freethinkers

Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers

Recovery From Religion

Secular Student Alliance

Secular Woman

Society for Humanistic Judaism

The Clergy Project

Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association