

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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August 21, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Re: Use of bible verses by DHS to frame deportations as a divine mission

Dear Secretary Noem:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to raise serious concerns about the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) use of bible verses and religious imagery to portray deportation and border enforcement as divinely sanctioned. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 42,000 members across the country. FFRF protects the constitutional separation between state and church and educates about nontheism.

It has come to our attention that DHS has repeatedly incorporated Christian scripture and sectarian imagery into official communications, framing immigration enforcement as a religious mission.¹ For example:

July 7, 2025: A DHS video opened with helicopters taking off while a narrator quoted Isaiah 6:8, followed by the lyrics "God's Gonna Cut You Down."²

July 28, 2025: A DHS video depicted armed Border Patrol agents as Proverbs 28:1 appeared onscreen: "The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion."³

July 14 & 23, 2025: DHS highlighted artwork glorifying "manifest destiny," including Morgan Weistling's A Prayer for a New Life and John Gast's American Progress — imagery historically tied to religiously justified conquest and displacement of Indigenous peoples.⁴

These disturbing messages merge religious text with enforcement strategy, sending a dangerous signal that DHS' brutal enforcement actions are morally elevated or even sanctified. We request that DHS immediately delete these posts and cease using religious propaganda in any federal context, including on its websites, social media, or employee training.

¹ <https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/msnbc-opinion/dhs-bible-verses-videos-deportations-rcna223009>.

² <https://www.facebook.com/reel/573034619213993>.

³ <https://x.com/DHSgov/status/1949913619644493930>.

⁴ <https://x.com/DHSgov/status/1944875154745778525>.

The First Amendment's Establishment Clause requires government neutrality between religions, and between religion and nonreligion. See *McCreary v. ACLU of Ky.*, 545 U.S. 844, 860 (2005); *Wallace v. Jaffree*, 472 U.S. 38, 53 (1985); *Epperson v. Ark.*, 393 U.S. 97, 104 (1968); *Everson v. Bd. of Educ. of Ewing*, 330 U.S. 1, 15–16 (1947). By quoting the bible and including religious imagery in official communications, DHS is displaying unconstitutional favoritism towards Christianity over all other faiths.

Aside from being a clear violation of the Establishment Clause, these ads are profoundly un-American in their content. Quoting Christian texts to frame immigrants and asylum seekers as “wicked” dehumanizes families who have worked, paid taxes, and contributed to our communities. If anything is wicked, it is the use of religious propaganda to vilify people who are among the most vulnerable.

The bible can be twisted to justify virtually any policy, from compassion to cruelty, and it has no place in official government messaging. The only purpose of invoking the bible in these propaganda videos is to claim a higher authority than our Constitution. The implicit message is: “God is on our side.” That is the age-old rallying cry of holy wars, not democratic governance. In truth, there is no greater authority in our nation than our secular Constitution.

The constitutional principle separating religion from government was the uniquely American vision of our revolutionary Founders. After centuries of bloody religious wars, inquisitions, crusades and pogroms in the Old World, and of the persecutions in the name of religion in most of the original colonies, the Framers were acutely aware of the danger and folly of mixing state and church.

Every reference to religion in the U.S. Constitution is exclusionary, including: a direct prohibition on religious tests for public office, an implicit prohibition in the godless oath of office prescribed for the presidency, and the First Amendment's historic bar of any establishment of religion by the government. The Framers of the Constitution made the United States first among nations to invest sovereignty not in a deity, but in “We the People.” The proscription against religion in government has served our nation well, with the U.S. Constitution now the longest living constitution in history, and our nation spared the constant religious wars afflicting theocratic regions around the world.

This wise separation between religion and government embodied in the Establishment Clause has largely protected the United States from the religious slaughter and persecution rife around the world and historically whenever the government and religion are aligned:

“There is no such source and cause of strife, quarrel, fights, malignant opposition, persecution, and war, and all evil in the state, as religion. Let it once enter our civil affairs, our government would soon be destroyed. Let it once enter our common schools, they would be destroyed.” *State ex rel. Weiss v. Dist. Bd. of Sch. Dist. No. 8 of City of Edgerton*, 76 Wis. 177, 44 N.W. 967, 981 (1890).

America's strength lies in its secular Constitution. True religious freedom requires that the government remain free from religious corruption. Keeping religion out of the government is a fundamental American ideal, essential for true religious freedom, and has been a tremendous asset to our society.

Today, nearly 37 percent of Americans are non-Christians, and this includes the nearly one in three Americans who are now religiously unaffiliated.⁵ DHS is charged with serving all Americans, not just Christians, and must not promote Christian nationalism under the guise of policy.

We urge DHS to immediately stop incorporating bible verses and religious imagery into its official communications. Please inform us in writing of the steps your agency will take to comply with its constitutional obligations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Line", with a stylized, flowing script.

Christopher Line
Legal Counsel
Freedom From Religion Foundation

⁵ Gregory A. Smith, About Three-in-Ten U.S. Adults Are Now Religiously Unaffiliated, Pew Research Center (Dec. 14, 2021), www.pewforum.org/2021/12/14/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-are-now-religiously-unaffiliated/.