

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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September 9, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Re: Unconstitutional promotion of religion through official communications

Dear Secretary Rubio:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to raise serious concerns over the promotion of Christian nationalist messaging on the U.S. Department of State's official X account. 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.

On September 5, 2025, the State Department used its official X account to link to a Fox News story about President Trump's speech at the Museum of the Bible, while declaring:¹

“Our nation was founded on the recognition that moral virtue and a steadfast faith in God are necessary preconditions of freedom. Yet under the Biden Administration, U.S. foreign policy belittled Christianity and weaponized government against faith. That era has ended. Under @POTUS's leadership, the State Department will eradicate practices that devalue and demean the Christian faith.”

Then, on September 8, the Department posted:²

“At @POTUS's direction, @SecRubio is taking action to secure religious liberties both at home and abroad, including terminating unlawful State Department policies targeting Christians and addressing the violent repression of Christians overseas. We will never apologize for our God-given rights.”

These statements send a clear message that the State Department prioritizes Christianity over all other faiths, and over nonreligion, reducing millions of Americans to second-class citizens. U.S. foreign policy should defend all human rights, not elevate one religion above all others. We respectfully request that the State Department immediately delete these posts and cease using

¹ <https://x.com/StateDept/status/1964008819475743179>.

² <https://x.com/StateDept/status/1965145275216916582>.

Christian nationalist rhetoric in any official communications, including websites and social media platforms.

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 declaring our nation was founded on “steadfast faith in God” in official communications, the State Department is displaying unconstitutional favoritism towards Christianity over all other faiths.

The Supreme Court has held that public officials may not seek to advance or promote religion, specifically stating, “If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein. If there are any circumstances which permit an exception, they do not now occur to us.” *W. Va. Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624, 642 (1943).

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.³ The State Department is charged with representing all Americans, not promoting Christian nationalism. True religious liberty requires a secular government, free from sectarian favoritism.

We therefore urge the Department to immediately cease incorporating religious messaging into its official communications. Please advise 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 long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher Line
Legal Counsel
Freedom From Religion Foundation

³ 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/.