

The Trump Administration's Accomplishments on

Religious Freedom



“

Faith breathes life and hope into our world. We must diligently guard, preserve and cherish this unalienable right.”

President Donald J. Trump



2017

JAN

Nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court.

- Justice Gorsuch is a judge committed to interpreting the Constitution according to its original text.
- His judicial record shows that he's a strong protector of religious liberty and the First Amendment.

FEB

The President spoke at the National Prayer Breakfast, two weeks into office.

MAY

Executive Order Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty.

- Designed to advance religious freedom across all federal executive agencies.
- Ensures that religious organizations can freely exercise their right to support candidates and causes consistent with their faith and values.
- Ensures people of faith and faith-based organizations are not forced to comply with Affordable Care Act contraceptive mandate violating their sincerely-held beliefs.

JUNE

The President spoke at the Faith and Freedom Coalition's Conference.

SEP

U.S. Solicitor General submits friend-of-the-court brief at the Supreme Court.

- Supported Colorado cake artist, Jack Phillips, and his First Amendment rights.
- Creating custom art is a form of free expression protected by the Constitution.

OCT

Setting the U.S. Dept. of Justice (DOJ) in motion to protect religious freedom.

- The DOJ issued twenty principles of religious liberty to guide the Administration's litigation strategy in cases related to religious freedom.

DEC

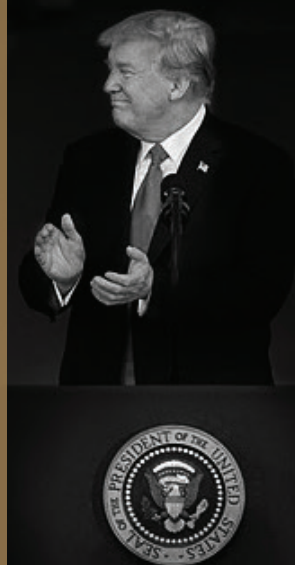
Confirmation of Judge James Ho to Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

- Judge Ho is a former volunteer network attorney with First Liberty Institute.
- He devoted countless hours and represented clients pro-bono in some of the most important religious liberty cases in the last decade.

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A judge must be independent and must interpret the law, not make the law. A judge must interpret statutes as written. And a judge must interpret the Constitution as written, informed by history and tradition and precedent.

Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh



JAN
2018

Updating FEMA Policies for Houses of Worship to Receive Federal Aid

- Reversing Obama administration's policy denying disaster aid to houses of worship, allowing them to receive crucial aid in times of crisis.

Presidential Proclamation of Religious Freedom Day - January 16, 2018.

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services announced major policy changes to protect religious freedom.

- Formed a new Conscience and Religious Freedom Division to enforce existing laws protecting people of faith and faith-based providers in the healthcare industry.

U.S. Dept. of Justice (DOJ) files brief to defend Archdiocese of Washington's religious liberty.

- Supported the Archdiocese in its effort to have religious ads on public transportation.

MAY Executive Order Establishing the White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative.

- Helps religious organizations have a voice in the federal government and provide recommendations to the Administration's policy agenda on faith-based community programs.

JUL The U.S. DOJ announces the formation of the Religious Liberty Task Force.

- The Task Force helps the DOJ coordinate its work on religious liberty litigation and policy.

OCT Confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court.

- Justice Kavanaugh is a judge committed to interpreting the Constitution according to its original text.
- His judicial record shows that he's a strong protector of religious liberty and the First Amendment.
- Early in his career, Justice Kavanaugh volunteered his time to work on a religious liberty case at the U.S. Supreme Court alongside Kelly Shackelford, First Liberty Institute's President, CEO and Chief Counsel.

DEC U.S. State Department places Pakistan on a "Special Watch List" for severe violations of religious freedom.



The United States is founded on the principle that our rights do not come from government; they come from God. This immortal truth is proclaimed in our Declaration of Independence and enshrined in the First Amendment to our Constitution's Bill of Rights. Our Founders understood that no right is more fundamental to a peaceful, prosperous, and virtuous society than the right to follow one's religious convictions.

President **Donald J. Trump**



MAR

Executive Order on Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency and Accountability at Colleges and Universities.

- Encouraging an open intellectually engaging environment consistent with the principles found in our First Amendment.

U.S. Department of Education (DOE) moves to ensure religious organizations are treated equally.

- Announced policy guidelines to give faith-based groups the same opportunity as secular groups, in accordance with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Trinity Lutheran v. Comer*.

JUNE

Confirmation of Judge Matthew Kacsmaryk to U.S. District Court.

- Judge Kacsmaryk is a former First Liberty Institute Deputy General Counsel.
- He is the first confirmed judge who's gone directly from a religious liberty law firm to the federal judiciary.

JUL

U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs announces revised policies.

- New rules will permit religious literature, symbols and displays across facilities nationwide.

AUG

Updated U.S. Department of Labor regulations.

- Giving religious organizations better and fairer treatment in contracts with the federal government.

SEP

The first American president to host a United Nations event on religious freedom.

- Historic international event calling on all nations and business leaders to help bring an end to religious persecution and stop crimes against people of faith.

U.S. Dept. of Justice submits important statement of interest condemning anti-Semitism in Airmont, NY.

- Giving religious organizations better and fairer treatment in contracts with the federal government.

Vice President Mike Pence spoke to thousands of veterans at The American Legion's 101st Annual National Convention.

- Assured veterans that addition to taking care of their healthcare needs, the current administration would meet their spiritual needs.

DEC

Confirmation of Lawrence VanDyke to Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

- Judge VanDyke was among the very first network attorneys to volunteer with First Liberty.
- He gave the first oral argument of his career in defense of our organization and won a critical victory protecting the First Amendment rights of issue-oriented think-tanks.

Executive Order on Combating Anti-Semitism.

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In America, we don't punish prayer. We don't tear down crosses. We don't ban symbols of faith. We don't muzzle preachers and pastors. In America, we celebrate faith, we cherish religion, we lift our voices in prayer, and we raise our sights to the Glory of God.

President Donald J. Trump



JAN
2020

The President hosted students and people of faith in the Oval Office of the White House.

- President and Chief Counsel, Kelly Shackelford, along with First Liberty clients Hannah Allen and Coach Joe Kennedy participate in special religious freedom ceremony.

Administration announced policy actions to protect religious freedom for all Americans.

- U.S. Dept. of Education issued updated guidelines on prayer and religious expression in public schools.
- Ensures religious organizations and their secular counterparts are treated equally across 9 different executive agencies.
- Ensures faith-based organizations cannot be discriminated against because of their religious status when applying for federal grants.

Becoming the first American President to attend and speak at March for Life rally.

- Recognizes that religious freedom has been under attack very strongly in our nation, but taking decisive action to stop violations.

Revised U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs guidelines to further protect veterans' religious freedom.

- New rules will help put faith-based groups on an equal footing when contracting with the federal government to provide critical services for veterans.

FEB

The President delivers State of the Union Address with a notable mention of how people of faith are reclaiming their religious liberty nationwide.

U.S. Dept. of State announces the International Religious Freedom Alliance

- A multinational gathering of more than two dozen countries who will collaborate to pursue religious tolerance and end religious persecution.

U.S. Dept. of Justice files lawsuit against the village of Walthill, NE, for restrictions on non-denominational Christian church trying to build a place of worship.



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Assembled by First Liberty attorneys and our expert legal team, these resources will help you take a stand when your religious freedom is threatened. Whether at school, at your workplace, at your church, or even in the military, our protection kits will explain in detail exactly how far your right to live out your faith truly extends.

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First Liberty conducts research and provides analysis on the effects of policy actions on religious liberty. This publication is intended to be used for informational, educational and reference purposes only.



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