

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

From the time of the establishment of our nation, the founding fathers recognized the importance of Freedom of Religion. It was deemed so important, in fact, that it forms the First Amendment to our United States Constitution.

What Does The First Amendment Say?

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Do you notice what it does not say about religion? It does not say that the government should ensure freedom from religion. The First Amendment also does not mention any type of “separation of [church and state](#)” – nor is this phrase found anywhere else in our U.S. Constitution!

In our practice, we deal primarily with two different clauses that make up the religious freedom aspect of the First Amendment: the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause.

The Establishment Clause Of The First Amendment

The Establishment Clause prohibits the government from establishing one religion for the nation, as well as favoring or disfavoring one religion over another in its dealings.

The Free Exercise Clause Of The First Amendment

The Free Exercise Clause concerns the statement that Congress may not prohibit the free exercise of an individual’s religion. This clause has encountered some different forms of interpretation in the Courts over the years, as the Court had to decide the extent of protection granted from this clause. Can people use this clause to defend their religious practice of polygamy, or even human sacrifice? This thought prompted the Supreme Court to decide, “Laws are made for the government of actions, and while they cannot interfere with mere religious beliefs and opinions, they may with practices.”

The First Amendment forms the basis for much of the work that we do here at Advocates for Faith and Freedom.

We believe in the freedom of religion and the protection of our individual liberties and rights as laid out in the U.S. Constitution and the First Amendment.