

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Texas Democrats believe that religious freedom is a fundamental right for all Americans as provided by the Texas and U.S. Constitutions. We recognize the importance of religion and prayer in the lives of Texans and support our Constitution's guarantee of every individual's right to practice his or her own beliefs without imposing them on others. We support the U.S. Constitutional provision that no religious test shall be required as a qualification for public office. We believe:

- that, just as personal faith and values guide and inspire us to further the well-being of our community, we must never use the power of government at any level to promote one religion or denomination over others or to impose our personal religious observances;
- government must not inhibit the free exercise of religion, but religion can never be used as an excuse to discriminate against or harm others;
- government must not use public resources to support purely religious positions or activities;
- entangling government with religion is dangerous to both government and religion;
- America is the most religiously observant country in the West because our founders wisely provided for separation of church and state, which allows religion to flourish in freedom and respects those who have no religious faith; and
- the religious test for public office in the Texas Constitution must be removed.

Democrats hold political views motivated by deeply held personal beliefs. No political party and no extremist group hold a lock on religious or ethical beliefs and values. We believe that religion should not be invoked to supersede the rights of others. These rights include:

- nondiscrimination laws including those protecting LGBTQ Texans;
- nondiscrimination for individuals in service or public accommodations in the private sector;
- workplace laws regarding wages and compensation;
- laws protecting children's welfare;
- laws ensuring access to healthcare, particularly for women and families; and
- provision of goods and services by government directly or through grants and contracts.