



REPORT

from the Capital

House committee OKs bill allowing religious discrimination

For the second time in as many years, a House panel has approved a bill that would allow some government-funded charities to discriminate in hiring on the basis of religion.

On a party-line vote Feb. 9, a subpanel of the House Education and Workforce Committee approved the "Job Training Improvement Act." The act reauthorizes a federal program that funds local organizations helping to provide unemployed people with marketable job skills.

The committee's 15 Democrats voted against the bill, while its 18 Republicans supported the legislation.

The proposal would remove statutory protections for employees seeking jobs from religious social service providers funded under the program. The 1964 Civil Rights Act allows churches and synagogues to discriminate in hiring for most positions on the basis of religious principles. However, the courts have not settled the issue of whether religious groups retain that right when hiring for a position wholly or partly funded by tax dollars.

On Feb. 17, after a lengthy debate in the full House Education and Workforce Committee, the Act passed 26-20 along party lines.

The 1982 Workforce Investment Act, which set up the program, originally prohibited organizations receiving grants under it from discriminating on the basis of religion, race, gender and other categories. The new bill would remove those protections only for religious providers, and only on the basis of religion.

"If this bill passes ... we will be repealing civil rights protections that have been in effect for decades," said Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Va., who offered an amendment to the bill that would restore the 1982 language on religious discrimination. It failed.

Several Democrats on the panel said Republican supporters of the proposal were trying to have their cake and eat it, too. Because the courts do not allow direct government funding of religious activity, they argued, religious charities should be able to hire qualified people of any faith for government-funded job training services without compromising their religious mission.

"The question is whether, once they've received federal dollars, they should be able to discriminate in employment based on religion in the providing of non-religious services," said Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md.

"We all agree it is not lawful for these organizations to use federal dollars to promote particular religions," he continued. "And therefore, at the same time, to argue that it is more effective for them to be able to discriminate on the basis of religion is nonsensical."

The issue has come to a head in the past few years, as President Bush has pushed for more federal funding of social services through churches and other religious entities. Though he failed to pass his "faith-based initiative" in its entirety through Congress, he has slowly implemented many parts of it via executive orders and other administrative actions.

Meanwhile, the House has done its part to aid piecemeal implementation of Bush's plan, including adding similar employment discrimination provisions to a number of bills funding social-service providers. But most of those attempts have been thwarted in the Senate.

In 2003, the House passed a bill similar to the Job Training Improvement Act that included an identical provision on religious discrimination. However, it never passed the Senate.



Scott



Van Hollen

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By Robert Marus, Associated Baptist Press

After 350 years, Baptists and Jews have much in common

By James M. Dunn

Surely every authentic Baptist rejoices in the 350 years of American Jewish life. We celebrate the freedom of religion and pluralism that has marked our lives together since 1654 when the first 23 Jews arrived in New Amsterdam.

A strong chain has linked Baptists and Jews theologically, historically and politically. Amanda Porterfield, in her 2001 book *The Transformation of American Religion*, gets right to the heart of Jewish/Baptist theological affinity. She wrote that an "internalized ethical analysis," or "commitment of conscience" fueled the thought of Roger Williams, founder of the first Baptist church on this continent. For cultural historian Perry Miller, Williams was "the symbolic embodiment" of complete religious freedom.

To the degree that Baptist leaders like Walter Rauschenbush and Martin Luther King Jr. have exercised this cantankerous Baptist individualism, they have been at the heart of a common Baptist/Jewish religious personalism. In fact, King wrote his doctoral dissertation on this subject.

To the secular observer, it may appear to be simply high humanism. But to Jewish and Baptist believers, a person's profound biblical belief affirms that all mortals are made in the divine image and that immediate and personal access to the Creator is possible, without formula or filter.

Historically, Baptists and Jews have a long-standing partnership. By its denial of any official religion, Rhode Island's bold experiment in radical religious liberty bound together Baptist believers and observant Jews. One can see its roots in Roger Williams' "Limits of the Civil Magistrate" (1652), that he addressed to Parliament:

"I humbly conceive it to be the duty of the civil magistrate to break down that superstitious wall of separation between us Gentiles and the Jews, and freely (without their asking) to make way for their free and peaceable habitation among us."

By 1663 Roger Williams and Dr. John Clarke had secured a charter for "The Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations." It was called "the most liberal state paper ever issued by the English Crown." It permitted the English subjects to "hold forth a lively experiment ... with full liberty in religious concerns."

May we never lose that liberty.

The "otherwise minded" dissenters, including Baptists and Jews, were glad that the state no longer had a right to enforce religious uniformity or to collect taxes for the support of the clergy.

A group of Sephardic Jews came to Newport, R.I. then governed by Baptists, as early as 1658. By 1677 the Jews bought land

for a sanctified cemetery plot, and by December 2, 1763, they dedicated the synagogue in Newport, later named for Isaac Touro, an early spiritual leader. As Jews flourished in late colonial Rhode Island, they were still unwelcome in Puritan Massachusetts.

In August 1790, before there was a Bill of Rights, President Washington, visiting that Newport Congregation, heard an address given by Moses Seixas, warden of the synagogue. Washington's reply days later repeated the warden's historic phrases: "The Government of the United States ... gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance."

Politically, religious belief is none of government's business. Our two peoples have been solid and steadfast allies in the struggle for separation of church and state, the necessary corollary of religious liberty.

A half-century after Roger Williams, John Locke wrote that "true and saving religion consists in the inward persuasion of the mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God."

Then, nearly a century later came Madison and Jefferson making it clear that when government intrudes into religion, it always has

a touch of mud.

When government tries to foster religion, it inevitably does it harm. When religion appeals to government to enforce faith, it falls flat on its face because "forced faith" is an oxymoron.

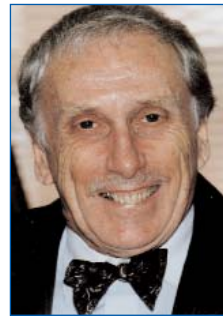
Today, most Baptists and Jews who are mindful of our American heritage oppose state-sponsored religious exercises in public schools. We tend to dislike graven images of the Ten Commandments put up by the people in public places. We often fight voucher schemes that take tax dollars for private and parochial schools. We are generally suspicious of all sorts of so-called "faith-based" initiatives that drain needed resources from people-serving programs and divert those monies into religious institutions.

Roger Williams knew that a nation cannot be Christian; only persons can be Christians. To call a nation Christian, he said, may make a nation of hypocrites but not one single true believer.

Here's to another 350 years of Baptist/Jewish partnership for freedom, for pluralism, for truth telling, for democracy. For Heaven's sake!

James M. Dunn is a professor of Christianity and Public Policy at Wake Forest University Divinity School and is the former executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee.

"Politically, religious belief is none of government's business. Our two peoples have been solid and steadfast allies in the struggle for separation of church and state, the necessary corollary of religious liberty."



James M. Dunn
President, BJC Endowment



J. Brent Walker
Executive Director

Virginia legislation reeks of 90s Istook Amendment

The Virginia House of Delegates – my elected representatives – is up to no good. By a vote of 69-27 the House recently passed a state constitutional amendment with sweeping language and dire consequences.

The proposed amendment to Article I of the Virginia Constitution is patterned after the federal constitutional amendment that Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla., pressed for in the mid-1990s. The Virginia measure provides:

“To secure further the people’s right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience, neither the Commonwealth nor its political subdivisions shall establish any official religion, but the people’s right to pray and to recognize their religious beliefs, heritage, and traditions on public property, including public schools, shall not be infringed; however, the Commonwealth and its political subdivisions, ... shall not compose school prayers, nor require any person to join in prayer or other religious activity.” (House Joint Res. No. 537)

The best thing that can be said about this proposed amendment is that it is absolutely unnecessary.

Religious expression by students in the public school abounds. From Bible clubs before and after school, to “See You at the Pole” prayer meetings, to robust discussions among students about religion, to voluntary student prayer anytime, it is obvious that God has not been kicked out of the public schools.

Religious speech in the public square resounds. And, you don’t have to strain to hear it. Private citizens speaking in public places proclaim their religious opinions with vigor and the media – from talking heads on television, to talk radio, to cover stories on national new magazines – can’t seem to get enough of it. And, various forms of “civil religion” pervade our public rituals and civic ceremonies, our patriotic songs and slogans, and the speeches of politicians. Our willingness to talk about religion openly belies any claim that we have a “naked public square.”

The worst thing that can be said about the measure is that it is unwise and inconsistent with the First Amendment.

The proponents of this measure do not want to amend the Virginia Constitution to preserve the status quo. Rather the proposed language would permit *government*

sponsorship of religion. In the public schools, one could hear intercom prayer every morning to a captive audience of students or classroom prayers led by teachers (aren’t teachers “people”?) as long as the prayer is not penned by the school board. In terms of public acknowledgements, this amendment does not simply permit public religious speech by private persons, but a full-fledged public endorsement of religion by government. A judge could lead a jury in prayer before trial and a city council could erect a nativity scene in the council chambers. None of these hypotheticals come close to pushing the envelope of what a common sense reading of this language would permit.

Yes, there are some limits in this proposal, but they are insufficient to diminish the mischief. The Commonwealth cannot “establish any official religion,” but as outlined above, government can promote a lot of religion short of such official establishments. The fact that the government cannot “require any person to join in prayer” does not adequately protect religious liberty. The implication here is that a student who does not worship the god of the classroom has the option of being sent out in the hall and branded a second-class citizen or staying in the classroom in violation of conscience. Moreover, the fact that school officials cannot “compose school prayers” would not prevent a teacher from leading in a prayer – such as the Lord’s Prayer – that might be suggested by a student. And even these caveats only keep school officials from composing prayers; it does not prohibit prayers in courtrooms or prayers led by other government officials.

History shows that when government decides which prayer to say or which religion to endorse, it exercises control over religion to everyone’s detriment. Prayers become a hollow ritual, symbols of faith can be used as political weapons, and religious freedom is sacrificed on the altar of majority rule.

I for one stand with those old-fashioned Virginians – like Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Baptist John Leland – who understood the importance of church-state separation in ensuring religious liberty. I stand against those modern-day political prayer pushers in the Virginia House who think they know better. I hope members of the Virginia Senate will stand against them, too.

When government decides which prayer to say or which religion to endorse, ... religious freedom is sacrificed on the altar of majority rule.



Freedom
for *me*
means
freedom
for *thee*

Freedom requires humility, not religious projections

By Tom Ehrich

"You have time for a walk," I tell an out-of-town visitor. Worsening weather suggests now or never.

As she assembles boots and coat, I ask if she would like company. I'm guessing she would like time alone — I would, if I were the guest — but I don't want her to get lost.

"Well, all right," she says. I assess her response, conclude she's just being polite, and encourage her to go alone. "Yes, I would like some time alone," before a day of business meetings, she says.

Am I making this unnecessarily complicated? No, I don't think so. Freedom is always complicated. For it is never enough for oneself to be free; freedom is a context, a

setting for interactions. The other's freedom is as important as mine. When the other is oppressed, my own freedom is diminished.

To do my part in nurturing a context of freedom, I must try to imagine the other's situation and to imagine the impact of my behavior on her freedom. Freedom imposed is just another form of oppression. So is freedom hemmed in by a projection of my own needs onto the other.

Promoting freedom, then, requires more humility, imagination, self-awareness and other-awareness than we normally give to relationships.

It is easier to assume that I know best and the other will benefit from whatever I

do in the name of freedom. My efforts might have a patina of generosity but, in fact, be quite self-serving, aiming to make my world safer or richer at the expense of the other's liberty.

True freedom includes the freedom to be wrong, the freedom to live differently, to believe differently, to govern one's home differently, to have different values. I cannot take my own moral, political or economic inventory and then judge the other wrong and therefore unworthy of freedom.

As long as my own freedom isn't impaired, it doesn't matter if the other offends me.

It is especially unseemly to do that judg-

Freedom is not just a political good but a spiritual value, something far more sacred than secular. Nor is it just a condition for a thriving democratic community. Freedom is a fundamental condition for the growth of human personality.

Our various usages of freedom bounce as numbered ping-pong balls do in their miniature cages on lottery night. We are never quite sure what meaning will be plucked out by the ladies with fixed smiles who preside at such drawings.

Some, such as freedom of speech, might astound those who think that freedom lets them spin words this way and that, or shock the innocence out of their audience. In return for its gift, freedom demands integrity — or wholeness — from all artists. As Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes famously said in 1919, freedom of speech “would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing panic.”

Freedom imposes a spiritual demand on artists because they work on the boundary between time and eternity every day. Ernest Hemingway felt that artists were free only in order “to put down what really happened ... the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion and which would be as valid in a year or in 10 years

or, with luck and if you stated it purely enough, always.”

Another quicksilver American phrase is the freedom to choose. This classic phrase of the Advertising/Public Relations Complex pulls off the trifecta of cheapening art, freedom and grammar. The meaning is vague because there is no

Freedom is a spiritual value

By Eugene Cullen Kennedy

object to the verb “to choose.” Freedom’s inherent morality and spirituality are transferred to the act of choosing itself so that we need not — as in abortion — ponder the full complexity of the choice itself.

This soft focus on what we are actually doing is a favored American variant on freedom. So we demand closure, getting something over with, as in mourning — a sacred experience that cannot be hurried. Or in moving on without acknowledging where we have been, what we have done, or where we are going. Humans cannot move on freely from what they do, especially to each other, without becoming less free and less human at the same time.

Freedom’s root is “pri,” which means to love and appears in the Germanic “fri-jaz,” “beloved, belonging to the loved ones.” To be out of bondage means to be loved, as in the Old English “freo” which

survives in our word “friend.” Freedom’s sacredness is grasped in the condition that people seek to provide for those they love. In such safe environments humans need not be on guard and so can become their true selves.

Freedom is profoundly mysterious and genuinely sacred in its demands for a place in which it is safe to be human. Totalitarians use terror to deny people this scared space

for living. As historian Hannah Arendt notes, terror “destroys the one essential prerequisite of all freedom which is simply the capacity of motion which cannot exist without space.”

We may not then be engaged in a holy war but, in engaging with terrorism, we are involved in the sacred work of protecting the space of true freedom that people need in order to become truly human. It is no easy task and the choices that leaders make are not small or easy ones but demand the same integrity that is demanded of the artist. This is a difficult time and freedom must be perceived not as part of a catch phrase for a cause but as a fundamentally spiritual experience.

Eugene Cullen Kennedy is professor emeritus of psychology at Loyola University in Chicago. This column was edited for space.

ing and freedom-depriving in the name of God. It can be difficult to sort out the partisan fervor projected onto God by the partisans who wrote the Old Testament and to see the God behind it all, but one thing is clear: Our God sees the “yoke” and “bar” of the oppressor and is offended. Our God values freedom, and not just the freedom of the chosen tribe, as the Old Testament sometimes conveys, but the freedom of all humanity, as Jesus manifested.

God had a preferred way for the Hebrew tribe to live, but they erred grievously when they sought to impose that way on others. They were to be a “bea-

con,” not a bludgeon. Jesus took that even further by refusing to give rules, structure or allocations of power. He taught and served in a way that left people free to disagree, to be wrong, to take a different path. The disciples weren’t issued weapons for compelling people to do it their way; they were given something to say and encouragement to move on if not heard.

Political and religious movements that claim to be serving God by imposing certain values on others are rarely doing more than imposing a yoke of oppression. That certainly seems to be the case now, as one ascendant group draws firm moral

conclusions based on a projection of their own beliefs and interests and sets out to compel others to live by their values.

Even if they were correct in calling their values “biblical” and “Christian” — which any serious reading of Scripture would dispute — they have no right to force those values on anyone else.

Freedom requires humility, imagination and awareness, not noisy and firm opinions.

Tom Ehrlich is a writer and computer consultant, managing large-scale database implementations. An Episcopal priest, he lives in Durham, N.C.



K. Hollyn Hollman
General Counsel

List of faith-based grants provides more questions than answers

The “faith-based initiative” has been difficult to track since it became mostly a matter of administrative action, implemented through the President’s executive orders and administrative agency rule changes. We know what the executive orders say, but we are still learning how they play out on the ground. While federal agencies are being encouraged to expand the role of faith-based groups in providing federally funded services, we know little about which specific groups are receiving the money, how they are using it and to what effect.

Not surprisingly, one of the most commonly asked questions is: where is the money going? The question is not just one of idle curiosity. In light of the administration’s aggressive pursuit of the initiative, its lenient interpretation of constitutional standards and its rhetoric lauding faith-based organizations, the public wants to know what faith-based groups are being funded. They also want to know how the new regulatory changes affect the beneficiaries of social services and whether organizations that receive the grants are playing

by the rules to avoid government funding of religion.

According to a recent Associated Press story, some of questions are starting to be answered. The White House provided the AP with a list of “faith-based” organizations receiving funds and the amount they received. According to the list, the federal government gave more than \$1.17 billion to “faith-based” groups in 2003. The story offered one of the first opportunities to evaluate how the initiative is working.

Two findings, however, underscore the political nature of the initiative. Clearly, the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives wants to show it has effectively expanded the role of religious groups in providing government social services. In announcing how many faith-based groups have received federal funding, however, the administration seems to have exaggerated the initiative’s success.

First, much of the funding reported went to large grant recipients that had been receiving federal funds for years. We can assume that they did so under traditional, more constitutionally protective rules. Those rules already allowed religious service providers to contract with the government. In fact, more than 80 percent of faith-based grantees awarded funds through the Department of Health and Human Services in 2003 have received government money in the past. Two programs, one under Head Start and the other Housing and Urban Development, account for half of the money reportedly given the faith-based groups. The stated goal of the faith-based initiative was to “level the playing

field” and remove a perceived bias against religious organizations. The list, however, seems to show that faith-based organizations operating under the old rules are receiving the majority of the funds.

Second, representatives from several of the organizations listed by the White House said that their organizations are not “faith-based” and were mischaracterized. For example, an organization named “You Gotta Believe” was listed. According to the AP report, this entity promotes low-income housing and is not about believing in God, but it promotes the belief that all deserve a home. The White House admitted to the AP that the list contains organizations that do not identify themselves as faith-based but merely had names sounding religious.

On the other hand, the exaggeration does not mean there is nothing to worry about. The list of grantees contains a large number of churches, some receiving grants of \$1 million, where the purpose of such grants is not identified.

Finally, it is clear that despite all the talk, there is very little new money for social services through faith-based grants. David Kuo, former White House Deputy Director of the Faith-Based Initiative, made this point in a recent article posted on Beliefnet.com and reported on the front page of *The Washington Post*. He claims that actual monetary support for the faith-based initiative has not matched the enthusiasm shown in the administration’s rhetoric. Kuo claims that in recent large budgets, other domestic priorities such as a repeal of the estate-tax surpassed any “compassion agenda.”

As the administration continues to push the “faith-based” initiative, we will continue to seek answers about its implementation. How is the money being used? Have organizations complied with the regulations to avoid advancing religion in government programs? Are the programs effective? Have faith-based groups simply received money that otherwise would have been going to experienced, effective secular organizations? The questions still outnumber the answers.

As the administration continues to push the “faith-based” initiative, we will continue to seek answers about its implementation. ... The questions still outnumber the answers.

Christian university in Ohio abandons religious hiring policy

Trustees at Ashland University have decided to abandon a policy that would have limited new faculty hires to Jews and Christians.

Instead, trustees at the Ashland, Ohio, school intend to require only that faculty and administrators support the private university's mission statement, including a commitment to Judeo-Christian values.

When trustees initially approved the hiring policy in October, it was meant to clarify Ashland's values to job applicants, said Emanuel Sandberg, chairman of the university's board.

"It turns out that in the process we created new difficulties," he said. "We weren't trying to create any difficulty for anybody."

After hearing complaints, the board agreed to revisit the issue. Ashland, founded in 1878, has historical ties to the Brethren Church. The campus is midway between Cleveland and Columbus.

Donald Sloan, a music professor and president of the faculty senate, said that during his 13 years at the university and for years before, faculty have signed contracts indicating that they support Ashland's mission statement.

That statement says, in part, that "Judeo-Christian values are the foundation of the educational and social environment of the university and shape the character of the institution."

Sloan said the faculty believed that practice has been successful and asked trustees to reconsider the change.

There are excellent faculty members who are not expressly Jewish or Christian, he said, but who nonetheless embody the kind of values the university wants to encourage. — RNS

Religious Freedom Commission says U.S. jails some asylum seekers

A commission set up by Congress has found some foreigners seeking a haven from persecution or torture are being unfairly held by the U.S. government in jails and jail-like facilities.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom released a report Feb. 7 on how expedited removal — under which immigration officials can detain and promptly deport immigrants arriving without documentation — is affecting internationals who are afraid to return to their countries of origin.

Experts appointed by the commission found procedures to protect asylum seekers under expedited removal were applied inconsistently. Also, most asylum seekers were detained in facilities resembling prisons — some actually in jails with convicted criminals. These flaws, the report stated, are not being resolved as a result of poor coordination between the departments of Homeland Security and Justice.

The report gave recommendations to the U.S. attorney general

"You cannot realize and enjoy religious freedom without human rights."

— Felice Gaer, vice chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, on the findings of the study.

and Department of Homeland Security, including:

- Allow asylum officers to grant asylum to credible applicants rather than sending them to court.
- Increase consistency in the rulings of immigration judges.
- Improve conditions at detention facilities.
- Expand efforts to provide legal assistance to asylum seekers.

The commission study was the first to directly investigate ports of entry, secondary inspection and detention centers.

The Rev. Ricardo Ramirez, bishop of Las Cruces, N.M. and a member of the commission, said he was "deeply moved" by the mistreatment of detainees.

On a commission visit to a facility to Florence, Ariz., commission members met detainees awaiting deportation, said Ramirez. Some were kept in the heat outside, others in air conditioning so cold it made them shiver, Ramirez said. Though most were Mexicans and 90 percent were likely Catholic, he said, "They were so frustrated even a priest was no consolation." — RNS

Justice Scalia addresses religion in talks with Catholic audiences

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia has been speaking out about religion lately, explaining to college students that judges should look to tradition and historic understanding in deciding religion cases.

On Jan. 22 Scalia gave an address to the Knights of Columbus Baton Rouge (La.) Council in commemoration of the group's 100th anniversary.

Three days later, Scalia addressed faculty, students and friends of Ave Maria Law School in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Speaking to a full ballroom, Scalia delivered the fifth annual Ave Maria Lecture. He focused on the religion clauses of the First Amendment:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

To determine whether a law is in line with the amendment, courts have applied three tests: Does the law have a secular purpose? Is it religion-neutral? Does it prevent the state from entanglement in religious matters?

Such formulas are perfectly OK, said Scalia. "They are the means by which judicial arbitrariness is checked." But they must be rooted in the Constitution, he said. And when the Constitution itself is unclear, jurists must default to "the settled practices that the text represents."

But what happens when long-established practices are challenged?

Scalia cited a 1970 Supreme Court case involving tax exemptions for houses of worship in New York. "Such exemptions had been around forever," said Scalia, but they don't pass the three tests because the houses of worship had gotten what amounted to favored treatment.

Still, the court let the exemptions continue, citing long-standing history and tradition. "Those historic understandings are the raw data from which the rules should be constructed," Scalia said.

The First Amendment principle about religious neutrality "needs fundamental readjusting" if not in accord with traditions laid out in matters such as the tax case, Scalia said. — RNS



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REPORT from the Capital

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Jeff Huett
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“Free to Worship, Free to Know — Celebrating our Founding Freedoms”

April 14-15, 2005 in Washington, D.C.

A TWO-DAY CONFERENCE (with optional weekend activities) in the nation's capital focusing on our treasured historic freedoms including religious liberty and freedom of the press.

Sponsored by the First Freedom Project partners: Associated Baptist Press, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty and *Baptists Today* news journal.

Program includes presentations by Baptist historian Walter B. Shurden and Freedom Forum CEO Charles Overby, and dialogue with members of Congress.

HOTEL INFORMATION

Courtyard by Marriott on Embassy Row
1600 Rhode Island Ave., Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 293-8000

Single or Double: \$159.00 plus tax
Ask for rooms in the block of First Freedoms Project.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

A registration fee of \$150 includes programming, dinner, two lunches and coach transportation to events.

To register online with a credit card:
Visit www.firstfreedoms.com

To register by check: Send name, address and phone number along with a check for \$150 per participant to First Freedoms Project, c/o Baptist Joint Committee, 200 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002.

VISIT the First Freedoms Project web site (www.firstfreedoms.com) often for the latest update on conference highlights as well as information on how your church can celebrate and support the historic freedoms “to worship and to know.”



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, April 14

- 12:00 pm Buffet lunch at First Baptist Church, Washington (1328 16th Street, NW)
- 12:45 pm Opening Program (First Baptist Church)
- 2:15 pm Check in hotel
- 3:00 pm Board coaches at Courtyard for Capitol Hill
- 3:30 pm Security check at Rayburn Office Building
- 3:45 pm Dialogue with members of Congress / Panel discussion on First Amendment freedoms
- 5:30 pm Board Coaches at Rayburn Office Building
- 6:30 pm Dinner program at Freedom Forum, hosted by Chairman and CEO Charles Overby
- 8:30 pm Board coaches at Freedom Forum for evening drive tour of the Nation's Capital
- 9:30 pm Return to Courtyard Hotel

Friday, April 15

- 9:00 am Board coaches at Courtyard Hotel
- 9:30 am Interpretive tour of Jefferson Memorial
- 10:00 am Celebration of Freedom on Jefferson Memorial Plaza
- 11:15 am Board coaches for Capitol Hill
- 11:45 am Luncheon Program in Medal of Honor Room, Reserve Officers Association (Minute Man Memorial Building, One Constitution Ave., NE)
- 1:30 pm Visit to Supreme Court Building
- 2:30 pm Board coaches for return to Courtyard
- 3:00 pm Conference officially ends ... but many spring-time options are available including post-Cherry Blossom events and the return of Major League baseball to Washington, D.C.

[Details of optional activities for the weekend will be forthcoming.]



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