

SENATE BILL NO. 1077

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR SCHNELTING.

4946S.011

KRISTINA MARTIN, Secretary

AN ACT

To amend chapter 1, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to religious liberty.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 1, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto
2 one new section, to be known as section 1.810, to read as
3 follows:

1.810. 1. This section shall be known and may be
2 cited as the "Missouri Religious Liberty Act".

3 2. (1) The general assembly hereby:

4 (a) Finds and declares that religious liberty is among
5 the most sacred rights recognized by the founders of this
6 nation, and that freedom of conscience and worship are
7 fundamental to the preservation of civil society;

8 (b) Finds and declares that the government of the
9 United States was established with the understanding that no
10 power of civil authority should ever be exercised to limit
11 or prohibit the free exercise of religion, or to close or
12 restrict houses of worship;

13 (c) Affirms the words of President George Washington:
14 "If I could now conceive that the general government might
15 ever be so administered as to render the liberty of
16 conscience insecure, I beg you will be persuaded that no one
17 would be more zealous than myself to establish effectual
18 barriers against the horrors of spiritual tyranny, and every

19 species of religious persecution". Letter from George
20 Washington, President of the United States, to the United
21 Baptist Churches of Virginia (May 1789) (Founders Online,
22 National Archives);

23 (d) Affirms the words of President George Washington:
24 "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political
25 prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable
26 supports". George Washington, President of the United
27 States, Washington's Farewell Address to the People of the
28 United States (September 19, 1796); and

29 (e) Affirms the words of President John Adams: "Our
30 Constitution was made only for a moral and religious
31 people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any
32 other". Letter from John Adams, President of the United
33 States, to the Officers of the First Brigade of the Third
34 Division of the Militia of Massachusetts (October 11, 1798)
35 (The Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society).

36 (2) In light of these principles, it is the intent of
37 the general assembly that the free exercise of religion,
38 including the right of houses of worship to assemble, shall
39 not be abridged, suspended, or prohibited by the state or a
40 local authority.

41 3. As used in this section, the following terms mean:

42 (1) "Place of worship", a building or grounds where
43 activities of religious groups are conducted;

44 (2) "Public official", any elected or appointed
45 officer, employee, or agent of the state of Missouri or any
46 political subdivision, board, commission, bureau, or other
47 public body thereof.

48 4. No public official shall issue an order that has
49 the effect of limiting or prohibiting religious groups from
50 holding religious services or meetings.

51 5. No public official shall issue an order that has
52 the effect of limiting or prohibiting places of worship from
53 holding religious services or meetings.

54 6. The provisions of subsections 4 and 5 of this
55 section shall not apply to religious groups using places of
56 worship to knowingly commit or plan to commit acts of
57 violence or harm.

58 7. The provisions of subsections 4 and 5 of this
59 section shall not be interpreted to exclude places of
60 worship from complying with applicable building and fire
61 codes.

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