



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WEEKLY

from
Americans for Freedom of Religion

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God Bless the USA's Annual Religious Freedom Day, Jan. 16, 2025 *The Anniversary of the Jan. 16, 1787 Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*

13 February, 1818: Letter from 2nd Pres. John Adams (Pres. from 1797-1801) “But what do We mean by the American Revolution? Do We mean the American War?” “The Revolution was effected before the War commenced. The Revolution was in the Minds and Hearts of the People. A Change in their Religious Sentiments of their Duties and Obligations. While the King, and all in Authority under him, were believed to govern, in Justice and Mercy according to the Laws and Constitutions derived to them from the God of Nature, and transmitted to them by their Ancestors— they thought themselves bound to pray for the King and Queen and all the Royal Family...ordained of God for their good.”

“But when they Saw those Powers renouncing all the Principles of Authority, and bent up on the destruction of all the Securities of their Lives, Liberties and Properties, they thought it their Duty to pray for the Continental Congress and all the thirteen State Congresses, &c.”

Learn more here: <https://tinyurl.com/vjhkrdrp> <https://tinyurl.com/p6zpummy>

As our founding fathers and mothers and military warriors lead the patriot colonists through a revolution requiring unimaginable sacrifice, carnage and uncertainty, their reliance on the mercy and assistance of God was ever present. We have the records of their pleas for divine assistance and thanks for what they saw as miraculous interventions in moments of crisis.

This critical freedom of each American to pray...to choose their faith and their method of worship became our nation's First Freedom, part of the compact among the individual states which formed the United States of America. The First Amendment to the Constitution explicitly protects these freedoms and is traceable to Thomas Jefferson's writings in his **Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom** passed on **January 16, 1786**. It protected Virginia citizens in their choice of religious beliefs and practice, assured that no taxes would be levied to benefit any religious sect, and that no man should suffer because of his religious beliefs.

The Virginia Statute was the basis for the First Amendment to the Constitution and was the basis for the Supreme Court's understanding of religious freedom. Thomas Jefferson considered it his most important contribution to our founding and the prevention of tyranny.