**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM DAY RESOLUTION**

**RESOLUTION FOR UPLIFTING FAITH AND FREEDOM IN AMERICA**

**(EXAMPLE 1)**

WHEREAS, Many of the first immigrants to the New World came to these shores motivated by their desire for religious liberty so that they could worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences rather than being forced into the religious uniformity of the Old World; and

WHEREAS, History is replete with examples of the disastrous results of governmental efforts to interfere with individual conscience and religious belief; and

WHEREAS, Even in colonial America, religious dissenters sometimes suffered great persecution from civil authorities, including beatings, imprisonment, and death because of their commitment to the inviolable nature of conscience and faith; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison blazed the trail in Virginia that would eventually lead the nation to see beyond mere religious tolerance so that citizens could enjoy the full and free everyday peaceful exercise of their God-given religious liberty, whether at home, in their professions, in their houses of worship, in their associations, and in all their many activities; and

WHEREAS, The American Founders, following in the great political tradition of John Locke, acknowledged that prior to the civil bonds of men in government, man's first bond and duty remained with his Creator, and man must be free to peacefully act upon his religious convictions without government coercion. As Madison wrote in his *Memorial and Remonstrance,* "This right is in its nature an unalienable right. . . . This duty is precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society;" and

WHEREAS, The Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was written and ratified to protect the unalienable right of individuals to peacefully speak and act on their religious beliefs and to ensure they would remain free from coercion to profess or act on a religious belief to which they do not adhere; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson said of the First Amendment that it "guard[s] in the same sentence, and under the same words, the freedom of religion, of speech, and of the press; insomuch as that whatever violates either throws down the sanctuary which covers the others;" and

WHEREAS, Our first president warned that our political prosperity was dependent upon religion and morality and our second president warned that our Constitution was incapable "of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion," and

WHEREAS, Section 2(a)(1) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401(a)) states that ‘‘From its birth to this day, the United States has prized this legacy of religious freedom and honored this heritage by standing for religious freedom and offering refuge to those suffering religious persecution;” and

WHEREAS, In America today, the growing ignorance of our rich religious heritage of freedom and the rising intolerance specifically to the free exercise of religion and freedom of speech have been directly accompanied by increasing hatred and a coarsening of civil discourse in the body politic; and

WHEREAS, This ignorance and intolerance, if left unchecked, will erase the cherished and fundamental human rights of the free exercise of religion and freedom of speech, taking all other freedoms with them, so that the very essence of America will be quenched and her beacon of freedom will no longer serve as a light to the world;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, We must once again understand the value of religious liberty and its vital importance to all human rights and to individual dignity and return to the principle that President George Washington expressed in his Farewell Address, that the happiness of a nation is connected with its virtue, and its virtue is dependent upon religious principle; and

RESOLVED, We must protect the fabric of religious faith in God in this nation, for only by doing so will America be able to protect the fabric of freedom that has made this nation great; and

RESOLVED, We request constant and fervent prayers for our leaders so that those who know God will be strengthened to maintain their faith, and those who have no belief in God will, at a minimum, show civility and respect to those who do; and

RESOLVED, We seek laws and public policies at all levels of government that will honor the long, hard road that our Founders traveled from mere religious tolerance to true religious liberty for all American citizens; and

RESOLVED, We seek God's continued grace, protection, guidance, and favor in the hope that America can soon overcome her civil discord and her disunity, so that her heritage of faith and freedom can remain a light of freedom to the nations; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, We proudly look back in history to the passage of the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom on January 16, 1786, recognizing and affirming Religious Freedom Day to commemorate that great historical accomplishment that provided the heart of our First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.