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FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

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Whaddya mean, 'America is not a Christian nation'?

Congressmen challenge Obama assertion by drafting 'spiritual heritage' legislation

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While Barack Obama has repeatedly claimed that the U.S. is "no longer a Christian nation." several members of Congress have taken a stand to boldly disagree.

A bipartisan group of 25 members of the House of Representatives earlier this month submitted H.Res. 397, which calls on Congress to affirm "the rich spiritual and religious history of our nation's founding and subsequent history" and to designate the first week of May as America's Spiritual Heritage Week for "the appreciation of and education on America's history of religious faith."

Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va., specifically challenged the president's claims that America is not a Christian nation in a news conference announcing the bill immediately following last week's National Day of Prayer observance.

"The overwhelming evidence suggests that this nation was born and birthed with Judeo-Christian principles," Forbes told reporters, "and I would challenge anybody to tell me that point in time when we ceased to be so, because it doesn't exist."

[Read for yourself the timeless evidence of Christianity's impact on America in the freshly republished "Christianity and the American Commonwealth."](#)

The bill itself cites over 70 historical references and quotes from past presidents, Founding Fathers and Supreme Court decisions as proof that Judeo-Christian principles have been the foundation of our nation.

H.Res. 397, which has now accumulated 41 cosponsors, not only calls on Congress to affirm the nation's



spiritual heritage, but also resolves that the U.S. House of Representatives "rejects, in the strongest possible terms, any effort to remove, obscure or purposely omit such history from our nation's public buildings and educational resources."

Video of Forbes presenting his argument for the bill's passage on the floor of the House can be seen below:

(Story continues below)

The [full text of H.Res. 397](#) begins by asserting that "religious faith was not only important in official American life during the periods of discovery, exploration, colonization and growth but has also been acknowledged and incorporated into all three branches of the federal government from their very beginning."

The bill's long list of "whereas" affirmations begins with the statement, "Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States affirmed this self-evident fact in a unanimous ruling declaring 'This is a religious people. ... From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation.'"

Among the many historical proofs included in the bill were the following:

- Whereas in 1777, Congress, facing a national shortage of "'Bibles for our schools, and families, and for the public worship of God in our churches," announced that they "desired to have a Bible printed under their care and by their encouragement" and therefore ordered 20,000 copies of the Bible to be imported;
- Whereas in 1782, Congress pursued a plan to print a Bible that would be "a neat edition of the Holy Scriptures for the use of schools' and therefore approved the production of the first English language Bible printed in America that contained the congressional endorsement that 'the United States in Congress assembled ... recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States';

- Whereas the 1783 Treaty of Paris that officially ended the Revolution and established America as an independent [nation] begins with the appellation "In the name of the most holy and undivided Trinity";
- Whereas in 1795, during construction of the Capitol, a practice was instituted whereby "public worship is now regularly administered at the Capitol, every Sunday morning, at 11 o'clock";
- Whereas in 1789, Congress, in the midst of framing the Bill of Rights and the First Amendment, passed the first federal law touching education, declaring, "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged";
- Whereas by 1867, the church at the Capitol was the largest church in Washington, D.C., with up to 2,000 people a week attending Sunday service in the Hall of the House;
- Whereas in 1853, the United States Senate declared that the Founding Fathers "had no fear or jealousy of religion itself, nor did they wish to see us an irreligious people. ... They did not intend to spread over all the public authorities and the whole public action of the nation the dead and revolting spectacle of atheistical apathy";
- Whereas in 1854, the United States House of Representatives declared "It [religion] must be considered as the foundation on which the whole structure rests. ... Christianity, in its general principles, is the great conservative element on which we must rely for the purity and permanence of free institutions";
- Whereas President John Adams, one of only 2 signers of the Bill of Rights and First Amendment, declared "As the safety and prosperity of nations ultimately and essentially depend on the protection and the blessing of Almighty God, and the national acknowledgment of this truth is not only an indispensable duty which the people owe to Him";
- Whereas President Andrew Jackson declared that the Bible "is the rock on which our Republic rests";
- Whereas President Franklin D. Roosevelt not only led the Nation in a six-minute prayer during D-Day on June 6, 1944, but he also declared, "If we will not prepare to give all that we have and all that we are to preserve Christian civilization in our land, we shall go to destruction";
- Whereas President Dwight D. Eisenhower declared, "Without God there could be no American form of government, nor an American way of life. Recognition of the Supreme Being is the first, the most basic, expression of Americanism. Thus, the Founding Fathers of America saw it, and thus with God's help, it will continue to be," in a declaration later repeated with approval by President Gerald Ford;
- Whereas the United States Supreme Court has declared throughout the course of our Nation's history that the United States is "a Christian country," "a Christian nation," "a Christian people," "a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being," and that "we cannot read into the Bill of Rights a philosophy of hostility to religion"

Following the lengthy "whereas" section, the bill then calls on the House to resolve to affirm the spiritual history of the nation, reject efforts to cleanse that religious history and establish America's Spiritual History Week to appreciate and educate the citizenry on the country's foundations in faith.

Forbes was joined in announcing the bill's introduction by several members of Congress who spoke in favor of the bill, religious leaders like Dr. James and Shirley Dobson, professional football player Shaun Alexander, and leaders of several national education, policy and advocacy groups.

Asked last year to clarify his remarks on America's spiritual heritage, Obama repeated them to the Christian Broadcast Network: "I think that the right might worry a bit more about the dangers of sectarianism. Whatever we once were, we're no longer just a Christian nation; we are also a Jewish nation, a Muslim nation, a Buddhist nation, a Hindu nation, and a nation of nonbelievers." Obama wrote in an e-mail to CBN News senior national correspondent David Brody.

"We should acknowledge this and realize that when we're formulating policies from the statehouse to the Senate floor to the White House, we've got to work to translate our reasoning into values that are accessible to every one of our citizens, not just members of our own faith community," wrote Obama.

Rep. Mike McIntyre, D-N.C., who serves as co-chair of the Congressional Prayer Caucus with Rep. Forbes, spoke at the press conference announcing H.Res. 397 and asserted to the contrary that it's "high time" the nation recognize and affirm the "integral part of our nation's history" that Christianity has played.

McIntyre said Americans don't know, for example, that even Ben Franklin, who "wasn't known as the most spiritual of the Founding Fathers," nonetheless looked to God as the only hope for our country:

"Ben Franklin," McIntyre said, "stood up and called the assembly of delegates to prayer, because, he said, 'Scripture teaches us that if a sparrow can't fall to the ground without his notice, is it likely that an empire will rise without his aid?' And if we don't first go to prayer, he said, 'We'll be no more successful than the builders of Babel.'"



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