



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Our Story: Religious Freedom in Peril

In 1775, Paul Revere rode through the streets of towns and villages, country roads and dirt paths, calling out to his countrymen and neighbors to wake up, and prepare for an imminent attack on their freedoms.

In 2012, a group of Catholics came together bound by a common concern: the federal government's denial of freedom of conscience. Much like Paul Revere, they recognized the urgent need to alert their friends and neighbors to an attack on our foundational freedom – our freedom of religion.

"The constitutional freedom of religion is the most inalienable and sacred of all human rights."

Thomas Jefferson

The group was roused by the government's mandate that forced all employers, except churches, to provide abortion-inducing drugs, contraception and sterilization as part of their health insurance. These Catholics recognized that this was an extreme denial of religious freedom – and it was unconstitutional. The federal government was claiming the ability to deny First Amendment rights through regulations and excessive fines.

The Catholics – who were retired professionals, enjoying time with their families, and volunteering in their communities – saw that this information was not reaching Catholics in the halls of their schools and the vestibules of their churches, and they felt compelled to act. Their mission was clear: to draw attention to the ongoing erosion of religious freedom in the US and around the world.

"It's the duty of everyone to defend religious freedom and promote it for all people."

Pope Francis

It was clear that secularism was being hard pressed on the heart of one of the most basic conscientiously-held beliefs – the sacredness of human life. The group knew from the world's history of religious intolerance and persecution that all Americans were in great jeopardy, particularly since religious freedom, the right of conscience, is the first of all our inalienable rights including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The group ultimately decided to mobilize and the Catholics for Freedom of Religion (CFFR) nonprofit organization was formed, embodying the group's commitment to grassroots action. This has involved nine years of building resources and expanding volunteers to reach more fellow lay Catholics and bring attention to denials of religious freedom. Together, we continue to educate our fellow Americans about the facts and importance of religious freedom, how dearly it was purchased for us and how easily it is diminished and denied when we are not vigilant. To learn more and to get involved, visit www.cffor.org.

*"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something.
And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do."*

Edward Everett Hale