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## Focus on Religious Freedom

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### The Five Freedoms of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an **establishment of religion**, or prohibiting the **free exercise thereof**; or abridging the **freedom of speech**, or **of the press**; or the right of the people **peaceably to assemble**, and **to petition the Government for a redress** of grievances. -*Text of the First Amendment*

The Constitution of the United States was fortified by the addition of the first ten amendments known as the Bill of Rights. It was added to further protect individual rights and to guard against government overreach.

America's founders were adamant that morality and religion, disbursed throughout the citizenry, would be the only sure protection of the natural liberties from their creator. It is not surprising then that religious freedom was the first of the rights emphasized. Freedom of speech was seen as the protection from tyrannical control over criticisms of government and, along with freedom of the press, was intended to prevent deceptions by government. Freedom of assembly and of redress gave citizens a practical approach to addressing laws and actions they believed denied their liberties.

The recent assassination of Charlie Kirk, a leading conservative Christian voice in this nation assaulted the freedom of religion and freedom of speech of every American. If these most basic freedoms are denied to one American, they may be denied to all.

- Our founders knew that "Whoever would overthrow the liberty of a nation must begin by subduing the freeness of speech." - Benjamin Franklin.
- "To suppress free speech is a double wrong. It violates the rights of the hearer as well as those of the speaker." - Frederick Douglass
- "The constitutional freedom of religion is the most inalienable and sacred of all human rights." - Thomas Jefferson
- "Conscience is the most sacred of all property." —James Madison

So that generations to come will understand and preserve religious freedom, freedom of speech and all five freedoms of the First Amendment, each American is obliged to learn the liberties of our Constitution and take responsibility for teaching them to the next generations. **Remember what the communist Lenin said: "Give me four years to teach the children and the seeds I have planted will never be uprooted."**