

Chairman Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Brennan and Members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Lori Bloom, and I come before you as a school board member and a concerned citizen who believes deeply in teaching the full story of our nation's founding. I would like to make a simple request: that we not shy away from the role Christianity played in shaping America's earliest ideals, institutions, and public life.

First, let us be clear: this is not about promoting a faith in our classrooms. It is about honesty in education. When we present our students with an incomplete narrative—omitting the influence of Christian thinkers on the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist writings, even early public schools—we do them a disservice. Our forebears drew on a variety of sources when crafting the principles of self-governance, human rights, and community responsibility. Among those sources were Christian moral teachings about human dignity, the equality of all before God, and the duty to one's neighbor. These ideas helped inform the concept that governments derive “their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

Second, our country's founders lived in an age when religion and politics were intertwined in ways that may feel foreign today. To understand their motives, we must understand their convictions. George Washington spoke of Providence. John Witherspoon, a Presbyterian minister on the signers' list, blended scripture and political philosophy. Ignoring their beliefs is like studying physics while denying gravity exists. It leaves a gap in understanding why they drafted the Constitution as they did, why they insisted on religious liberty, and why they ultimately embedded the First Amendment in our Bill of Rights.

Third, acknowledging Christianity's historical role does not threaten the Establishment Clause—it honors it. By teaching facts impartially, we empower students to see how the framers balanced religious conviction with the imperative of government neutrality toward any particular faith. We also open the door to meaningful dialogue about how America's Christian heritage coexists with other traditions and with secular civic values.

In closing, I urge this committee to support curriculum standards that include Christianity as one among several forces that shaped the American experiment. Let our classrooms foster critical thinking, not censorship of genuine history. Let us entrust our students with the truth—so they can appreciate both the challenges our founders faced and the rich tapestry of ideas they wove into our republic. Thank you for your time.