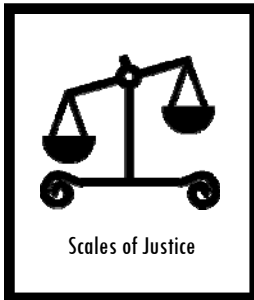


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## Our Mission

Michigan Atheists is a statewide movement that defends the civil rights of atheists; works for the total separation of state and church; and addresses issues of First Amendment public policy.

Michigan Atheists hold that the rights of both religious and nonreligious (theistic and atheistic) people are best served when the power



of government is not abused to impose one person's religious beliefs or practices upon another.

It is also held that no exemption or allowance in the law should be made for religious people (theists) or sectarian institutions that is not likewise made for nonreligious people (atheists) or secular institutions.

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## Our Motto

*Action without discussion is dangerous. Discussion without action is futile.*



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*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; ..."*

# Separation of State and Church



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**For Freedom's  
Sake, Think!**

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M I C H I G A N A T H E I S T S

## THERE IS NO FREEDOM OF RELIGION WITHOUT FREEDOM FROM RELIGION

### United States National Motto

*E Pluribus Unum* ("from many, one") was adopted by Act of Congress in 1782 and used on coins and paper money since 1795.

*In God We Trust* appeared on some currency as early as 1864 but did not become our nation's motto until 1956.

### Pledge of Allegiance

Originally composed by Francis Bellamy in 1892, the pledge has been altered four times. The words "under God" were not added until 1954.

### God in the Constitution

Like other states, Michigan's original constitution, written in 1835, did not include flowery expressions of gratitude to God in the preamble. Nor did its second constitution, written in 1850.

The phrase "grateful to Almighty God" was not added until 1908. No such reference to God is made in the preamble of the United States constitution.

### Not Diminished or Enlarged

"The civil and political rights, privileges and capacities of no person shall be diminished or enlarged on account of his religious belief."

*Mich. Const 1963, Art I, §4, Eff. Jan 1, 1964*

### Wall of Separation

"I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State." Thomas Jefferson's Letter to Danbury Baptist Association, 1802.



### Line of Separation

James Madison wrote in a letter to Jasper Adams, "... it may not be easy, in every possible case, to trace the line of separation between the rights of religion and the Civil authority with such distinctness as to avoid collisions ..."



Furthermore Madison expressed concerns over "the tendency to a usurpation on one side or the other, or to a corrupting coalition or alliance between them ..."

### Forever Separate

"Let us labor for the security of free thought, free speech, pure morals, unfettered religious sentiments, and equal rights and privileges for all men, irrespective of nationality, color, or religion;... leave the matter of religious teaching to the family altar, the church, and the private school, supported



entirely by private contribution. Keep church and state forever separate." Ulysses S. Grant's Speech to G. A. R. Veterans, at Des Moines, IA 1875.

### An Outrage Against Liberty

"To discriminate against a thoroughly upright citizen because he belongs to some particular church, or because, like Abraham Lincoln, he has not avowed his allegiance to any church, is an outrage against the liberty of conscience, which is one of the foundations of American life." From Theodore Roosevelt's letter on religious liberty.



### Supreme Court Justices on Freedom for Religion and Irreligion

"The day that this country ceases to be free for irreligion, it will cease to be free for religion--except for the sect that can win political power." Written by Justice Robert H. Jackson in the dissenting opinion for *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952).



In the *Board of Education of Kiryas Joel Village School District v. Grumet*, (1994), Justice David Souter, writing for the majority, concluded that "government should not prefer one religion to another, or religion to irreligion."

