

## The Strategic Prayer Initiative – Legal Issues Prayer Topics

Where Prayer Focuses Power Falls!



Version 03142019

**Supreme Court:** Pray that each justice would be courageously impartial in every case. Pray that God would help each justice to make decisions that would be in keeping with the purity and character of the living Judeo/Christian God. Pray that the Lord would bring future justices of His choice onto the Court in His sovereign timing. Ask God to draw each justice to Himself.

**Freedom to Share the Gospel or Bible:** Pray that Christians would continue to be able to freely share the Word of God, even when it may be contrary to opinion of some in the local community. Pray for a favorable resolution for Ken Hauge, a retired pastor in Virginia, who faces eviction for holding a bible study in his apartment. First Liberty sent a letter to the realty company on his behalf "detailing how [the housing complex's] actions constitute religious discrimination in housing, a violation of the federal Fair Housing Act." After no response, a complaint was filed with the Department of Housing and Urban Development. (Source: [www.FirstLiberty.org](http://www.FirstLiberty.org))

**Free Speech of Employees and Officials:** Pray for the continued right of employees to write or speak about matters unrelated to work according to their beliefs and the freedom of public officials and employees to act and speak their faith during their private time. Pray that believers would boldly exercise these rights. In *Cochran v. City of Atlanta*, Kelvin Cochran, former Fire Chief in Atlanta and also Fire Chief of the year in *Fire Chief Magazine*, sued the City of Atlanta when he was fired for briefly mentioning his Christian views on sex and marriage in a devotional he wrote during personal time. In December 2017, a federal court found some of the city's policies to be unconstitutional and October 2018, City of Atlanta agreed to pay its former fire chief, Kelvin Cochran, \$1.2 million. (Source: [ADFLegal.org](http://ADFLegal.org))

**Sanctity of Life:** Pray that our nation would value life and that the murder of the unborn, disabled or the elderly would not be tolerated or funded by our government. In March 2018 the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a California law requiring pro-life pregnancy centers to tell their clients that California provides free or low-cost abortions (advertise for the abortion industry). In light of this victory, a similar law was struck down in Hawaii by a federal district court citing the California case. Currently in Illinois, there are 2 cases challenging similar laws. Pray for a favorable outcome to these suits. (Source: [ADFLegal.org](http://ADFLegal.org))

**University Students' Rights to Equal Access and Opportunity:** Pray that all student groups have the same access to resources a university has made available such as funding, room usage, mail systems, etc. In 2018, officials at Ball State denied funding to Students For Life that wanted to "share resources with pregnant and parenting students on campus." However after a federal lawsuit was filed, Ball State eliminated policies that discriminated against 'religious, political or ideological' expression among student groups and implemented safeguards against viewpoint discrimination as part of a settlement agreement and agreed to pay damages. (Source: [ADFLegal.org](http://ADFLegal.org))

**University Students' Rights to Freedom of Speech, Religion, and Association:** Pray that students would be free from censorship, reprisal or punishment for beliefs and have equal chance at academic success, employment and promotion. Julea Ward was dismissed from her graduate program (four classes shy of completion and with a 3.91 GPA) at Eastern Michigan University "because she referred a potential client who wanted advice on his same-sex relationship to another fellow counselor." Her initial suit was dismissed, but in 2012 the Court of Appeals reversed the decision of the lower court and ruled in Julea's favor. (Source: [ADFLegal.org](http://ADFLegal.org))

**Academic Freedom for University Faculty:** Please pray for the right of university professors of any faith to express their views without facing retaliation or discrimination. Dr. Kenneth Howell was fired for explaining the church's official position on homosexuality in response to a student question during an "Introduction to Roman Catholicism" class at University of Illinois. In July 2010, attorneys sent a letter asking university officials to reinstate Professor Howell, "explaining that the university's actions violated his rights protected by the First Amendment..." The university reinstated him and an investigation cleared him of all charges. (Source: [ADFLegal.org](http://ADFLegal.org))

**Freedom of Religion within One's Profession:** Pray the Christians will continue to enjoy the freedoms to practice their religion/conscience, no matter what profession they choose. A nurse sued Vanderbilt University for requiring participants in a Nurse Residency Program to participate in abortions. Vanderbilt receives federal dollars and federal law prohibits grant recipients from forcing students or healthcare workers to participate in abortions contrary to their religious beliefs or moral convictions. The day a complaint was filed with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the university modified its nurse residency application so that it no longer required applicants to pledge that they will participate in abortion procedures. (Source: [ADFLegal.org](http://ADFLegal.org))

**Public Schools:** Pray that students would not be hindered from exercising their religious rights while at public school. Students in Texas were chastised for praying at lunch in the cafeteria and later told they could pray behind the stage curtains. Pray that the students and parents know and exercise their legal rights: to opt out of activities that violate their religious beliefs; to pray or bring their bible to school; to form bible clubs; and to choose religious topics when students are free to choose topics. (Sources: [www.ChristianLaw.org](http://www.ChristianLaw.org) and [www.FirstLiberty.org](http://www.FirstLiberty.org))

**Freedom of Religion in the Public Square:** Pray that people would not be hindered from praying or practicing their religion in the Public Square. According to national media, in Georgia in 2014, a group of women were stopped from praying in the Mall whose policy was to prohibit prayer in the mall, even over a meal. Pray that Christians can freely exercise their religion, even if some in the community do not agree with it or are uncomfortable by it.

# Prayer for Christians to Exercise Rights in Public School Arena



(Current legally protected rights of religious expression: From Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation  
<http://cpcfoundation.com/religious/religious-freedom/>)

1. **Discrimination**—School authorities may not discriminate against religious activity or speech. Pray that school administrators would uphold students' and teachers' religious and speech rights.
2. **Bible Reading and Prayer**—Students may read their Bibles or other Scriptures, say a prayer before meals and pray before tests. Pray that Christian students would freely and courageously pray and read their Bibles at appropriate times during school.
3. **Discussions**—Students may attempt to persuade their peers concerning religious topics, just as they may political topics. Harassment, however, (which is not defined) is not permissible. Pray that Christian students would lovingly share Jesus with their peers and have wisdom not to harass their classmates.
4. **School Work**—Students may use religious themes in their homework, artwork, or other assignments, and such work should be judged (graded) by ordinary academic standards. Pray that students would seek God to creatively share Christian themes in their school assignments.
5. **Literature**—Students have the right to distribute religious literature (tracts, etc.) to their schoolmates on the same terms as they are permitted to distribute other literature. Pray that students would be discern how to best distribute religious literature to their peers.
6. **Religious Objections**—Students may be excused from lessons that are objectionable on religious or other conscientious grounds. Pray the Christian parents would be made aware of any lesson presented to their child/ren that are religiously objectionable and that they would boldly have their child/ren excused from these lessons.
7. **Clothing**—Students may wear clothing depicting religious themes, and these messages may not be singled out for suppression. They are subject to the same rules as apply to comparable messages. Pray that Christian students feel free to wear clothing with a Christian message.
8. **Christian Groups**—Students religious groups at public secondary schools have the same right of access to school facilities as is enjoyed by other comparable student groups. Pray that that students not be hindered from access to school facilities and help these groups know an articulate these rights to authorities.
9. **Student Meetings**—Student meetings may include a prayer service, Bible reading, or other worship exercise. Pray that students would confidently take advantage of opportunities to meet together or religious activities at school.
10. **Access**—Students may use the public address system, the school newspaper, and the school bulletin board to announce their meetings, on the same terms as other student groups. (This only applies to schools receiving federal funds.) Pray that administrators allow student groups at your local schools equal access as other groups.
11. **Teaching**—Schools may teach about religion, including the Bible or other scripture, the history of religion, the Bible-as-literature, and the role of religion in the United States and other countries. Schools are to be neutral with respect to religion. However, they may play an active role with respect to teaching civic values and virtue, and the moral code that holds us together as a community. Schools may not allow religious instruction by outsiders on school premises during the school day. However, school officials may dismiss students to off-premises religious instruction. Pray that Christian teachers seek God in how to neutrally incorporate religion in their lessons and that they may do so without censure.

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## Student Rights Public Schools:

1. Students can pray, read their Bibles or other religious material, and talk about their faith at school.
2. Students can organize prayer groups and religious clubs, and they can announce their meetings.
3. Students can express their faith in their classwork and homework.
4. Teachers can organize prayer groups with other teachers.
5. Students may be able to go off campus to have religious studies during school hours.
6. Students can express their faith at a school event.
7. Students can express their faith at their graduation ceremony.

A summary of key points from *Guidance on Constitutionally Protected Prayer in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools* ([www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)) by Gateways to Better Education ([www.GoGateways.org](http://www.GoGateways.org))

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## Student Rights at Public University:

1. **Freedom of Speech** - The U.S. Constitution protects your right to express personal religious and political beliefs in writing, speech, and visual or performing arts while at a public university. In class, a professor may ask you to take positions you disagree with, so long as he doesn't require you to agree with those positions outside the classroom.
2. **Freedom of Association** - Christian and conservative student groups have the same right to associate on public university campuses as any other group.
3. **Free Exercise of Religious Beliefs** - Public universities cannot compel you to publicly advocate views and adopt values that are contrary to your beliefs.
4. **Equal Access** - All recognized student groups have the same right to access resources a university has made available. This includes funding, meeting rooms, mail systems, or other campus resources.
5. **Equal Opportunity** - As a student, you have the right to be free from censorship, reprisal, or punishment for your beliefs. Students with religious or conservative beliefs should have the same chance at academic success, employment, and promotion.  
From <https://www.adflegal.org/issues/religious-freedom/university/u-faq>.