

CONCERNED
WOMEN *for* AMERICA

**Statement by Annabelle Rutledge
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Concerned Women for America's Young Women for America
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Shurtleff v. Boston Oral Arguments Rally

Good morning everyone,

My name is Annabelle Rutledge from Concerned Women for America, the largest public policy organization for women in the nation. I serve as the national director of CWA's Young Women for America project, which is training the next generation of young women on the Christian and constitutional principles that are the foundation of our liberties and freedoms.

I stand here on behalf of hundreds of thousands of women who want to see an end to the pernicious *hostility* towards religion that has become all too common in our day and age. If we are being honest, the hostility we see in many cases is directed specifically at Christians.

Many Americans fail to realize that the very foundations of the liberties they enjoy sprout out of Biblical soil. Therefore, in attacking religion as a whole, and Christianity more specifically, they work against their own interests, against their own liberty.

This case is a prime example that sometimes the loudest voices crying for diversity and tolerance are the most intolerant of diversity when that diversity is also inclusive of people of faith with whom they disagree.

The City of Boston has a worthy goal for its flagpole policy in its city hall plaza. The city explained that it wants "to create an environment in the City where everyone feels included and is treated with respect." Except that "everyone," according to the City of Boston, does not include Christians—we are apparently the right kind of people to exclude.

The city's website further explains their policy this way, "We also want to raise awareness in Greater Boston and beyond about the many countries and cultures around the world. Our goal is to foster diversity and build and strengthen connections among Boston's many communities."

Accordingly, LGBTQ+ communities are loudly celebrated, their flag displayed with pride, no pun intended. Likewise, flags with Muslim themes from countries other than our own are welcomed with open arms. “Yay, diversity!”

But the flag that represents the faith of the very people who founded the City of Boston (the Puritans) *that flag* is just not welcomed. For Boston, diversity stops at Christianity’s doorsteps.

Needless to say, this nonsensical policy stands in clear violation of the First Amendment to our Constitution, which states plainly, as applied to the states, that the city “shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof....” In targeting religious speech and somehow saying it is unworthy of the same protections afforded other types of speech, the city violates the most basic principles of justice and fairness, not to mention the essence of our First Amendment.

As we pointed out in our brief before the Court, the city’s attempt to differentiate between religious organizations and civic organizations fails to recognize the nature of our faith. By their very nature, religious organizations are civic organizations. Our concern for the poor and needy, for the weak and oppressed, and for justice and righteousness cannot be contained to the four walls of a building. Call that building a church or call it what you want.

Our faith is a living faith. We are called to go and love our neighbors. We cannot do otherwise.

That faith gave birth to many of the freedoms we enjoy. The faith that is at the root of the City of Boston, whose very city flag contains its motto in Latin words that read, “God be with us as he was with our fathers.”

Fitting, since from the founding of our country, churches have been the most important civic institution, bringing incredible progress. It is why the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 declared that “religion, morality, and knowledge [were] necessary to good government.”

The words of John Adams also stand as a similar reminder when he said that “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

Religion and faith are not only compatible with our Constitution; they are indispensable to its proper understanding.

We are confident the Supreme Court understands this, and we expect a unanimous Court to send a clear message by striking down this unconstitutional policy.

Thank you.