



# OFFICIAL BI-WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

## Religion in Politics

**\*NOTHING BELOW REPRESENTS THE OPINIONS OF BRIDGEUTK OR ITS LEADERSHIP**

### Andrew Kingsolver: Charlie Kirk's Assassination Marks Another Dangerous Precedent for Political Discourse

On Wednesday September 10th, America witnessed the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk. Last semester, Mr. Kirk spoke at a public gathering on our campus. While he held many controversial opinions (I personally had serious disagreements with his stance on Ukraine), he was allowed to speak due to requirements for the University to respect his Constitutionally protected right to free speech. This is a freedom I would equally expect our university to honor for activists on the opposite side of the political spectrum. He is unfortunately not the first person killed for their political beliefs this year. In June, a Democratic state representative and her husband were killed, and a Democratic state senator and his wife were also wounded in Minnesota. Just over a year ago, Donald Trump was twice targeted. The first attempt saw one of the attendees at his Pennsylvania rally killed while shielding his family, while the second attempt was foiled before any shots were fired.

There has been a rapid escalation in attacks on politicians and political activists by both sides of the political spectrum in America. Such political violence is normally expected in Authoritarian regimes, not the country that declares itself to be a haven of freedom and democracy. So what has happened to our country for us to have reached this point? Have we lost our ability to respectfully disagree with one another?

In my time as a student, I have had the opportunity to meet and debate with several other students, as well as professors, who I have had vehemently and whole-heartedly disagreed with. Some of them are people who I consider myself fortunate enough to call friends. So how is it that we can have cordial conversations when we are so ideologically dissimilar? In all of my conversations, we remembered a vital rule that all are entitled to their own opinion, even if it is wrong. We never insult the intelligence of each other in discussing different viewpoints, we do not resort to name calling, and above all else, we never use our beliefs to justify violence against anyone we disagree with.

It seems like this is a skill that has been in stark decline in recent decades and has plummeted in the last few years. Such an environment is detrimental to the foundation that this country was built on. Without the ability to have constructive debate and discourse, our country would never have been formed, let alone survive nearly 250 years. The last time our country was unable to have discourse between opposite sides resulted in the country being torn in half and the loss of between 600,000 and 750,000 American lives. As of writing, the suspect for Mr. Kirk's murder, 22-year-old Tyler Robinson, has only just been arrested and his full motive is not yet known. What is known is that he had a strongly negative opinion of Charlie Kirk. However, I feel comfortable saying that violence is used by those who have no other justification to support their opinion and therefore do not deserve the right to one.

Right now, America stands at a crossroad. Are we going to continue to allow ourselves to descend further into anarchy, or will we stand shoulder to shoulder with those who stand on opposite sides of our ideological beliefs? As one of many Americans who has become disgusted at the current state of politics in America, I implore my fellow Americans to cease watching everything crumble from the sidelines. We must demand better, both of our leaders and of ourselves. If we want our country to change for the better, we must start that change from within.

### Connor Corby: Separation of Church and State

Hello readers! My name is Connor and to state my biases, I am a Christian and a firm believer in the separation of church and state. For context, the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states that the U.S. shouldn't establish or favor any particular religion over another and that people have the right to exercise their religious freedoms. These details from the Constitution make up my perspective on the role of religion in politics. I believe that policy shouldn't endorse religious action like funding religious schools or allowing school-guided prayer because these actions would be deemed as state endorsement of religion. At the same time, I believe that people in politics and government should be allowed to express their religious beliefs because it is a part of why their constituents choose them and/or their right.

The diversity of people of faith in government ensures that all people are represented in politics. But recently, I have started to fear the rise of advocacy from the far right surrounding Christian Nationalism. I am against Christian Nationalism and believe that the movement is based on ideology, not religion, and the ideology leans toward hatred of people not "fitting the bill" of their preferred identity and ideology. People can have their beliefs, and we should encourage expression, but we need to be constantly vigilant of the relationship between religion and state affairs to prevent overlap.

### William Bricker: Religion in Politics

The free expression of religion should be guaranteed in the context of a democratic, secularly governed society. That being said, it is clear that in America, the primary way in which politics and religion interface is through the synthesis of Evangelical Christianity and right-wing politics. In recent years, an increasing portion of the right has identified itself with Christian nationalist beliefs, with 53% of Republicans qualifying as adherents or sympathizers according to the nonpartisan research institute PRRI (1). Most aligned with the left will find these ideas odious in and of themselves, but everyone else with an interest in a democratic and peaceful nation should also be concerned by this, given the fact that 28% of adherents to Christian nationalism and 22% of sympathizers believing political violence is necessary to save the country (compared to a respective 12% and 8% of skeptics and rejecters) (2). Even if one possesses a personal adherence to a religion, it's clear that religious fundamentalism is toxic to the values of a free society.

- (1). Tsadadmin. (2025, July 2). Christian Nationalism Across All 50 States: Insights from PRRI's 2024 American Values Atlas - PRRI. PRRI. [https://prri.org/research/christian-nationalism-across-all-50-states-insights-from-prri-2024-american-values-atlas/#\\_ftn1](https://prri.org/research/christian-nationalism-across-all-50-states-insights-from-prri-2024-american-values-atlas/#_ftn1)
- (2). Prophecy, Trump, and the Justification of Political Violence - PRRI. (2025, June 18). PRRI. <https://prri.org/spotlight/prophecy-trump-and-the-justification-of-political-violence/>

### College Republicans Statement

The American republic was built on a common belief in the Christian God. From the pilgrims of many denominations escaping religious persecution in the colonial era, to the Founding Fathers invoking the name of God multiple times in our founding documents, America has never backed down from expressing its acknowledgment of God. Christian belief has a core place in politics and government, anchoring our nation in timeless laws and principles that have defined civilization throughout all of history. Laws and principles that continue to make America the country that it is today. The Christian ideals of justice, charity, the sanctity of human life, and the dignity of every human being are foundational to a moral society. Without a strong moral foundation in the truth, which is Christianity, politics and government go adrift in far flung ideologies that degrade the human existence.

To separate Christian belief from politics is to separate the American tree from her roots. A government informed by Christian conviction stands for absolute truth in the face of destruction and tyranny. It reminds us that our rights are granted to us by God, not the state. If America is to endure the many hardships and struggles of the future, her politics must be in alignment with the will of God. Christian belief in politics does not weaken our Republic; instead it strengthens it and casts the light of truth over our laws, our leaders, and our people.



For online orders to count towards the fundraiser, they must be placed for pickup only from the restaurant location of, and during the hours of, the fundraiser. Delivery orders and gift cards do not qualify. \$150 minimum event sales required to receive any donation.