



## Religious Freedom in America: Constitutional Roots and Contemporary Challenges (Studies in American Constitutional Heritage)

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**Religious Freedom in America: Constitutional Roots and Contemporary Challenges (Studies in American Constitutional Heritage)** From University of Oklahoma Press

All Americans, liberal or conservative, religious or not, can agree that religious freedom, anchored in conscience rights, is foundational to the U.S. democratic experiment. But what freedom of conscience means, what its scope and limits are, according to the Constitution—these are matters for heated debate. At a moment when such questions loom ever larger in the nation’s contentious politics and fraught policy-making process, this timely book offers invaluable historical, empirical, philosophical, and analytical insight into the American constitutional heritage of religious liberty.

As the contributors to this interdisciplinary volume attest, understanding religious freedom demands taking multiple perspectives. The historians guide us through the legacy of religious freedom, from the nation’s founding and the rise of public education, through the waves of immigration that added successive layers of diversity to American society. The social scientists discuss the swift, striking effects of judicial decision making and the battles over free exercise in a complex, bureaucratic society. Advocates remind us of the tensions abiding in schools and other familiar institutions, and of the major role minorities play in shaping free exercise under our constitutional regime. And the jurists emphasize that this is a messy area of constitutional law. Their work brings out the conflicts inherent in interpreting the First Amendment—tensions between free exercise and disestablishment, between the legislative and judicial branches of government, and along the complex and ever-shifting boundaries of religion, state, and society.

What emerges most clearly from these essays is how central religious liberty is to America’s civic fabric—and how, under increasing pressure from both religious and secular forces, this First Amendment freedom demands our full attention and understanding.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“With religious freedom under assault from various directions, this fine collection of essays could not be timelier. Bringing historical, juridical, and social science perspectives to bear on contemporary challenges, the authors and editors point the way to a society in which diverse religions may not only peacefully coexist but flourish, and where no one is forced to choose between religious obligations and civic duties.”—**Mary Ann Glendon** Learned Hand Professor of Law, Harvard University

“As religious freedom becomes an increasingly contentious area of public law and policy, this volume offers an outstanding collection of essays on religious freedom and related church-state issues. Each carefully crafted essay stakes out a position—while giving due consideration to multiple and competing views. Scholars, students, judges, journalists, and anyone with a serious interest in the topic should put this volume at the top of their reading list.”—**John J. DiIulio, Jr.**, Frederic Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion, and Civil Society, University of Pennsylvania, and First Director, White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

#### About the Author

**Allen D. Hertzke** is David Ross Boyd Professor of Political Science, and Faculty Fellow in Religious Freedom with the Institute for the American Constitutional Heritage, at the University of Oklahoma. He is the author of *Freeing God’s Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights* and editor of *The Future of Religious Freedom: Global Challenges*.

**Kyle Harper** is Senior Vice President and Provost and founding director of the Institute for the American Constitutional Heritage at the University of Oklahoma. He is author of *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275–425* and *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality*.

**Roger Finke** is Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies at the Pennsylvania State University and Director of The Association of Religion Data Archives.

**Steven K. Green** is Fred H. Paulus Professor of Law and Director, Center for Religion, Law & Democracy, at Willamette University.

**Charles C. Haynes** is director of the Religious Freedom Center of the Newseum Institute in Washington, D.C. He writes and speaks extensively on religious liberty and religion in American public life.

**Thomas S. Kidd** is Professor of History at Baylor University and Senior Fellow at Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion.

**Robert Martin** is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Southeastern Louisiana University.

**Vincent Phillip Muñoz** is the Tocqueville Associate Professor of Political Science and Concurrent Associate Professor of Law at the University of Notre Dame.

**Rajdeep Singh** joined the Sikh Coalition in December 2009 and serves as its Director of Law and Policy, in which position he focuses on developing and promoting policy solutions for civil rights issues through an interdisciplinary combination of government affairs, media relations, and interfaith coalition building.

**Harry F. Tepker, Jr.**, is Floyd and Irma Calvert Chair in Law and Liberty and Professor of Law at the University of Oklahoma College of Law.

**Asma T. Uddin** is Counsel for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, Washington, D.C., and Founder and Editor-in-Chief of AltMuslimah.com, a web magazine dedicated to issues on gender and Islam.

**Robin Fretwell Wilson** is the Roger and Stephany Joslin Professor of Law and Director of the Program in Family Law and Policy at the University of Illinois College of Law.

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