Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without theism or other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

The mission of the American Humanist Association (AHA) is to advance humanism, an ethical and life-affirming philosophy free of belief in any gods and other supernatural forces. Advocating for equality for nontheists and a society guided by reason, empathy, and our growing knowledge of the world, the AHA promotes a worldview that encourages individuals to live informed and meaningful lives that aspire to the greater good.

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President’s Message

This is my first President’s Message and comes at the end of my first year leading the AHA. While a nonbeliever my entire adult life, I have identified as a humanist for at least twenty years and have been heavily involved with supporting the AHA for more than ten years. I am therefore thrilled to have the gratifying privilege and awesome responsibility of leading this organization with a history of almost eight decades fighting for the rights of nontheists in our country.

2019 was a year that the AHA continued to make progress in advancing its mission. We kept up our ongoing efforts to uphold the legal and constitutional rights of nontheists, with the important milestone of our Legal Center arguing a case before the Supreme Court for the first time. Being a grassroots organization, our efforts to help humanist communities across the country are critical, and we launched the Humanist Environmental Response Effort (HERE) for Climate to connect local individuals and community organizations with the resources they need to have an impact on the pervasive crisis facing our planet.

But the last year was also a very difficult one for us humanists who take seriously our tagline about being good. Our republic saw the continued and intensified degradation of ethical behavior in the public sphere. We watched a president impeached, allegedly engaging in violations of the most basic ethical standards. We observed politicians and other public figures across the country appear to enthusiastically enable such personal unethical behavior and gleefully participate in advancing unethical policies against refugees and other marginalized groups.

My view is that the most important contribution any of us can make to our cause in such an environment is to continually set an example of ethical behavior, while openly identifying as nontheist, whenever that identification can be done without endangering our personal safety. This is a contribution we can make wherever we live, whatever work we do, whatever our financial situation.

If we do not want what is past to be prologue in 2020, each of us has another important role to play. This year each of us has the opportunity to participate with our nation in choosing whether the degradation of ethical standards in our public life continues or whether our republic takes a turn away from this path. Needless to say, one’s individual view on this will have no influence on the nation’s choice unless each of us makes an effort, however busy our lives are, to register and cast votes for those whom we want to represent us. But beyond that, we need to impress upon others in our lives the importance of the choices that will be made in 2020. This is especially applicable to younger people who are increasingly nontheist but not sufficiently part of our movement. Make no mistake, the damage that could be done to the institutions of our republic as a result of the nation’s choices in 2020 may be extensive and long lasting.

When you speak up on matters such as why our nation’s choices in 2020 are important to you, don’t let anybody tell you that humanist values are not American values. To those who would show you that being godly is an excuse to condone unethical behavior and to indulge in it if one can get away with it, show them that you would rather be good than godly any day.

Sunil Panikkath

Sunil Panikkath
Public Awareness of Humanism

Through extensive media outreach and public relations work, the American Humanist Association promotes its activities and offers a humanist perspective on major current events with the goal of bringing humanism into the mainstream.

The AHA focused its publicity efforts in 2019 on climate change, the activities and members of the Congressional Freethought Caucus, the definition of religious freedom, religious privilege in public schools, and more. Additionally, many outlets looked to humanists’ voices to comment on the increasing pattern of Christian nationalism in the Trump administration, including troubling comments made by Secretary Ben Carson, Secretary Mike Pompeo, and Attorney General William Barr.

Major Media Coverage in 2019

- ABC News
- AOL.com
- Associated Press
- BBC
- Bloomberg
- Breitbart
- Business Insider
- CBS News
- Chron.com (Houston Chronicle)
- CNBC
- CNN
- Esquire
- Fox News
- Los Angeles Times
- Medium
- National Public Radio
- NBC News
- New York Post
- Newsweek
- Politico
- San Francisco Chronicle
- Scribd
- SFGate
- Slate
- The Atlantic
- The Daily Beast
- The Hill
- The Huffington Post
- The Wall Street Journal
- The Washington Post
- Time Magazine
- US News & World Report
- USA Today
- Vox
- Washington Examiner
The AHA garnered over 5,600 media hits from local, national and international news outlets.

The AHA’s press outreach efforts resulted in over $82 million in earned media value.

AHA received over 3,700 radio and television hits.

AHA’s Monica L. Miller (right) speaks to reporters, including NPR’s Nina Totenberg (left), after presenting oral arguments at the Supreme Court on February 27, 2019.
Defending the First Amendment

As one of the leading advocacy organizations for the secular movement, the Appignani Humanist Legal Center (AHLC) has firmly established a reputation of success, effectiveness, and swift response to church-state violations on behalf of the humanist community.

2019 Litigation

SUPREME COURT: Christian Cross on Public Land in Bladensburg, MD
Monica Miller, Legal Director and Senior Counsel, briefed and then argued AHA’s first Supreme Court case in February 2019. The case centered on the constitutionality of a 40-foot-tall Latin cross towering over a busy intersection in Bladensburg, MD. In front of a majority conservative court, our focus was on a “narrow loss” as we fought to prevent the high court from overturning decades of precedent. Although the Supreme Court upheld the cross (with Justices Ginsburg and Sotomayor strongly dissenting), the ruling was highly fragmented and has limited applicability for future cases.

Cross Display in Pensacola, FL
In 2018, AHA won a case which affirmed the district court’s ruling that a Florida city’s 34-foot-tall Christian cross used solely for Easter services violates the Establishment Clause. The high court instructed the lower court to reevaluate the ruling, so AHA filed a brief. A decision is expected in 2020.

Legislative Prayer in Carroll County, MD
The AHA celebrated a major victory in August of 2019 when it won a longstanding case challenging the Carroll County Board of Commissioners’ practice of delivering prayer at public meetings. The court issued an order that permanently prevents the commissioners from delivering prayers at the opening of commission meetings.

Humanist Inmate Seeking Equal Recognition in Nevada
The case sought recognition of humanism as a state-approved “faith group” in order for humanists to hold weekly meetings in Nevada prisons. The AHA achieved this result while the appeal was pending, with Nevada ultimately adding humanism to its list of approved “faith groups” and authorizing humanist meetings.

Ten Commandments Display in Little Rock, AK
The AHA, along with other secular groups, filed a lawsuit on behalf of its members in Little Rock, AR in May 2018 challenging the constitutionality of Arkansas’ Ten Commandments monument on state capitol grounds. Throughout 2019, AHA attorneys were actively engaged in discovery and pretrial motions.
Public School Prayer in South Carolina
AHLC attorneys celebrated another major court victory in July 2019 when they won a case against a South Carolina school district. The case, filed in 2013, challenges the school district’s promotion of graduation prayers and use of a Christian venue for elementary graduation ceremonies. The U.S. District Court originally ruled against the AHA, but it successfully appealed to the Fourth Circuit in 2016 and won on both issues back on remand.

Police Prayer Vigil in Ocala, FL
In May 2018, AHA won its case in the U.S. District Court of Florida against the City of Ocala and its police department for sponsoring a prayer vigil. In 2019, AHA attorneys filed briefs defending the victory against the city’s argument that the ruling should be vacated on a procedural issue.

Demand-letter Activism
In 2019, the AHA’s legal team sent approximately twenty demand letters—virtually all successfully resolved—to various government entities objecting to church-state violations. Several noteworthy victories include:

- The cancellation of a planned first grade field trip to a Christian college to see a biblical play. AHA sent a “final warning” email and hours later, the school agreed to cancel the trip!
- A creationism display in a Texas elementary school was removed after AHA attorneys wrote to the school district challenging the egregious violation.
- Victory in a long-fought battle for rights of incarcerated humanists: AHA attorneys wrote an email to prison officials demanding that humanist inmates be allowed to assemble after a court victory in AHA’s favor more than a year prior. In October 2019 humanist meetings began at North Carolina facility.

Amicus brief (friend-of-the-court) activity
The AHA’s legal team submitted or co-signed five amicus briefs in 2019:

CFI v. Warren
The AHA authored a brief supporting CFI and the legal recognition of atheist wedding officiants.

The AHA authored an amicus in support of a lower court ruling that the Pennsylvania House of Representatives’ practice of barring nonreligious local residents from offering invocations is discriminatory and unconstitutional.

AHA attorneys, in conjunction with secular and interfaith allies, filed an amicus brief in support of a lower court ruling that the City of Boston was correct in its decision to deny a request to fly the Christian Flag in front of City Hall.

Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue
The AHA joined other major nontheist organizations in a brief opposing public funding of religious education.

New Hope Family Services, Inc. v. Poole
The AHA cosigned an amicus brief in support of adoption services free from religious discrimination.
Humanism on Capitol Hill

The American Humanist Association continues to use its proximity to the Capitol and White House to build relationships and advocate for the rights of humanists and nontheists everywhere. Whether through direct meetings, coalitions, or demonstrations, AHA staff work tirelessly to make sure humanist voices are heard and weighed when it comes to making and implementing our nation’s laws.

Repeal Blasphemy Laws

AHA led a coalition effort of more than 35 organizations to reintroduce resolutions in the House and Senate that call for the global repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws. AHA also developed a 4-page info sheet “Understanding Blasphemy Laws around the World,” distributed to legislators on Capitol Hill.

Bangledeshi-American secular activist Rafida Bonya Ahmed (second from left) joined (from left) AHA’s Rachel Deitch, Michaela Reger, and Isabelle Oldfield, along with Ron Millar of the Center for Freethought Equality at the Congressional Freethought Caucus reception, held during the State Department’s Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom on July 16-18, 2019.
Humanist Values on Capitol Hill
AHA participated in more than 100 direct meetings with members of Congress, administration officials, and congressional staff in 2019 to discuss AHA’s policy priorities on issues such as the separation of church and state, international religious freedom, civil rights and liberties, education reform, voting reform, scientific integrity, LGBTQ rights, women’s autonomy, anti-discrimination legislation, and many more.

New Humanist Resolutions
The AHA undertook the largest issue portfolio expansion in our organization’s history when our Board of Directors passed new resolutions on white supremacy, immigration, benefit corporations, and environmentalism.

Humanism’s Seat at the Table
Along with participating for the second year in a row in the State Department’s Ministerial to Advance International Religious Freedom, the AHA secured invitations for national and international secular groups to attend. AHA was also in the room with global leaders at the United Nations “Global Call to Protect Religious Freedom.”

Darwin Day
Darwin Day Resolutions were introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate, with 21 co-sponsors, in recognition of the achievements of reason, science, and the advancement of human knowledge. The Darwin Day resolution honors both Darwin and modern scientists for their contributions towards humanity, and also affirms the validity of evolution while opposing the teaching of creationism in public schools.

National Day of Reason
The National Day of Reason is a project of the AHA that works to recognize the first Thursday of May as National Day of Reason, a counter-event to the Congressionally-mandated National Day of Prayer. AHA worked with co-chair of the Congressional Freethought Caucus Jamie Raskin (D-MD) to reintroduce a resolution recognizing May 2 as a National Day of Reason.
Realizing Social Progress

Humanists have the perspective and unique opportunity to be a leading positive force for change and to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with allies against discrimination.

Social Justice Alliances
In 2019, our social justice alliances became more robust and started organizing their own programs and projects. The LGBTQ Humanist Alliance, for example, hosted its inaugural Centering the Margins Summit to bring together LGBTQ Black, Indigenous, and People of Color within the humanist and nontheist communities.

Spreading the Word
Alliance Leadership Council members continued to educate on topical issues at events across the country, including national conferences such as Creating Change, Skepticon, and Women of Color Beyond Belief.

Humanists March for Good
Alongside events and programs, we took to the streets to exercise our freedom of speech in support of the issues we care about deeply. We were partners of the global Climate Strikes, the Women’s March, and participated in Fire Drill Fridays, gun violence protests, a rally against white supremacy, and more.
Black Humanist Alliance
The Black Humanist Alliance builds on the natural tie between humanist thought and support for social justice causes that campaign for equal rights and social liberation.

Feminist Humanist Alliance
The Feminist Humanist Alliance strives to build healthy communities that confront discrimination and oppression guided by the principles of intersectional feminism.

Latinx Humanist Alliance
The Latinx Humanist Alliance facilitates social justice activism among, expand the visibility of, and foster safe spaces for Latinx humanists.

LGBTQ Humanist Alliance
The LGBTQ Humanist Alliance works to advance equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning people and their families, and strives to build connections and alliances between LGBTQ communities and humanist communities through education and outreach.
Teaching Humanism and Growing Community

The American Humanist Association’s Center for Education strives to provide educational opportunities that serve humanist and secular communities. The center offers a wide range of resources designed for humanist individuals and groups across the spectrum.

Humanist Studies Program
The Humanist Studies Program (HSP) built a collaborative relationship with Meadville Lombard Theological School, a Unitarian Universalist liberal seminary. Throughout the year, AHA negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding to offer HSP and Meadville students the opportunity to earn a Master of Arts in Leadership with a concentration in Humanism.

Online Courses
Right to Die, by Kevin Bradley of Final Exit Network, was added as the 28th online course. The purpose of this course is to present factual information about a sensitive, controversial topic. It does not presume to judge anyone’s religious beliefs, and it does not align with a particular political ideology.

Open Lecture Series
The fourth Open Lecture Series event was in Minneapolis, MN, on Climate Justice: A Better Future for Us All. The lectures focused on building a narrative on the human right to a safe and habitable environment, and the challenges posed by overconsumption and a rapidly industrializing world.

(left to right) Bailey Webster, Vishnu Laalitha Surapaneni, Timothy Denherder-Thomas, Mysti Babineau, Ben Passer, and Catherine Fleming speak at Climate Justice: A Better Future for Us All on May 18, 2019
HERE for Climate
The launch of AHA’s climate action program, the Humanist Environmental Response Effort (HERE) for Climate, was a huge success as the AHA brought attention to the global climate crisis and engaged humanists with actionable ways to combat climate change and make a positive impact on the environment. Supported by a generous donor who funded a matching campaign, AHA’s advertising campaign reached millions of people encouraging them to take an active role in stopping the climate crisis. Ads appeared on billboards, in transit shelters, in traditional print media, and online through major digital outlets and on social media. The AHA worked on “greening” its office throughout the year by completing an energy audit to address inefficiencies and implementing composting and advanced recycling systems.

Humanism for All
The AHA supports over 150 incarcerated humanist members. With assistance from volunteers and staff, the AHA sent incarcerated humanists various donated books and DVDs, about 250 winter holiday letters, and established ongoing pen-pal correspondence.

Ten Commitments
The Ten Commitments represent humanistic values that promote a democratic world in which every individual’s worth and dignity is respected, nurtured, and supported, and where human freedom and ethical responsibility are natural aspirations for everyone.

Master Class
The Master Class is continuing education for leaders across the humanist and secular movement. Using the active learning methods of the Humanist Studies Program, the Master Class encourages participants to fully engage with instructors and peers to go beyond the acquisition of facts, and truly delve into topics. In 2019, the AHA hosted the second master class on Building Communities to Counter White Nationalism, exploring proactive responses to white nationalist and white supremacist politics throughout the world.

Humanism & Self-Respect Conference
The AHA hosted a joint conference this September in partnership with Periyar International USA, drawing hundreds of attendees. The international event brought together humanists and the Tamil and Indian-American rationalists of the self-respect movement for two days for cultural exchange, exploring topics in humanism, and celebrating the long-growing humanist movement in Southern India.

University Award
The AHA offers an annual University Award for Philosophical Diversity to post-secondary learning institutions that foster a culture of intellectual openness that allows humanism and a diverse array of other philosophical perspectives to flourish. The ceremony was in February and commemorated the establishment of the University of Miami’s Endowed Chair for the Study of Atheism, Humanism, and Secular Ethics.
AHA’s 78th Annual Conference: Expanding Our Reach, Reducing Our Footprint

The American Humanist Association’s 78th Annual Conference was held on June 7-9, 2019, in a first-of-its-kind distributed venue. Streamed live from five select university locations across the country, humanists participated via livestream or attended in person.

This distributed online conference had the advantage of making AHA’s Annual Conference more accessible to those of differing financial means at a lower carbon footprint. The AHA reached more members than ever before—allowing for a wide variety of speakers to participate and educate others while building stronger networks of local humanists.

The conference attracted well over 1,000 registered attendees (livestream and in-person)—close to twice the attendance than one of AHA’s traditional conferences.

2019 Awardees

Salman Rushdie
2019 Humanist of the Year

Pamela Gay
Isaac Asimov Science Award

Barry Kosmin
Lifetime Achievement Award

Leighann Lord
Humanist Arts Award

Mara Wilson
LGBTQ Humanist Award

Richard Wiseman
Humanist Media Award

THE AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION

78TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

FIVE UNIVERSITY VENUES & WEBCAST

PITTSBURGH Carnegie Mellon University
HOUSTON Rice University
BROOKLYN Medgar Evers College
CLAREMONT Pitzer College
MIAMI University of Miami
WORLDWIDE Webcast
AHA Programs & Adjuncts

Center for Freethought Equality reached out to over 840 candidates in four states electing their legislatures (Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, and Virginia) and in more than 20 special federal and state elections and municipal elections across the country. The PAC endorsed 17 candidates (7 allies and 10 members of the nontheist community). Of the endorsed candidates, 7 won their races (5 allies and 2 members of the nontheist community). In addition to endorsed candidates three humanists won re-election or election to their municipal offices. There are now 75 elected officials who publicly identify with our community at the local, state, and federal levels in 25 states across the county.

The AHA boasts a large network of local humanist groups, with 150 chapters and 100 affiliates across the country dedicated to promoting humanism and encouraging community engagement. A monthly Humanist Action Kit for local groups provided information and activities on Martin Luther King Jr Day of Service, Darwin Day, Marching Forward, Environmentalism, National Day of Reason, LGBTQ Pride, International Day of Friendship, International Day of Literacy, Supporting Marginalized Populations, World Kindness Day, and Human Rights Day.

The Humanist Society applies humanism to daily life through a unique celebrant program, education, and community involvement. Humanist Society endorsees received two in-person trainings for humanist celebrants in Los Angeles and Orlando and four quarterly teleconferences on topics in celebrancy. In December, the Humanist Society launched a Professional Development section on its website—a collection of hundreds of pages of training materials, ceremony scripts, online courses, teleconference recordings, and other resources for our endorsees to expand their skills and further professionalize their work.

The Humanist Foundation ensures a lasting future for humanism with the generosity of members who have included the American Humanist Association or the Humanist Foundation in their will or other estate plan. Founded in 1980 and with an endowment of $8 million, the Foundation provides estate planning advice on wills, life insurance plans, trusts, and gift annuities for members who seek to support humanism for years to come. The Humanist Foundation’s Humanist Heritage Project seeks to conserve the life stories of humanist leaders in a perpetual archive for historic preservation.

The Humanist Legal Society promotes and protects humanist values in the legal system by providing support and networking opportunities to lawyers, judges, legal academics, law students, and paralegals throughout the United States and by fostering humanism in the law. In 2019 the HLS held an event in Colorado with Colorado Supreme Court Justice Melissa Hart.

Humanist Press is the publishing house of the American Humanist Association and has provided material for the humanist/freethought/atheist market since 1995. Humanist Press books and e-books are available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and other online book retailers, and 100 percent of the proceeds benefit AHA programs.
The Humanist Magazine

Committed to providing readers with intellectual and ethical adventure, the bimonthly Humanist magazine provides humanist perspectives on religious freedom and human rights, scientific exploration and technology, politics, psychology, ethics, art, and more.

Issues explored in the Humanist in 2019:

- Social media
- Far-Right group Patriot Prayer
- Imperial borders and mythical frontiers
- Legislative action on climate
- Secular vs. sectarian monuments
- Polyamory in Portland
- “America First”
- Evangelicals’ climate denial
- 200 years of Walt Whitman
- Climate justice
- Secularism on college campuses
- The Ten Commitments

Important humanist voices featured during the year in articles, interviews, and profiles included: Salman Rushdie, Pamela Gay, Barry Kosmin, Leighann Lord, Mara Wilson, Richard Wiseman, Ryan Bell, Sikivu Hutchinson, Mark Dunbar, Daniel Thomas Moran, Becky Garrison, Steven Waldman, Jerry McNerney, and Clay Farris Naff.

“Like many humanists, I get more magazines than I have time to read. I have huge stacks of to-read books beside the bed and stuffed onto shelves, and newsletters of all sorts pile up awaiting a few free moments. However, I always find that reading the Humanist is time well spent, with good food for thought.”

From a reader in Genesee, PA
TheHumanist.com

TheHumanist.com is the daily online news site of the American Humanist Association. It is the online hub for news, politics, science, and culture from a humanist perspective. TheHumanist.com serves as a general-interest website for humanists, atheists, freethinkers, secularists, religious progressives, and the non-religious.

By the Numbers

- 3,277 original pieces since launch
- 78,000 page views per month
- 50,000 visitors per month
MAKING A DIFFERENCE: 2019 Supporters of the American Humanist Association

A special thanks to our donors in 2019. The list below features the names of donors who contributed $250 or more in 2019. The support of all our donors—large and small—enables the work we do, and we regret that we could not publish the names of all of our 34,000 members and supporters. Thank you for helping humanism move forward!

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Michael Ware
Emily Watkins
Jerry Wesner
Brent S. Weyhrauch
Andrew Whalley
Thomas and Valerie Wheeler
Eric Whitcombe
Donald and Karen White
Louise M. Wilde
Wayne Williams
James S. Wilson
Cathy Wood
Jim Wooldridge
Reuben Yost
Secular Hub for Humanists, Atheists and Freethinkers
Anonymous (3)

**Supporting Member ($250-499)**
Gregory Lyle Alexander and Chris Vogdes
John Alexander
Ed Allwein
Balance Sheet

**Assets**
- Current Assets: $950,693
- Fixed Assets: $35,763
- Total Assets: $986,456

**Liabilities & Equity**
- Liabilities: $245,070
- Equity (Net Assets, Net Income): $741,386
- Total Liabilities & Equity: $986,456
Ways to Support Humanism

Our successes in 2019 were possible because of the generosity of our members and supporters. As a supporter of the AHA, you help us to provide the most comprehensive and activist-oriented approach to protecting the separation of church and state and working for the rights and values of humanists like you.

Donate
The American Humanist Association relies on the support of our members. Donations to the AHA are put directly to work toward protecting the separation of church and state, promoting humanist issues to our nation's leading policy makers, supporting local humanist communities, working toward an inclusive humanist community and increasing humanism's visibility to the public.

Monthly Giver
Become a Vonnegut Sustainer, a special group of members who give generously every month to the American Humanist Association and help to sustain our programs.

Planned Giving
Leave a legacy for humanism and the generations ahead with your planned gift. A variety of options are available, including bequests and charitable annuities, and estate planning assistance is free if you become a member of the Honor Roll of the Humanist Foundation and name the American Humanist Association or The Humanist Foundation in your will.

Other Ways to Donate
There are many ways to donate to the American Humanist Association: employer matching gifts, giving through the Combined Federal Campaign (#19492), gifts of stock, gift subscriptions to the Humanist magazine, eBay's Giving Works program, or AmazonSmile.

Follow the AHA on Social Media
The American Humanist Association is on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Follow us to get news and updates from the AHA.

Join or Start a Local Chapter
The AHA has 250 chapters and affiliates across the United States. If there is not yet an AHA chapter or affiliate group near you, start one! The AHA can help find local members in your area and provide helpful resources to start a local chapter.

The American Humanist Association, a 501c3 charitable educational nonprofit, is proud to hold the highest standards in charitable accountability for nonprofit organizations in the United States.