



Atheists. Agnostics. Humanists. Americans.

Jan 6, 2022

The Honorable Bennie Thompson
Select Committee to Investigate the
January 6th Attack on the Capitol
House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairperson Thompson,

The rise of white Christian nationalism in this country is a threat to its future as a democracy. The attack on the Capitol on January 6th demonstrated this for the world to see. The crosses, the flags, the signs, the prayers outside the building and on the Senate floor were all the result of growing influence of this pernicious ideology. The testimony of numerous people arrested that day confirms that white Christian nationalism motivated many of the rioters.

White Christian nationalism seeks to merge Christian and American identities, distorting both the Christian faith and America's constitutional democracy. Christian nationalism demands that Christianity be privileged by the State and implies that to be a good American, one must be Christian. It is the antithesis of the secular and pluralistic government envisioned by the Founding Fathers and embodied in the First Amendment.

As an ideology, white Christian nationalism is a permission structure that allowed the January 6th rioters to attack police and disrupt the electoral process because they believed they had the right and the duty to do so. That makes it dangerous. We do not attribute January 6 to Christian nationalists alone. Lies about the outcome of the election certainly played a role, as did other factors. But we cannot overlook the involvement of white Christian nationalists and the way the rhetoric of Christian nationalism has spread to influence millions of people. Framing elections in apocalyptic terms has become much more common. People hear that, too many believe it, and some act on it. The storming of the Capitol crystallized how serious a threat we face.

We ask that the Committee hold a hearing to thoroughly investigate the extent and the impact of white Christian nationalism on those who stormed the Capitol on January 6



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and the accompanying election interference. We also ask that the Committee's final report fully account for white Christian nationalism's role in the events that day and the days leading up to it. White Christian nationalism is a clear threat to democracy in America and must be recognized as such. The Committee has a vital role in shining a light on this threat.

Sincerely,

The Secular Coalition for America:

American Atheists

American Humanist Association

Camp Quest

Ex-Muslims of North America

Freedom From Religion Foundation

Hispanic American Freethinkers

Recovery From Religion

Secular Woman

The Clergy Project

American Ethical Union

Black Nonbelievers

Cultural & Secular Jewish Organization

Foundation Beyond Belief

Freethought Society

Military Association of Atheists and

Freethinkers

Secular Student Alliance

Society for Humanistic Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Humanist

Association