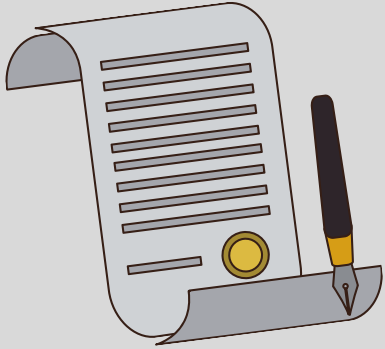


Religious Liberty & Freedom



INTERFAITH ALLIANCE
OF COLORADO
PROTECTING FAITH AND FREEDOM

The phrases “religious liberty” and “religious freedom” cause confusion when used to discuss reproductive healths, rights, and access. They are often invoked as justification to deny rights in favor of religious convictions. This is a misreading of the rights granted us by the Bill of Rights.



The First Amendment to the United States Constitution says: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...

The First Amendment grants individuals the freedom to believe as they choose. **The establishment clause protects individuals from required adherence to a national religion.**

Religious freedom protects the rights of all members of society and protects everyone from discrimination, unequal treatment, or punishment based on religion. Religious freedom has limits: it protects personal religious expression and practice so long as it does not infringe upon the rights of others.

Currently, 3,500 groups make up the American religious landscape. The growing and changing landscape means that we have to learn how to give value to diversity. We live in a pluralistic society, so **each individual is entitled to their own religious beliefs**. However, individuals may not use religious freedom to control others’ beliefs or behaviors in the public sphere. Religious freedom emphasizes the equality of all people and it is necessary to ensure that our multitude of religions and the people who practice them are able to thrive.

Religious liberty should not be interpreted as the right to impose one’s beliefs upon other. For instance, religious convictions should not limit the benefits offered to employees. Allowing religious groups to discriminate undermines the democratic principle of equality. An individual shouldn’t be required to participate in someone else’s religious practices or rituals.

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