

February 12, 2025

**To the Honorable Members of the North Dakota Legislature,**

As you consider House Concurrent Resolution 3020, which urges North Dakota to acknowledge the “Kingship of Jesus Christ,” I implore you to reflect on the profound implications of such a measure. This resolution not only undermines the foundational principles of our democracy but also threatens the very fabric of our pluralistic society.

**Separation of Church and State:** The U.S. Constitution explicitly mandates the separation of church and state, ensuring that no single religion is elevated above others. This principle is fundamental to our democracy, safeguarding the freedom of all citizens to believe or disbelieve as they choose. By promoting a resolution that acknowledges the “Kingship of Jesus Christ,” you risk violating this constitutional safeguard and setting a dangerous precedent for religious favoritism.

This measure is antithetical to the very bedrock of our nation as outlined in the **First Amendment** to the **U.S. Constitution** where we find the the Establishment Clause, which states:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

**Pluralism and Inclusivity:** North Dakota, like the United States, is home to a diverse population of individuals from various religious backgrounds, including those who identify as non-religious. This resolution would send a stark message of exclusion to these citizens, potentially relegating them to second-class status. In a society that prides itself on inclusivity and equality, such a move would be a significant step backward.

**Constitutional Implications:** While this resolution may not carry the force of law, its symbolic impact cannot be overstated. It would embolden a growing Christian nationalist movement that seeks to blur the lines between church and state, undermining the safeguards that protect religious liberty for all. This is not merely a matter of personal belief but a challenge to the constitutional framework that ensures our democracy remains secular and inclusive.

This resolution would also be in direct violation of **Article I, Section 3** of the **North Dakota Constitution** that states:

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“The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, **without discrimination or preference shall be forever guaranteed in this state**, and no person shall be rendered incompetent to be a witness or juror on account of his opinion on matters of religious belief; but the liberty of conscience hereby secured shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or justify practices inconsistent with the peace or safety of this state.”

**The Role of Government:** Government officials take an oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution, not religious doctrine. It is your duty to protect the rights and freedoms of all North Dakotans, regardless of their religious affiliations. This resolution diverts attention from pressing issues that require legislative action and instead focuses on a divisive, symbolic gesture.

**Call to Action:** I urge you to reject this resolution and uphold the principles of religious freedom and pluralism that have made our nation strong. Instead of promoting religious dogma, focus on legislation that benefits all North Dakotans, regardless of their faith or lack thereof. The future of our democracy depends on our ability to maintain a secular government that respects the beliefs of all citizens.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Loren Keith Henry

Grand Forks, North Dakota