

**No Ohio citizen via taxes paid should be forced to support religious institutions.**

The 1802 Ohio Constitution in Article VIII, section 3 protects the right to worship according to the dictates of one's conscience. It also prevents one from being compelled to support or maintain any ministry against one's consent. That provision stated:

That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God, according to the dictates of conscience; that no human authority can, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience; that no man shall be compelled to attend, erect or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry, against his consent; and that no preference shall ever be given, by law, to any religious society or mode of worship, and no religious test shall be required, as a qualification, to any office of trust or profit. But religion, morality and knowledge, being essentially necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of instruction shall forever be encouraged by legislative provision, not inconsistent with the rights of conscience. (See 1851 CONST. art. I, § 7.)

Essentially, the 1802 provision was included in the 1851 Constitution, which states:

All men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own conscience. No person shall be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship, or maintain any form of worship, against his consent; and no preference shall be given, by law, to any religious society; nor shall any interference with the rights of conscience be permitted. No religious test shall be required, as a qualification for office, nor shall any person be 1 The Constitution of the State of Ohio incompetent to be a witness on account of his religious belief; but nothing herein shall be construed to dispense with oaths and affirmations. Religion, morality, and knowledge, however, being essential to good government, it shall be the duty of the General Assembly to pass suitable laws, to protect every religious denomination in the peaceable enjoyment of its own mode of public worship, and to encourage schools and the means of instruction. (1851)

The language of the above 1851 provision is straightforward and understandable. One is permitted to worship according to one's own conscience and cannot be forced to support other styles of worship. Ohioans via taxation are forced to support private religious schools through direct payments for vouchers, nonpublic administrative cost reimbursement, auxiliary services and EdChoice vouchers. This is a violation of the Ohio Constitution. But as one prominent Ohio legislator told the press, "We can kind of do what we want"; thus state officials ignore the Constitution.