



Protecting the Equal Rights
of Nonreligious Americans

January 27, 2025

1012 14th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 299-1091
www.secular.org

The Honorable John Thune
Office of the Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Office of the Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Thune and Schumer,

As a coalition of twenty organizations dedicated to the separation of church and state, freedom of religion or belief, and the rights of the nonreligious, the Secular Coalition for America (SCA) is writing today in opposition to the nomination of Russell Vought to be director of the Office of Management and Budget. We do not need to speculate on what he would do as OMB director because we can simply look at his record in his previous stint at OMB and his contributions to Project 2025.

The first line of the Bill of Rights declares, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." SCA and its member organizations staunchly support the Establishment Clause and the separation of church and state that follows from it. Mr. Vought cannot say the same. In his article titled "[Is There Anything Actually Wrong with 'Christian Nationalism'?](#)" he says he believes Christian nationalism "... is a commitment to an institutional separation between church and state, but not the separation of Christianity from its influence on government and society." He's okay with "institutional separation" as long as he still gets the influence of Christianity on the government.

In his same article, Vought says the United States is a Christian nation. It is absolutely not. Our Constitution does not contain any of the words Christian, God, Jesus, or Bible. It is a secular document that meticulously establishes a secular government. It only mentions religion twice: in Article VI, clause 3, which prohibits religious tests for any government office; and in the First Amendment. Neither establishes the United States as a Christian nation. Quite the opposite.

Mr. Vought's beliefs could have a significant impact on government policy with serious, real-world consequences. According to his own statements, an individual's immigration eligibility should depend on whether that person "[accept\[ed\] Israel's God, laws and understanding of history.](#)"



Atheists. Agnostics. Humanists. Americans.

Mr. Vought's concept of the United States as a Christian nation faces demographic challenges as well. The percentage of Christians in the total population has declined steadily to 63 percent, while those with no religious affiliation have grown to 29 percent. Those of other faiths have remained fairly constant at eight percent. Our nation is famously a melting pot of different cultures, customs, and creeds. Mr. Vought's desire to promote and privilege Christianity over other faith traditions — and none — is antithetical to the idea of a pluralistic society and directly contrary to the uniquely secular democracy our Founding Fathers envisioned.

There are additional concerns with Mr. Vought's approach to leading OMB as demonstrated by his previous term there. One of his signature policies was his effort to implement "Schedule F" in order to change the employment status of tens of thousands of federal employees so they can be replaced by political loyalists from Mr. Vought's party. This would result in a significant loss of experience, competence, and confidence in the federal workforce, which serves all Americans in ways they do and do not realize.


In addition, we should not overlook the inevitable response from the next Democratic president, which will be to fire the tens of thousands of federal employees hired by Republicans and replace them with Democrats. This cycle of massive federal employee turnover with every new administration will inevitably result in a less effective federal workforce and one that will attract fewer and fewer highly qualified candidates.

We are also deeply concerned with Mr. Vought's lack of respect for laws duly passed by Congress and upheld by the Supreme Court. For example, his lack of interest in complying with the Impoundment Act of 1974, which prevents the president from refusing to spend money appropriated by Congress.

Mr. Vought said in his confirmation hearing that, while he agrees it is an existing law, the Impoundment Act has only been in place for 50 years, not 250, and more importantly, the President believes that the law is unconstitutional and made a campaign promise to ignore it. So, Mr. Vought says, the new "team" will consider whether to obey that law or not. This should concern members of Congress who support Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution which gives them "the power of the purse."

There are many reasons to vote against this nomination. His selective observance of the nation's laws is just one. We believe Mr. Vought's determination to make this a more Christian nation with a more Christian government is, by itself, disqualifying.

Sincerely,


Steven Emmert
Executive Director



Atheists. Agnostics. Humanists. Americans.

The Secular Coalition for America includes the following member organizations:

American Atheists

American Ethical Union

American Humanist Association

Association of Secular Elected Officials

Atheist Alliance of America

Black Nonbelievers

Center For Inquiry/Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science

Camp Quest

Ex-Muslims of North America

Freedom From Religion Foundation

Freethought Society

Hispanic American Freethinkers

Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers

Recovering From Religion

Secular Student Alliance

Secular Woman

Society for Humanistic Judaism

The Clergy Project

Unitarian Universalist Humanist Association