

Dear Members of Congress,

We, the undersigned organizations and community leaders, **respectfully urge you not to participate in the 2026 National Prayer Breakfast** to be held on February 5. Participation in this event legitimizes a project that has openly merged partisan politics with sectarian identity and increasingly functions as a platform to boost MAGA Christianity rather than unity.

The past several years have made clear that the National Prayer Breakfast is not a benign [event](#). In 2025, President Trump used the Breakfast to suggest he was [chosen by God to lead the nation, promoted the idea that we need to bring religion back, and reinforced a Christian nationalist political program](#). His [remarks](#) framed political opponents as threats and cast governance itself as a religious mission, rather than a constitutional one. The event became a stage for self-congratulations, grievances, and declarations that public policy should promote MAGA Christianity.

These developments are not isolated. The National Prayer Breakfast continues to sit at the center of a week-long hub of related Christian nationalist gatherings, including the [National Gathering for Prayer and Repentance](#) hosted by [Tony Perkins and the Family Research Council](#). The National Gathering for Prayer and Repentance is held the night before the National Prayer Breakfast at the Museum of the Bible.

Members of Congress have taken notice. In 2025, Congressional leaders, including Senators Schumer and Coons, Leader Jeffries, and former Speaker Pelosi, declined to attend the National Prayer Breakfast. [Members of the Congressional Freethought Caucus, particularly Rep. Huffman, publicly challenged](#) the event's constitutional, ethical, and human rights implications, raising [concerns](#) about the Fellowship Foundation, foreign influence operations, and the inappropriateness of hosting sectarian worship in our capital.

MAGA Christianity bent of the National Prayer Breakfast

The National Prayer Breakfast has become a political platform for MAGA Christianity. Trump repeatedly [uses the Breakfast](#) to claim divine sanction for his political agenda and that America was not founded as a secular country. In the 2025 Prayer Breakfast, he said:

- *We have to bring religion back. We have to bring it back much stronger. It's one of the biggest problems that we've had over the last fairly long period of time. We have to bring it back.*
- *(We must) Reaffirm that America is and will always be "one nation under God."*
- *The stories of legends like Washington, Winthrop, and Williams remind us that without faith in God, there would be no American story. Every citizen should be proud of this exceptional heritage. We have an unbelievable heritage, and we have to use that and make life better for everyone.*

At the NPB Gathering in 2025, an affiliated National Prayer Breakfast event, Trump was introduced by [MAGA Pastor Paula White](#) and:

- Highlighted the work of DOGE.
- Referred to the period after the 2020 election as “What should have been mine.”
- Referred to himself as “I’m a believer, and we want to have a believer in this position.”
- Argued that Christians are being treated unfairly and used that claim to justify giving MAGA Christianity greater influence and protection through government action.

Anti-Democratic History of the Fellowship Foundation and the Prayer Breakfast

In her opening remarks at the 2025 National Prayer Breakfast, [Senator Maggie Hassan](#) (NH) distorted the origin story of the National Prayer Breakfast as a suggestion to President Eisenhower to meet with members of the Senate Prayer Breakfast, who were then joined by the House Prayer Breakfast to pray about the issues the new Eisenhower administration was facing. In reality, the National Prayer Breakfast was an outgrowth of the opaque **Fellowship Foundation**. The Fellowship Foundation has had troubling relationships with [dictators](#) around the world, such as Gen. Suharto of Indonesia, Siad Barre of Somalia, Jonas Savimbi of Angola, Artur da Costa e Silva of Brazil, Papa Doc Duvalier of Haiti, and other authoritarian leaders, such as Vladimir Putin of Russia.

In recent years, U.S. foreign policy and diplomatic engagement have increasingly blended official state functions with a sectarian form of Christian nationalism that advances a specific theological and political agenda rather than a neutral commitment to religious freedom. This shift is evident in State Department initiatives that recast human rights through a narrowly defined “[natural rights](#)” framework—language closely aligned with conservative Christian legal movements. Together, these developments have created an institutional pipeline through which a particular theological worldview is being promoted globally under the banner of U.S. diplomacy.

In November 2025, Paula White-Cain, former Director of the White House Faith Office, who we expect will take a leading role at the Prayer Breakfast, undertook a [well-documented tour of Africa](#). While in Africa, White-Cain advanced “[religious diplomacy](#),” where American evangelical influence intersects with U.S. interests on the continent. While the spiritual advisor (White-Cain) insists her mission “[is fundamentally spiritual](#),” her presence in the heart of sensitive political issues raises questions about the limits of this role and its impact on the peace process in the Great Lakes region.”

The Fellowship Foundation was originally founded to oppose the [New Deal](#). Currently, [the official website glosses](#) over the controversial origins of the Breakfast, citing a 1935 gathering of Seattle business executives as a meeting aimed at addressing issues “in the Spirit of Jesus of Nazareth,” when in fact this was part of a right-wing counterattack against the [New Deal](#). The current iteration of the Prayer Breakfast, beginning with the Eisenhower Administration, was at the [suggestion of Rev. Billy Graham](#) to bolster Eisenhower’s “Christian” legacy.

The Fellowship Foundation’s longstanding involvement with the Prayer Breakfast continues to raise serious concerns. Its global network has included partnerships with political and religious actors who advance anti-LGBTQ+ agendas, including efforts that helped legitimize [Uganda’s](#)

[extreme anti-LGBTQ+ law](#). These associations conflict with the basic principles of equality and human dignity that Americans across belief systems expect their government to uphold.

The Breakfast has a documented history of foreign interference and extremist influence. From Russian agent Mariia Butina's [use of the Breakfast](#) to gain access to U.S. officials to the Fellowship Foundation's historic support for authoritarian leaders, the event has repeatedly served as a conduit for influence operations.

Participation in the 2026 Breakfast would lend legitimacy to an event that now openly advances MAGA Christianity. Declining to attend demonstrates a commitment to inclusive governance, religious neutrality, and democracy.

We urge you to join the growing number of leaders who decline to attend the National Prayer Breakfast, recognizing that it is harmful to our national unity and that attending it strengthens a movement and an administration dedicated to reshaping government along sectarian lines. Congressional participation is no longer a neutral act of prayer, but an implicit endorsement of a coordinated MAGA Christianity project operating at home and being exported abroad.

Sincerely,

American Atheists
American Humanist Association
DignityUSA
Black Nonbelievers
Center for Inquiry and the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science
Council for Global Equality
DignityUSA
Faithful America
FFRF Action Fund
Freethought Society
Healthcare Across Borders
Interconnected Justice
Interfaith Alliance
Oasis Legal Services
The Religious Nationalisms Project—TRNP
Secular AZ
Secular Coalition for America
Secular Student Alliance
Society for Humanistic Judaism
Vote Common Good

Community Leaders:

ND State Senator, Ryan Braunberger
Maggie Carpenter, MD, NY
Rev. Jason Carson Wilson, M. Div
WI State Representative, Ryan Clancy
Las Cruces NM City Councilor, Becky Corran
Bay City (MI) City Commission, Sixth Ward, Commission President Alexander Dewitt
OK State Representative, Mickey Dollens
FL State Representative, Dr. Anna V. Eskamani
Oklahoma City Councilor - Ward 6, JoBeth Hamon
MA State Representative, Rev. Jack Patrick Lewis, M.Div.
OK State Representative, Michelle McCane
Councilmember, City of Charlotte, NC, JD Mazuera Arias
OK State Representative, Annie Menz
KS State Representative, Heather Meyer
KS State Senator, Silas Miller
MI State Representative, Jason Morgan
Rev. Doug Pagitt, M. Div
Elected Covina City Treasurer, CA, Neil Polzin
VT State Representative, Monique Priestley
NH State Representative, Ellen Read
Bishop Joseph Tolton, MBA
Rev. Stephanie Vader, Senior Pastor Capitol Hill UMC Washington DC