

Secular America Report Card

The United States was founded as a secular country. Separation of church and state—or, more broadly, religion and government—is foundational to American society. Yet from the very beginning, America has struggled to live up to its own standards.

Especially since the 1970s and rise of the so-called “Moral Majority” and “Religious Right,” the wall of separation has been under constant attack. The goal of secular activism is to stop the erosion of that wall and to secure the separation of church and state. It is an enormous and never ending task, and we must be diligent about securing our freedoms for ourselves and future generations.

The Secular Student Alliance would like to help you equip yourself and your members to understand the issues where you live and express your values to your elected officials. This guide is designed to help you do just that.

1. Who are your elected officials?

National politics gets a great deal of attention in the media, but the issues that effect people the most are often local in nature. It’s important to know who is representing you, from the highest office in the nation to the most local. Do you know who represents you? How many of your elected officials can you name?

President of the United States:

US Senator:

US Senator:

US House of Representative:

State Governor:

State Senator:

State Assembly or House of Representative
(or equivalent)

Mayor of your City:

City Councilmembers*

City Councilmembers*

*Some cities elect councilmembers by district (a geographical region of the city), some elect at-large councilmembers, and some have both. You may have one or more council members who represent you where you live.

If you can’t name all of these people, visit whoaremyrepresentatives.org and enter your address to find out who your elected officials are. You will probably need to visit your city website to find out who your city officials are.



How are your elected officials doing on the issues you care about?

Using our report card, do research on the elected official(s) of your choice and record your findings. Give your elected official a grade on the issues that matter most to you. This grade is subjective, of course. You and your members must decide together what you think. Here is a basic rubric to guide your efforts.

- A = Person is supporting the secular view on this issue and is a leader on this issue
- B = Agrees with us and will vote our way but doesn't take the lead
- C = Passive or non-committal on the issues. Tends to take the path of least resistance.
- D = Opposes the secular perspective on the issue and votes against our views.
- F = Not only votes against secular values but is leading the charge for faith-based policies and actively undermines separation of church and state.

After you've done your research, have each member of your chapter grade the elected official in question. Tabulate the results and see how they do.

Expand your knowledge about secular issues.

The Secular Coalition for America organizes secular issues into Children's Rights, Civil Rights, Education, Establishment Clause Issues, Health & Safety, Religion & the IRS, Science, and more!

You can read more about these issues at their website: www.secular.org/key-issues.

American Atheists released a "State of the Secular States Report" which looks at state laws and policies in four broad areas: State Constitutional Protections, youth and schools, health care and wellness, and special privileges for religion. They have also created a state-by-state report card on issues relating to atheists and other non-religious individuals and communities.

Go to www.atheists.org/states and click on your state to see what issues American Atheists have identified.

Do your own research

Look at the website of your local newspaper and use key search terms like religion, secular, prayer, science, education, LGBT, and other key terms to bring up stories about what is happening in your local community about these issues.

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Elected official's name: _____ Title: _____

Establishment Clause

"In God We Trust"

Disapproves of legislation requiring the display of the national motto in schools and other public buildings.

Grade

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Notes

Memorials and Monuments

Opposes religious displays on public land

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Pledge of Allegiance

Supports student's right not to have to stand for the Pledge

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Health & Safety

Abortion

Supports access to safe, legal, affordable abortion services

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Sex Education

Supports evidence-based sex education for students

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Vaccines

Supports universal vaccination based on scientific evidence

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Science & Education

Climate Crisis

Believes the scientific consensus about human-caused global warming and the climate crisis including efforts to stop the destruction of our climate.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Evolution

Supports teaching real science in schools, not creationism or so-called intelligent design

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

School Prayer

Opposes teacher or staff-led prayer on campus or for official campus activities

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Civil Rights

LGBTQ Civil Rights

Supports full equality for gay, lesbian, bi, queer and trans individuals

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Your Personal Secular Issues to Track

1. _____

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

2. _____

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

3. _____

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

This report card does not imply an official endorsement or opposition of any candidate by the Secular Student Alliance