

18-wheelers as transportation in the carry of goods. And I am not here to cast stones, but I am here to say, Mr. Speaker, we need more safety regulation and enforcement as it relates to 18-wheeler trafficking.

I bring to our attention the tragic story that occurred this past summer, a couple of months ago, to the Lutine family, where this widow now tells a story of losing her husband and three babies because of an 18-wheeler at high speed that turned over on them and caused the truck to explode; the vehicle that the family was riding in, the recreational vehicle that the family was riding in, and caused the husband and the children to be burned alive.

If I can quote the comment from the wife, the wife and mother of the three, these victims, witnessed this sickening event and as she testified she stood at the scene screaming, "My life is over. All my children are dead."

I am hoping that we can come together as Members of the United States Congress and ask that we include a data recorder in all trucks, Mr. Speaker, that would provide factual information to determine how these accidents occurred so that we can prevent these accidents. We will have an opportunity as we move toward H.R. 2669, as I conclude, the Motor Carrier Safety Act of 1999, this week and I hope we can work together to ensure that these tragedies do not happen again.

#### WHEN HISTORY IS LOOKED AT, THERE IS NO CONSTITUTIONAL SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, tonight several of us are again gathered here in the hall of the House in this legislative body that represents the freedom that we know and love in America to discuss what our Founding Fathers believed about the First Amendment, the freedom of religion, the issue of religious liberty, and the intersection of religion and public life.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot said by people of all political ideologies about the role of religion in public life and the extent to which the two should intersect, if at all. Lately we have heard the discussion of issues like charitable choice, graduation prayers, even prayers at football games, opportunity scholarships for children to attend religious schools, government contracting with faith-based institutions, and the posting of the Ten Commandments and other religious symbols on public property.

As we hear this discussion, we often hear the phrase "separation of church and state" time and time again.

Joining me tonight to examine this phrase and this issue and what our First Amendment rights entail are several Members from across this great Nation. I am pleased to be joined by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO), the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES), the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. WHITFIELD), the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. RYUN), and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT), each of whom will examine the words and the intent of our Founding Fathers.

I would like to begin by examining some of the words of some of our Founders and Framers of the Constitution as we look at the issue of encouraging religion. In debates in this body in recent weeks, some Members have criticized proposed measures to protect public religious expressions or to allow voluntarily participation in faith-based programs.

They tell us that it is not the purpose of government to encourage religion, even if it shows preference to no particular religious faith or group. Interestingly, we hear no criticism when we encourage or cooperate with private industry or with business or any other group. Only when we cooperate with faith institutions do the critics emerge.

Are the programs and endeavors of people of faith below government encouragement? Or do people of faith have some lethal virus which prohibits the government from partnering with them? Certainly not. What then is the problem? We are told that for us to encourage religion would be unconstitutional, that it would violate the Constitution so wisely devised by our Founding Fathers. This is an argument not founded in history or precedent. It is an argument of recent origin. It does not have its roots in our Constitution but rather in the criticisms of numerous revisionists who wish the Constitution said something other than what it actually does. In fact, those who wrote the Constitution thought it was proper for the government to endorse and encourage religion.

As proof, consider the words of John Jay, one of the three authors of the Federalist Papers, and the original chief justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Chief Justice John Jay declared, and I quote, "It is the duty of all wise, free and virtuous governments to countenance and encourage virtue and religion." Chief Justice John Jay was one of America's leading interpreters of the Constitution, and he declared it is the duty of government to encourage virtue and religion.

Consider next the words of Oliver Ellsworth. He was a member of the convention which framed the Constitution. He was the third chief justice of the United States Supreme Court.

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Chief Justice Ellsworth declared, "The primary objects of government are peace, order, and prosperity of society. To the promotion of these objects, good morals are essential. Institutions for the promotion of good morals are therefore objects of legislative provision and support, and among these, religious institutions are eminently useful and important."

Chief Justice Oliver Ellsworth, another of American's leading interpreters of the Constitution, and one who actually helped frame the Constitution, declares that religious institutions are to be encouraged.

Consider, too, the words of Henry Laurens, another member of the constitutional convention. Henry Laurens declared, "I had the honor of being one who framed the Constitution. In order effectually to accomplish these great constitutional ends, it is especially the duty of those who bear rule to promote and encourage respect for God and virtue."

Henry Laurens is a third constitutional expert, one who participated in the drafting of the Constitution and who therefore clearly knows its intent, and he declares that it is the duty of government to encourage respect for God."

Consider also the words of Abraham Baldwin, another of the original drafters of the Constitution, one of its signers. Abraham Baldwin declared, "A free government can only be happy when the public principle and opinions are properly directed by religion and education. It should therefore be among the first objects of those who wish well the national prosperity to encourage and support the principles of religion and morality."

Abraham Baldwin is yet a fourth constitutional expert, a signer of the Constitution. He declares that government should encourage religion.

Since the very Founders who prohibited, "an establishment of religion" also said that it was the duty of government to encourage religion, it is clear that they did not equate encouraging religion as an unconstitutional establishment of religion.

Finally, consider the words of Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story, placed on the Court by President James Madison. Justice Story, in his 1833 Commentaries On The Law, which today are still considered authoritative constitutional commentaries, declared this, "The promulgation of the great doctrines of religion, the being and attributes and providence of one Almighty God; the responsibility to Him for all our actions, founded upon moral accountability; a future state of rewards and punishments; the cultivation of all the personal, social, and benevolent virtues, these never can be a matter of indifference in any well-ordered community. It is indeed difficult