

Journalists' Toolkit

*A Guide to Covering Atheists, Agnostics,
Humanists and Other Nontheists*



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*An electronic version of this toolkit is
available at secular.org*

About The Toolkit

The Secular Coalition for America produced this resource to assist professional journalists in their goals of accuracy and objectivity in their reporting. Our goal is to provide tools and resources to help journalists create quality pieces that reflect the myriad opinions of Americans today. The reality is that covering topics relating to religion require talking to both believers and nonbelievers. Our toolkit aims to provide those resources in a quick, easy to use format that makes reporting easier and more efficient.

WHAT THE TOOLKIT PROVIDES

Valuable information including:

- Who to contact and how
- Statistics on the non-religious
- How to avoid common pitfalls
- Common terms within the nontheist community
- Personal anecdotes

An Overview of Secularism in the United States

Myth: The U.S. is a Christian nation.

Fact: Although many Americans are Christians, the United States is a pluralistic nation encompassing citizens of many world views. The U.S. government is secular as defined by its constitution and upheld through hundreds of years of Supreme Court precedent.

Secularism is a principle that involves two basic propositions. The first is the strict separation of the state from religious institutions. The second is that people of different religions and beliefs are equal before the law.

The term “secularist” is often used to describe those who do not believe in God(s). In actuality “secularist” applies to all those who believe religion should be separate from government whether they believe in God(s) or not.

The U.S. Constitution mentions religion only twice:

1. The First Amendment states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”
2. Article VI forbids a religious test as a requirement for holding a governmental position.

[The U.S. Constitution] mandates that the government remain secular rather than affiliate itself with religious beliefs or institutions, precisely in order to avoid discrimination among citizens.”

—Supreme Court of the United States,
Allegheny County v. Greater Pittsburgh ACLU (1989)

These provisions were described by Thomas Jefferson as “building a wall of separation between church and state,” a principle that has been repeatedly upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court (e.g. Everson v. Board of Education, 1947).

Additionally:

- The United States has no official state religion
- The U.S. Constitution makes no reference to Christianity or deism and instead derives its power from “We the People”
- United States laws are made by elected officials, not clergy

Correctly referring to the U.S. as a “secular state” simply means that religion and government officially are separate, although its citizens may or may not choose to affiliate with a religion. It should not be confused with any ideology where atheism or non-religion is officially promoted by the government.

Covering the Nontheistic Community Objectively

Depth and nuance are important aspects of any coverage, but particularly important when covering marginalized groups, including nontheists. To provide balanced coverage, reporters should include religious and non-religious Americans.

It is imperative that reporters use a variety of credible sources for the myriad issues nontheists are involved in. There are a diverse range of nontheistic viewpoints that should be represented in coverage including nontheists. The Secular Source Guide and Organizational Contact Chart at the back of this toolkit are a wonderful place to start.

COMMON PITFALLS

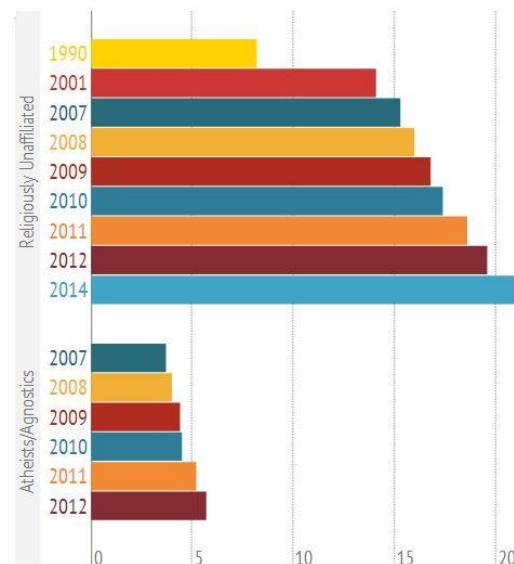
Some of the mistakes journalists make when covering nontheists include:

- **Playing into the Stereotypes** — Atheists are often portrayed as angry, hateful, bitter, unhappy, religion-bashing, immoral and overly sensitive. While you will certainly find people in any group that fit this description, the vast majority of nontheists share many of the same values, ethics, and temperaments as those who believe in a supernatural god.
- **Lack of Variety in Sourcing** — Reporters tempted to turn to radical activist types on both sides of an issue may walk away with a good quote or sound bite, but often these sources play into negative stereotypes, are not necessarily representative of the community as a whole and often fail to elevate the discussion.
- **Putting Atheists on the Defensive** — Often atheists are included in a story only when they are put on the defensive—being asked to defend an unpopular policy or position or responding to what a religious group has said. However, nontheists are involved in all aspects of American society and should be included in much the same way other groups would be for stories on any number of topics.
- **Leaving Atheists Out** — Despite participation in many interfaith events, humanists and other nontheists often aren’t mentioned as having been involved. When mentioning other religious groups it’s important to mention the nontheist groups that participated as well.

- **Writing the Same Story** — An example of a typical story including atheists often goes like this: Atheists are furious because religious groups want to include religion in public life and have “picked a fight” with local authorities to the chagrin of the community. While there are certainly stories that fit that description—and those do need to be covered—when journalists *only* cover stories like these, they miss the opportunity to write about the much broader societal issues, touching human interest pieces, and more, that nontheists can offer. Also, these stories often fail to acknowledge those within the community that may feel differently than the perceived majority.
- **Equal Treatment of Religious Dogma and Fact** — Often in an attempt to tell both sides of a story, religious dogma is given the same weight as fact-based evidence. An example is climate change, where equal time is often given to those who accept climate change and those who reject it—despite overwhelming scientific data to back up the theory and virtually no scientific evidence to reject it.

HOW JOURNALISTS CAN GET IT RIGHT

- Use variety in sourcing. There are hundreds of nontheists groups across the country—both local and national—that offer a variety of nontheist perspectives.
- Broaden coverage of atheists by writing about issues that go deeper than standard church/state disputes.
- Be careful not to play into the stereotype of the “angry atheist.”
- Allow atheists to tell their stories – many atheists have experienced discrimination and some have even been outcast by their family and friends for their nontheistic beliefs. There are some wonderful human interest stories out there just waiting to be told.
- When mentioning religious groups, include nontheist groups as well.
- Elements of a story that can be backed up by fact, science, data or other evidence should be given more weight and treated as more credible.
- Atheists are passionate about politics; they are reliable voters who make up more than 12 percent of the electorate. Don’t ignore nontheists in political stories and discussions.
- Don’t mistakenly assume that any community as a whole—or any given source—is religious. Atheists outnumber many religious groups—including Jews, Hindus and Mormons—but are



routinely ignored by politicians and often the media.

- Include nontheist perspectives when writing about political and social issues such as education, the military, tax policy, health policy and other issues that may intersect with religion. [For more information on policy positions, please view the Secular Coalition's [Model Secular Policy Guide](#).]

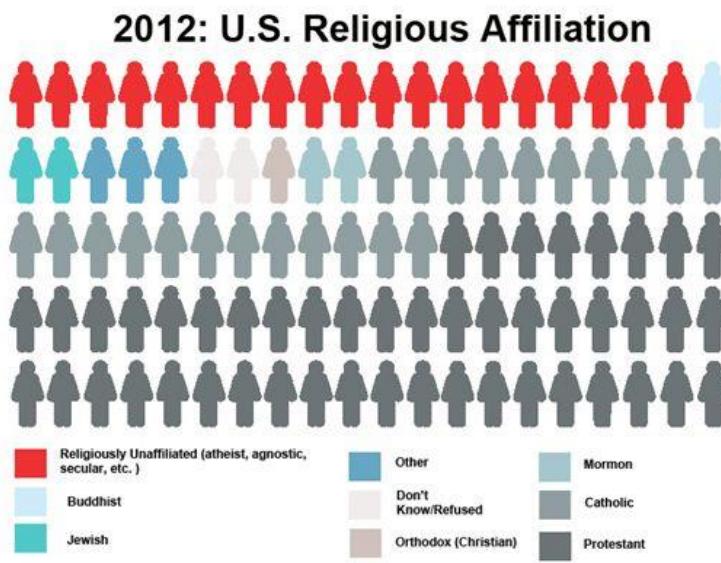
Who Are the Religiously Unaffiliated?

According to the Pew Forum¹, the religiously unaffiliated, or the “nones”, are the fastest-growing “religious” group—and the third largest “religious” group—in the United States, comprising about one-fifth (21 percent) of the adult population. The Public Religion Research Institute describes the makeup of the “nones”, writing²:

- **“Unattached believers”** (23%): describe themselves as religious despite having no formal religious identity, and are more likely than the general population to be black or Hispanic and to have lower levels of educational attainment
- **“Seculars”** (39%): describe themselves as secular or not religious, and roughly mirror the general population in terms of racial composition and levels of educational attainment
- **“Atheists and agnostics”** (36%): identify as atheist or agnostic, and are more likely than the general population to be non-Hispanic white and to have significantly higher levels of educational attainment.

The growth of the “nones” is evident at the ballot box, where unaffiliated voters now account for a significant slice of the electorate. The unaffiliated vote share in presidential elections more than doubled from 5 percent in 1980 to 12 percent in 2012.³

According to the Public Religion Research Institute, the religiously unaffiliated are comprised of three distinct groups, with 75 percent self-identifying as either atheist/agnostic or secular. According to various stats from Pew and [the American Religious Identification Survey \(ARIS\)](#) the



¹ Ravitz, Jessica. "Is the Internet Killing Religion?" CNN, April 9, 2014. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2014/04/09/is-the-internet-killing-religion/>.

² "2012 Pre-Election American Values Survey." Public Religion Research Institute, 2012, 1. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/AVS-2012-Pre-election-Report-for-Web.pdf>.

³ "How the Faithful Voted: 2012 Preliminary Analysis." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://secularismandnonreligion.org/index.php/snr/article/view/12/12>.

percentage of religiously unaffiliated American adults has grown over 140 percent since 1990 and statistics indicate continued growth. A 2012 Pew Forum study found that 35 percent of 18-29 year olds were religiously unaffiliated and of those, 40 percent self-identified as atheist/agnostic.⁴

In 2012, the percentage of the population that identified specifically as atheist or agnostic is estimated at between 5.7 percent and 6.8 percent. By contrast, American atheists and agnostics outnumber the *combined membership* of Jews, Muslims, Mormons, Buddhists, Hindus, Jehovah's Witnesses and the Orthodox, which combined accounted for only 5.4 percent of the American population, according to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Atheists and agnostics even outnumber groups like Lutherans (4.6 percent), Black Baptists (4.4 percent) and Methodists (less than 5.4 percent).⁸

	Religiously Unaffiliated % of U.S. Population	Atheists/ Agnostics % of U.S. Population
1990	8.2% ⁵	--
2001	14.1%	--
2007	15.3% ⁶	3.7%
2008	16%	4%
2009	16.8%	4.4%
2010	17.4%	4.5%
2011	18.6%	5.2%
2012	19.6%	5.7%
2014	21% ⁷	--

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT OF THE RELIGIOUSLY UNAFFILIATED

- Atheists and agnostics (73 percent) are also significantly more likely than secular Americans (53 percent) or unattached believers (53 percent) to say they are absolutely certain they will vote⁹
- “Nones” are the largest “religious” voting bloc in the Democratic Party comprising 24 percent. They are followed by “other” (18 percent), black Protestants (16 percent), white mainline Protestants (14 percent), white Catholics (13 percent)¹⁰
- Overall, 63 percent of unaffiliated voters say they are Democrats (compared to 48 percent of general population)
- 57 percent of atheists and agnostics identify as politically liberal

⁴ "Nones on the Rise." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>.

⁵ 1990-2001; Kosmin, Barry A., and Ariela Keysar. "American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS 2008)." Trinity College, 2009, 5. Accessed August 25, 2014. http://b27.cc.trincoll.edu/weblogs/AmericanReligionSurvey-ARIS/reports/ARIS_Report_2008.pdf.

⁶ 2007-2012: "Nones on the Rise." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>.

⁷ Jones, Robert P. "2014 LGBT Issues and Trends Survey." Public Religion Research Institute, 2014, 4. Accessed August 22, 2014. http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014.LGBT_REPORT.pdf.

⁸ "Nones on the Rise." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>.

⁹ "2012 Pre-Election American Values Survey." Public Religion Research Institute, 2012, 1. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/AVS-2012-Pre-election-Report-for-Web.pdf>.

¹⁰ "Nones on the Rise." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>.

- In 2008 75 percent of unaffiliated voters voted for Obama, while only 23 percent voted for McCain. In 2012, 70 percent voted for president Obama¹¹

UNAFFILIATED VIEWS ON RELIGION'S ROLE IN POLITICS

- 66 percent say to keep churches out of political matters (compared to 54 percent of general population)¹²
- 75 percent say churches should not endorse candidates (compared to 66 percent of general population)¹³
- 54 percent say they are uncomfortable with religious talk from candidates (compared to 43 percent of general population)¹⁴
- 67 percent say churches are too concerned with politics (compared to 46 percent of general population)¹⁵

UNAFFILIATED VIEWS ON SOCIAL & FISCAL ISSUES

- 72 percent of “nones” say abortion should be legal in all/most cases (compared to 53 percent of general population)¹⁶
- 76 percent say homosexuality should be accepted by society (compared to 56 percent of general population)¹⁷
- 37 percent of LGBT Americans are now religiously unaffiliated. Roughly 31 percent of LGBT Americans left their childhood religion to become religiously unaffiliated¹⁸
- 73 percent favor same-sex marriage (compared to 48 percent of general population)¹⁹
- The portion of the unaffiliated who say they would prefer a smaller government providing fewer services, to a larger government providing more services, is similar to the share of the general public who take the same view (50 percent and 52 percent, respectively)²⁰

GENERAL POPULATION AGREES: TOO MUCH RELIGION IN POLITICS

According to the Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, the public thinks there is too much religion in government and that the Republican Party is overly influenced by religion:²¹

¹¹ "How the Faithful Voted: 2012 Preliminary Analysis." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://secularismandnonreligion.org/index.php/snr/article/view/12/12>.

¹² "More See ‘Too Much’ Religious Talk by Politicians." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/more-see-too-much-religious-talk-by-politicians.aspx#church>.

¹³ Id.

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ Id.

¹⁶ "Nones on the Rise." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>.

¹⁷ Id.

¹⁸ Jones, Robert P. "2014 LGBT Issues and Trends Survey." Public Religion Research Institute, 2014. Accessed August 22, 2014. http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014.LGBT_REPORT.pdf.

¹⁹ "Nones on the Rise." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>.

²⁰ Id.

²¹ "More See ‘Too Much’ Religious Talk by Politicians." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/more-see-too-much-religious-talk-by-politicians.aspx#church>.

- The number of respondents saying there has been too much religious talk from political leaders now stands at its highest point since the Pew Research Center began asking the question more than a decade ago.
- A majority of Americans (54 percent) say that churches and other houses of worship should keep out of political matters, according to a March 2012 Survey by the Pew Research Center.²² This includes:
 - 44 percent of Republicans
 - 58 percent of Independents
 - 60 percent of Democrats

Discrimination Against Nontheists

Atheists cannot join the Boy Scouts, most Americans are reluctant to marry or vote for an atheist, and atheist service members can be deemed “deficient” by the military when they do not score high enough on “spiritual” fitness tests. Many people who “come out” as atheists are made outcasts by their friends, family and society.

MARGINALIZATION OF ATHEISTS

- The 2008 American Religious Identification Survey found that 41 percent of self-identified atheists reported experiencing discrimination in the last 5 years due to their lack of religious identification.²³
- Participants reported experiencing different types of discrimination to varying degrees, including slander; coercion; social ostracism; denial of opportunities, goods, and services; and hate crimes. Similar to other minority individuals with concealable stigmatized identities, atheists who more strongly identified with their atheism, who were “out” about their atheism to more people, and who grew up with stricter familial religious expectations reported experiencing more frequent discrimination.

AMERICANS’ VIEWS OF NONTHEISTS

When asked to rate each group on a “feeling thermometer” ranging from 0 to 100 – where 0 reflects the coldest, most negative possible rating and 100 the warmest. The public views atheists and Muslims more coldly; atheists receive an average rating of 41, and Muslims an average rating of 40. Fully 41 percent of the public rates Muslims in the coldest part of the thermometer (33 or below), and 40 percent rate atheists in the coldest part²⁴

- Republicans and Republican leaners view atheists and Muslims much more negatively than they view other religious groups, with a coldness rating of 34, compared to 46 percent by Democrats

²² "More See ‘Too Much’ Religious Talk by Politicians." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/more-see-too-much-religious-talk-by-politicians.aspx#church>.

²³ Kosmin, Barry A., and Ariela Keysar. "American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS 2008)." Trinity College, 2009, 5. Accessed August 25, 2014. http://b27.cc.trincoll.edu/weblogs/AmericanReligionSurvey-ARIS/reports/ARIS_Report_2008.pdf.

²⁴ "How Americans Feel About Religious Groups." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2014. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/07/16/how-americans-feel-about-religious-groups/>.

- According to a national survey, 78.6 percent of Americans believe that atheists do not share their vision of American society²⁵
- 47.6 percent would disapprove if their child wanted to marry an atheist²⁶
- A 2011 Gallup poll found that half of Americans say they would not vote for an otherwise qualified atheist candidate for president²⁷
- In addition, atheists are often stereotyped as rebellious, immoral, and hedonistic, among other descriptors²⁸

PERSONAL STORIES OF DISCRIMINATION

The Secular Coalition’s Anti-Discrimination Support Network (ADSN) collects narratives highlighting instances of bigotry against the nonreligious and nonbeliever community. The collection form is available at secular.org/content/discrimination. Contact the Secular Coalition for America for more information on the ADSN or to be put in contact with sources that have experienced discrimination.

ATHEISTS COMING OUT

According to Pew, knowing someone from a religious group is linked with having relatively more positive views of that group. For example, those who say they know someone who is Jewish give Jews an average thermometer rating of 69, compared with a rating of 55 among those who say they do not know anyone who is Jewish.²⁹ Comparatively, atheists receive a neutral rating of 50, on average, from people who say they personally know an atheist, but they receive a cold rating of 29 from those who do not know an atheist.³⁰

For these reasons and others, more and more atheists are “coming out” and there is a growing number of resources within the secular community to help them.

Openly Secular

To encourage more secular Americans to “come out,” the Secular Coalition for America, Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science U.S., Secular Student Alliance and Stiefel Freethought Foundation have established the “Openly Secular” campaign (openlysecular.org) to encourage more nontheists to be open about their world-view.

²⁵ Hammer, Joseph H., Ryan T. Cragun, Karen Hwang, and Jesse M. Smith. "Forms, Frequency, and Correlates of Perceived Anti-Atheist Discrimination." *Secularism & Nonreligion*, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://secularismandnonreligion.org/index.php/snr/article/view/12/12>.

²⁶ Hammer, Joseph H., Ryan T. Cragun, Karen Hwang, and Jesse M. Smith. "Forms, Frequency, and Correlates of Perceived Anti-Atheist Discrimination." *Secularism & Nonreligion*, 2012. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://secularismandnonreligion.org/index.php/snr/article/view/12/12>.

²⁷ Id.

²⁸ Id.

²⁹ "How Americans Feel About Religious Groups." Pew Research Center Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2014. Accessed August 22, 2014. <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/07/16/how-americans-feel-about-religious-groups/>.

³⁰ "Americans Still Hold Certain Biases in Choosing President." Gallup, June 20, 2011. Accessed August 25, 2014.

Recovering from Religion

Recovering from Religion (RR) assists those who have decided to leave religion and seek support. RR offers national, regional, and local groups and resources and a 24/7 national hotline which serves as a secular support network for those in need. (recoveringfromreligion.org)

Ask an Atheist

Organizations such as the Secular Student Alliance hold an annual “Ask an Atheist Day” which takes place on college campuses across the country and on social media. The event encourages nontheists to be open about their world-view and serves as an opportunity to connect with others outside the community.

Common Terms within the Nontheist Community

Most people who do not believe in a god or gods identify with one or more of the terms below. Identifying with these terms does not necessarily imply membership in any organization. The terms are not mutually exclusive.

- **Atheist**- Someone who does not believe in a god or gods.
- **Agnostic**- Someone who believes that it is impossible to know whether or not gods exist. Although technically incorrect, colloquially it is used to describe someone who is unsure about the existence of gods.
- **Bright**- Has a naturalistic worldview. Created as an alternative to the word atheist.
- **Freethinker** – All-encompassing term for people who live their lives based on science, logic and reason, who do not give deference to dogma or religion. Catch-all term for nontheistic people who don’t self-identify as atheist or agnostic.
- **Humanist**- Humanists focus on human values and concerns, attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. Secular humanism specifically, espouses reason, ethics, and justice, while rejecting supernatural and religious dogma as a basis of morality and decision-making. Many who identify as humanists may also identify as an atheist,

Religiously Unaffiliated
None
Agnostic
Humanist
Nontheist
Freethinker
Atheist
Skeptic
Secular
Bright
Humanistic Jew

agnostic or other labels.

- **Humanistic Jew**- Humanistic Jews identify with the culture of Judaism, including holidays, religious rituals and cultural aspects, but not the religious and supernatural aspects. Jews are an ethno-religious group, so many who identify as Jews from an ethnic perspective, may not believe in God. Some studies show that up to 50 percent of American Jews do not believe in a God.
- **None** – “nones” are those without a religious affiliation, as defined by the Pew Research Center. “nones” may or may not believe in a God or gods.
- **Nontheist**- An umbrella or catch-all term for anyone who does not believe in a supernatural deity.
- **Secularist** – Term applied to those who believe in the separation of government and religion. Secularists may or may not believe in God. This can sometimes be used as an all-encompassing term for Nontheists, although it is technically not synonymous.
- **Skeptic**- Skeptics are science-minded and primarily focused on debunking pseudo-scientific claims, possibly including, but not limited to claims focused on God or religion specifically. Skeptics are passionate about scientifically-based education and apply scientific rigor to conspiracy theories, claims of the supernatural, and especially toward those who attempt to profit from these things (i.e. psychics, mediums, astrologists, alternative medicine, etc.) The TV show “Penn & Teller” is a good example of skeptics in action.

Secular Source Guide

	Local affiliates	Science/ Research	Legislation/ Policy/ Advocacy	Atheism (General)	Students/Youth	Religious Secularism	Minority Issues	Community Outreach	International	Judicial/ Courts	Military	Philanthropy/ Volunteerism	Addressing Religious Harm
Secular Coalition for America	✓		✓	✓				✓			✓		✓
American Atheists	✓		✓					✓		✓			
American Ethical Union	✓					✓							
American Humanist Association	✓		✓					✓		✓	✓		
Americans United for Separation of Church and State	✓	✓				✓				✓			
Atheist Alliance of America	✓			✓									
Atheist Alliance International	✓			✓					✓				
Black Nonbelievers	✓						✓	✓					✓
Camp Quest	✓				✓			✓					
Center for Inquiry	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓			✓
Council for Secular Humanism	✓			✓			✓	✓					
Ex-Muslims of North America	✓						✓	✓	✓				✓
Foundation Beyond Belief								✓				✓	
Freethought Society				✓									✓
Freedom From Religion Foundation	✓			✓						✓			✓
Hispanic American Freethinkers	✓						✓	✓					
Humanist Community at Harvard								✓					
Institute for Humanist Studies		✓											
Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers	✓										✓		
Recovering From Religion	✓			✓				✓	✓				✓
Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science		✓		✓					✓				
Secular Student Alliance	✓				✓			✓					
Society for Humanistic Judaism	✓					✓		✓					
The UU Humanists	✓					✓		✓					
United Coalition of Reason	✓		✓					✓					

Secular Organizational Contact Guide

ORGANIZATION	ABOUT	CONTACT INFORMATION
Secular Coalition for America	The Secular Coalition for America (SCA) represents more than 200 nontheistic organizations and advocates at the federal level to protect and strengthen the secular character of our government. The Coalition's 50 state chapters advocate at the state level with SCA-trained citizen lobbyists. The Secular Coalition produces Congressional scorecards and secular voter guides, holds weekly movement-wide coalition building calls, Congressional briefings, federal and state lobby days and more. The Coalition also maintains the Anti-Discrimination Support Network, which collects narratives highlighting instances of discrimination against the nonreligious and nontheistic community.	1012 14 th St. NW, Suite 205 Washington, DC 20005 (202)299-1091 secular.org secular.org/states Media Inquiries: ext. 205 Lauren Anderson Youngblood (202)630-9725 Lauren@secular.org
American Atheists	American Atheists fights on the front lines of the battle for separation of religion and government, laboring for the civil liberties of atheists. Since 1963, American Atheists has challenged the intrusion of religion and religious tradition in schools, work, and public policy while educating millions about what it means to be an atheist.	225 Cristiani Street Cranford, NJ 07016 (908)276-7300 atheists.org Media Inquiries: ext. 7 Dave Muscato dmuscato@atheists.org
American Ethical Union	The American Ethical Union is a national federation of Ethical Culture/Ethical Humanist Societies. Founded in 1876, Ethical Societies are congregational, religious humanist fellowships that meet regularly to explore ethical issues and ideals and to foster ethical relationships between individuals and groups. Ethical Societies are actively engaged in social justice activities such as civil and human rights and protecting the secular nature of government.	2 West 64th Street New York, NY 10023 (212)873-6500 aeu.org office@aeu.org Media Inquiries: communications@aeu.org
American Humanist Association	The American Humanist Association advocates for progressive values and equality for humanists, atheists, and freethinkers. Promoting the idea that you can be good without a god since 1941, and today headquartered in Washington, DC, the American Humanist Association litigates, lobbies, advertises, publishes, organizes and speaks out to promote the positive philosophy of humanism and further humanist causes.	1777 T Street, NW Washington, DC 20009 (202)238-9088 americanhumanist.org Media Inquiries: ext. 116 Maggie Ardiente mardiente@americanhumanist.org

ORGANIZATION	ABOUT	CONTACT INFORMATION
Americans United for Separation of Church and State	Americans United is a 501(c)(3) dedicated to educating people about the various church/state separation issues currently being debated in the United States. Founded in 1947, the organization works within all three branches of government at federal and state levels to encourage citizen activism and seek justice for non-believing Americans.	1301 K Street NW Suite 850 Washington, DC 20005 (202) 466-3234 au.org Media Inquiries: Rob Boston communications@au.org
Atheist Alliance of America	Atheist Alliance of America (AAA) is a non-profit umbrella organization in support of democratic local affiliates to project a positive voice for atheism through community activism. The organization began in 1991 as Atheist Alliance and evolved into 2 separate organizations over time—AAA with a U.S. focus, and a global Atheist Alliance International.	atheistallianceamerica.org Media Inquiries: Amy Monsky amy.monsky@atheistallianceamerica.org.
Atheist Alliance International	Atheist Alliance International (AAI) is a non-profit umbrella organization that works to promote a positive view of atheism to people all over the world. AAI works to strengthen the relationship between secular organizations around the world, promote new secular organizations in developing countries, educate people about issues concerning secular citizens globally, and advocates for policy based on reason and rationality over religion.	1777 T Street, NW Washington, DC 20009 atheistalliance.org Media Inquiries: info@atheistalliance.org
Black Nonbelievers	Black Nonbelievers is based in the Atlanta area and seeks to provide a safe and caring environment for members of the Black community and their allies who may have been cast out or shunned by their family and friends. Their goal is to create a “secular fellowship” where members can gather to discuss truth and morality through reason and evidence as opposed to faith.	1081 Reynolds Ct Morrow, GA 30260 (404) 213-9655 blacknonbelievers.wordpress.com Media Inquiries: Mandisa Thomas mandisathomas@bellsouth.net
Camp Quest	Camp Quest provides an educational adventure shaped by fun, friends and freethought, featuring science, natural wonder and humanist values. Started in 1996, Camp Quest supports a network of summer camps for children and teens that encourage critical thinking and skepticism. Aimed at campers from atheist, agnostic, and other secular families, Camp Quest is open to campers from all worldview backgrounds.	P.O. Box 2552 Columbus, OH 43216 (614)441-9534 campquest.org Media Inquiries: Amanda Metskas amanda.metskas@campquest.org

ORGANIZATION	ABOUT	CONTACT INFORMATION
Center for Inquiry	<p>The mission of the Center for Inquiry is to foster a secular society based on science, reason, freedom of inquiry, and humanist values. They work to promote reason and rationality in both policy and everyday life. They produce educational materials to help counteract many common beliefs that are driven by superstition—both religious and otherwise. By working to end the stigma of nonbelief and promoting rationality in decision making, an ultimate goal of the organization is to end the privileged position religion and pseudoscience enjoy throughout the world.</p>	<p>P.O. 741 Amherst, NY 14226 (716) 636-4869 centerforinquiry.net info@centerforinquiry.net</p> <p>Media Inquiries: Paul Fidalgo (207)358-9785 press@centerforinquiry.net</p>
Council for Secular Humanism	<p>The mission of the Council for Secular Humanism is to advocate and defend a nonreligious life stance rooted in science, naturalistic philosophy, and humanist ethics, and to serve and support adherents of that life stance. Founded in 1980, the Council publishes FREE INQUIRY magazine and operates the movement's oldest outreach to African Americans.</p>	<p>P.O. Box 664 Amherst, NY 14226-0664 (716)636-7571 secularhumanism.org</p> <p>Media Inquiries: info@secularhumansim.org</p>
Ex-Muslims of North America	<p>Due to the large amount of stigma in Muslim communities associated with deconversion from Islam, the Ex-Muslims of North America focuses primarily on creating local communities in major cities across North America to provide places ex-Muslims can turn to for solidarity and support. They also work to create a more realistic public image of Islam—one based neither in racist bigotry or in apologetics that justifies terrorist actions.</p>	<p>1069 West Broad St, Suite 142 Falls Church, VA 22046 1-855-EXMUSLIM (396-8754) exmna.org exmuslimblogs.com</p> <p>Media Inquiries: ext. 702 Muhammad Syed media@exmna.org</p>
Foundation Beyond Belief	<p>The Foundation Beyond Belief (FBB) works to focus humanist generosity and compassion by organizing charitable projects for groups around the country. Member groups not only contribute to the charities selected by the FBB, but they can submit projects of their own and accumulate points that go toward benefits for their organizations.</p>	<p>4575 Webb Bridge Rd. #5992 Alpharetta, GA 30005 (678)458-5861 foundationbeyondbelief.org</p> <p>Media Inquiries: Ed Brayton press@foundationbeyondbelief.org</p>
Freethought Society	<p>The Freethought Society is a non-profit, educational organization advocating separation of religion and government, freedom from religious intrusion, and freedom of expression. The Freethought Society educational resources to all nontheist groups and individuals.</p>	<p>P.O. Box 242 Pocopson, PA 19366 (610)793-2737 ftsocety.org</p> <p>Media Inquiries: Margaret Downey freethought@ftsocety.org</p>

ORGANIZATION	ABOUT	CONTACT INFORMATION
Freedom From Religion Foundation	The Freedom From Religion Foundation is a nonprofit working to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism, and to promote the constitutional principle of separation between church and state. Since 1978, the Foundation has acted on countless violations of the separation of state and church, and has taken and won many significant complaints and important lawsuits to end state/church entanglements.	PO Box 750 Madison WI 53701 (608)256-8900 ffrf.org Media Inquiries: Call Above Number
Hispanic American Freethinkers	Founded in 2010, the Hispanic American Freethinkers is a non-profit organization that provides a voice for Hispanics in the U.S. and beyond by offering resources to develop critical thinking and freethought. HAFree has chapters all over the nation, releases podcasts, and works to promote science education and the separation of church and state.	1818 Library Street, Suite 500-20 Reston, VA 20190 (202)656-5060 hafree.org Media Inquiries: info@hafree.org
Humanist Community at Harvard	The Humanist Community at Harvard (Humanist Hub) has served humanists, atheists and agnostics at and around Harvard University for over 30 years. In recent years the HCH has evolved into a hub for secular community-building activities at Harvard, in Greater Boston and beyond.	The Humanist Hub 30 JFK Street, Harvard Square Cambridge, MA 02138 (617)495-5986 harvardhumanist.org Media Inquiries: info@harvardhumanist.org
Institute for Humanist Studies	The Institute for Humanist Studies is a think tank, committed to gathering information and practices within Humanism, to address the socio-political, economic and cultural challenges facing communities within the United States and within a global context. Such information and practices will include sponsored research to address questions and concerns within Humanism and non-theism, as well as published books and colloquiums and articles to articulate our determinations. The Institute for Humanist Studies views humanism as having the moral imperative to extend the circle of justice, caring and concern to all.	1777 T Street NW Washington, DC 20009 (202)238-9088 humaniststudies.org Media Inquiries: ext. 116 Maggie Ardiente mardiente@americanhumanist.org
Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers	The Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers builds community for atheists and humanists in the military and fights discrimination against nontheists in the military. Established as a 501c3 charitable organization in 2006, the Military Association connects service members in need with the national secular community and shows America that secular Americans support the troops.	1380 Monroe St NW, PMB 505 Washington, DC 20010 (202)656-6223 militaryatheists.org Media Inquiries: Jason Torpy jtorpy@militaryatheists.org

ORGANIZATION	ABOUT	CONTACT INFORMATION
Recovering From Religion	Recovering From Religion is a nonprofit supporting those who have "given faith their best shot" but cannot accept the answers religion provides over science, logic and reason. Recovering From Religion has chapters throughout the country, and many other programs aimed at supporting those who leave religion, including a telephone hotline.	10940 Parallel Pkwy Suite K-145 Kansas City, KS 66109 (512)666-4630 recoveringfromreligion.org Media Inquiries: Sarah Morehead sarah@recoveringfromreligion.org
Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science	The Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science (US) supports scientific education, critical thinking and evidence-based understanding of the natural world in the quest to overcome religious fundamentalism, superstition, intolerance and human suffering.	1012 14 th St. NW, Suite 209 Washington, DC 20005 (202)733-5276 richarddawkins.net Media Inquiries: Robyn Blumner robyn@richarddawkins.net
Secular Student Alliance	The Secular Student Alliance organizes, unites, educates, and serves students and student communities that promote the ideals of scientific and critical inquiry, democracy, secularism, and human-based ethics. Founded in 2000, the Secular Student Alliance supports a rapidly growing network of over 350 atheist, agnostic, and humanist groups on high school and college campuses.	PO Box 2371 Columbus, OH 43216 (614)441-9588 ssa@secularstudents.org secularstudents.org Media Inquiries: ext. 101 Jamila Bey jamila.bey@secularstudents.org
Society for Humanistic Judaism	Embracing a human-centered philosophy that combines the celebration of Jewish culture and identity with an adherence to humanistic values and ideas, the Society for Humanistic Judaism offers a nontheistic alternative within Judaism. The Society organizes and supports inclusive congregations and communities, creates celebrations for Shabbat, Jewish holidays and life cycles, publishes resources and educational materials, and offers adult and children's programs in communities and on campuses.	28611 W. 12 Mile Rd. Farmington Hills, MI 48334 (248)478-7610 shj.org Media Inquiries: info@shj.org
The UU Humanists	The UU Humanists strives to promote and extend the use of rational inquiry without supernatural considerations, followed by compassionate action in all human interactions. For over fifty years, UU Humanists and its precursor organizations have celebrated the Humanist Manifesto's vision of a religion without gods through scholarship, teaching, promotion and advocacy - both within Unitarian Universalism and in the wider world.	P.O. Box 185202 Hamden, CT 06518-0202 huumanists.org Media Inquiries: John Hooper jhooper@optonline.net

ORGANIZATION	ABOUT	CONTACT INFORMATION
United Coalition of Reason	The United Coalition of Reason (CoR) works to promote local secular groups throughout the country to give them more visibility and power. Groups in similar regions are brought together to help pool resources and complete larger projects. The CoR also provides several services to help these local coalitions, including media training and free webhosting.	<p>1777 T Street, NW Washington, DC 20009 (202)550-9964 unitedcor.org info@unitedcor.org</p> <p>Media Inquiries: Fred Edwards fredwords@unitedcor.org</p>

RESOURCES, STATISTICS & PERSONAL ANECDOTES

ORGANIZATION	ABOUT	CONTACT INFORMATION
Openly Secular	Seeks to break down discrimination toward nontheists and “build love through narrative.” (Also: see the Secular Coalition’s Anti-Discrimination Support Network)	<p>openlysecular.org</p> <p>Media Inquiries: Mercury Public Affairs Carolyn E. Becker press@openlysecular.org (916)444-1380</p>
Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI)	Public Religion Research Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to research at the intersection of religion, values, and public life.	<p>publicreligion.org</p> <p>Media Inquiries: Tom Fazzini press@publicreligion.org (202)776-7700</p>
Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life	The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life seeks to promote a deeper understanding of issues at the intersection of religion and public affairs.	<p>pewforum.org</p> <p>Media Inquiries: (202)419-4562 religion@pewresearch.org</p>

ORGANIZATION	ABOUT	CONTACT INFORMATION
The Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture (ISSSC)	Nonpartisan and multidisciplinary, the Institute conducts academic research, sponsors curriculum development, and offers publications and public events.	<p>Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society & Culture Trinity College 300 Summit St. Hartford, CT 06106 (860) 297-2381 isssc@trincoll.edu</p> <p>Media Contact: Barry Kosmin, Director of the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society barry.kosmin@trincoll.edu</p>
Pitzer College	Pitzer College's Secular Studies is an interdisciplinary program focusing on manifestations of the secular in societies and cultures, past and present.	<p>1050 N. Mills Avenue Scott Hall 211 Claremont, CA 91711</p> <p>Phil Zuckerman, PhD (909)607-4495 phil_zuckerman@pitzer.edu</p>

About the Secular Coalition for America

The Secular Coalition for America is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit advocacy organization whose purpose is to amplify the diverse and growing voice of the nontheistic community in the United States. We are located in Washington, D.C. for ready access to government, activist partners and the media. Our staff lobbies the U.S. Congress on issues of special concern to our constituency.

The Secular Coalition represents more than 200 organizations nation-wide and advocates at the federal level to protect and strengthen the secular character of our government. The Coalition's 50 state chapters advocate at the state level by Coalition-trained citizen lobbyists. The Secular Coalition produces Congressional report cards and secular voter guides, holds weekly movement-wide coalition building calls, Congressional briefings, federal and state lobby days and more. The Coalition also maintains the Anti-Discrimination Support Network, which collects narratives highlighting instances of bigotry against the nonreligious and nonbeliever community.

One of the Secular Coalition's primary roles is to facilitate unity within the movement. Our 18 voting member organizations are established 501(c)(3) nonprofits who serve atheists, agnostics, humanists, freethinkers and other nontheistic Americans. In addition to our voting member organizations, the Secular Coalition boasts over 190 endorsing, allied and associate organizations as part of the Coalition.

WHAT WE OFFER

Weekly Movement Update Call & Agenda – Every Thursday at 12:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Phone Number: (559)726-1300, Code: 953064. Our weekly call features updates on judicial, international and federal cases and policy impacting the secular community, insider politics, troubling federal and state legislation, secular news, movement organization and unity, secular charity efforts, secular student movement, secular events and movement-wide calendar, and more. Each call is recorded and available at secular.org.

PLUS

- Legislation & Regulation Tracking
- Model Secular Policy Guide
- Capitol Hill Briefings
- Congressional Report Cards
- Voter Guides
- Anti-Discrimination Support Network
- Annual Secular Summit & Lobby Day (Capitol Hill)
- 50 State Chapters
- Chapter Training and Support
- State Lobby Days
- Lobbying Trainings
- Secular News Daily (website)
- Research Documents
- Daily News Updates
- Weekly Newsletters
- Master Secular Calendar
- Action Alerts
- Training Materials
- Educational Materials
- Facilitating Movement Unity

Those interested in getting involved with the Secular Coalition can donate, sign up to receive our informative newsletters, daily news clips or actions alerts, or join a state chapter.

Find more information at secular.org and secular.org/states.



Atheists. Agnostics. Humanists.
Americans.

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