

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION DESIGNATING RELIGIOUS  
FREEDOM DAY**

2015 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Brian S. King**

Senate Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor designates January 16th each year as "Religious Freedom Day."

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This resolution:

- ▶ designates January 16th each year as "Religious Freedom Day" in the state of Utah;

and

- ▶ urges Utah's citizens and governments to remember and honor the nation's first

religious freedom law, as written and championed by Thomas Jefferson and James

Madison.

**Special Clauses:**

None

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*Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

WHEREAS, the United States Congress in 1992 set aside January 16th as Religious Freedom Day to honor the passage of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom in 1786;

WHEREAS, Religious Freedom Day has been recognized by presidential proclamation annually;

WHEREAS, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was written by Thomas



28 Jefferson one year after writing the Declaration of Independence, and ushered into law by  
 29 James Madison one year before he became a principal author of the United States Constitution;

30 WHEREAS, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom represents the first and  
 31 defining law establishing and protecting the rights of individuals to choose for themselves what  
 32 they will or will not believe;

33 WHEREAS, the right to religious freedom as defined by Jefferson and Madison is  
 34 fundamental to the success of a ~~H→~~ **[democratic] constitutional** ~~←H~~ republic;

35 WHEREAS, the state of Utah was founded upon the principles of respect for  
 35a the ~~H→~~ **religious** ~~←H~~ beliefs ~~H→~~ **or non-beliefs** ~~←H~~  
 36 of all persons, ~~H→~~ **[be they Christian or Jewish, Muslim or Hindu, Buddhist or Sikh, atheist or**  
 37 **agnostic] and the state constitution expressly provides since statehood in 1896 that "perfect**  
 37a **toleration of religious sentiment is guaranteed" (Article III) and all citizens of this state shall**  
 37b **enjoy equally all religious rights and privileges (Article IV)** ~~←H~~ ;

38 WHEREAS, ~~H→~~ **[millions of]** ~~←H~~ people from all parts of the world have come to ~~H→~~ **the**  
 38a **United States of America and** ~~←H~~ Utah fleeing  
 39 religious persecution;

40 WHEREAS, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom established that all individuals  
 41 are free to believe as they will and that this shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their  
 42 civil capacities;

43 WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States has recognized repeatedly that the  
 44 Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom right was an important influence in the development of  
 45 the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights:

46 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the  
 47 Governor concurring therein, designates January 16th each year as "Religious Freedom Day" in  
 48 the state of Utah.

49 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge citizens and  
 50 local governments to remember and honor the nation's first Religious Freedom law, as written  
 51 and championed by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison ~~H→~~ **, and the enduring religious**  
 51a **freedom guaranteed in the United States and Utah constitutions** ~~←H~~ .

52 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the members of  
 53 Utah's congressional delegation and the state legislatures of the other 49 states.

**Legislative Review Note**  
**as of 2-2-15 6:01 PM**

**Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel**