

25 June 2025

Dear Speaker Johnson:

As organizations that work to protect and advance religious freedom, we urge you to denounce Rep. Mary Miller's [recent comments](#) regarding Sikh granthi Giani Surinder Singh's prayer on the House floor and voice your opposition to the harmful ideas underlying those comments as an attack on religious freedom. Religious freedom is a fundamental American value and a cornerstone of our democracy. It ensures we are all free to believe as we choose and that no religion is favored over others.

Rep. Miller is wrong to claim that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. The Constitution, which derives its power from the people and forms our government, does not proclaim an official religion. Instead, it protects religious freedom for all. Indeed, Thomas Jefferson explained that the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, the model for the Free Exercise and Establishment Clauses of the First Amendment, would ensure religious freedom for "the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan, the Hindoo, the infidel of every denomination." Given our nation's robust, longstanding commitment to the freedom of religion and belief, it is no surprise that the United States is among the most religious, and religiously diverse, nations in the world. This diversity should be celebrated, not denigrated.

This episode demonstrates how pernicious the Christian nation myth is. The mistelling of American history is designed to exclude and divide. Rep. Miller said that it is "deeply troubling" that a Muslim or a Sikh person could be allowed to lead a prayer in the House of Representatives. This makes plain that when people invoke the Christian nation myth, they believe non-Christians are not full and equal members of our communities and citizens of our country. At its core, though, religious freedom is about equality because it ensures that all people are treated the same regardless of their beliefs.

If the government has an official prayer, such as the one given each day on the House floor, people from all religions and beliefs must be eligible to lead it. Article VI of the Constitution, in fact, bars any kind of religious test. And any government-authorized prayer should be inclusive so that no one feels like an outsider. For an elected official like Rep. Miller to undermine that inclusivity with her harmful comments is simply unacceptable.

We urge you to denounce Rep. Miller's comments and to affirm that you believe people of all faiths and those who are non-religious are welcome in the halls of Congress. We appreciate in advance your prompt response and public courage on this matter.

Sincerely,

The Sikh Coalition
Americans United for Separation of Church and State
Interfaith Alliance
Advancing Justice | AAJC
Alliance of Baptists
American Atheists
American Civil Liberties Union
American Humanist Association
American Sikh Caucus Committee

Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Faith in Public Life Action
Faithful America
FFRF Action Fund
Japanese American Citizens League
Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA)
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
National Association of Social Workers
National Council of Jewish Women
SAAJCO
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)
South Asian Network
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ
Western States Center