

First Amendment

We look with deep concern on any attempt to tinker with the constitutional formula under which religious liberty has flourished in America as it has nowhere else in the world. For the national welfare, we are especially concerned in opposing any attempt to alter the Bill of Rights which for 175 years has guaranteed the rights and freedoms of all Americans.

At their best, the proposed amendments would constitutionally sanction government involvement in and sponsorship of non-sectarian religious exercises, which would not be compulsory for any citizen. Such a provision would immediately place civil government in the position of setting official religious standards in order to determine what is sectarian and what is not. The dangers of opening such a Pandora's Box has been amply demonstrated by history. Furthermore, in heterogeneous America such an enactment could only result in destructive religious wrangling and divisiveness throughout the country. As to the non-compulsory provision, it has been often noted that this is an illusory provision as applied to such situations of natural compulsion as the school room.

We feel that the cause of religion and the cause of America would both be ill-served by any attempt to experiment with the First Amendment, which has in the main served both causes so well.

7/30/62