

**CONTROLLING CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES, PURPOSES & PRACTICES**  
*U. S. Supreme Court Establishment Clause Doctrine - A Landmark Case*  
*Everson v. Board of Education, 330 U.S. 1 (1947)*

*The landmark decision in Everson marked a turning point in the interpretation and application of disestablishment law in the modern era.*



The "establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment means at least this: neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will or **force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. No person can be punished for entertaining**

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**or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion.** Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups, and vice versa. In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect "a wall of separation between church and State." Reynolds v. United States, supra, at 98 U. S. 164.

The Amendment's purpose was not to strike merely at the official establishment of a single sect, creed or religion, outlawing only a formal relation such as had prevailed in England and some of the colonies. Necessarily, it was to uproot all such relationships. But the object was broader than separating church and state in this narrow sense. **It was to create a complete and permanent separation of the**

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**spheres of religious activity and civil authority by comprehensively forbidding every form of public aid or support for religion.** In proof, the Amendment's wording and history unite with this Court's consistent utterances whenever attention has been fixed directly upon the question.

The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state. **That wall must be kept high and impregnable.** We could not approve the slightest breach.

*Thoughts, Words and Actions for Plaintiff's Quintessential Rights of the First Amendment:  
Truths that manifest Life, Liberty & Pursuit of Happiness pursuant to the Free Exercise Clause*