

## [News](#)

Adelle M. Banks

[View Author Profile](#)

Religion News Service

[View Author Profile](#)

## [Join the Conversation](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

Washington — January 31, 2018

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

Reaction to President Trump's first State of the Union was fast and furious from opponents and supporters of his definition of immigration reform and his approach to religious liberty.

In his 80-minute speech, the president declared Tuesday (Jan. 30) that "Americans are dreamers too" and said, "The motto is, 'In God we trust.'"

He opened describing "the beauty of America's soul, and the steel in America's spine" and told tearful family members of victims of MS-13 gang members, "everyone in this chamber is praying for you."

The president affirmed the importance of faith and family and vowed to protect people of every creed and religion.

**[Related:](#)** [The most divisive president in US history champions unity in State of the Union address. What?](#)

"As long as we are proud of who we are and what we are fighting for, there is nothing we cannot achieve," he said as he closed his remarks. "As long as we have confidence in our values, faith in our citizens, and trust in our God, we will never fail."

Here is a sampling of responses from religious leaders and faith organizations:

**Tony Perkins, president, Family Research Council**

"The president spoke from the heart about our shared values as Americans. One of those values that binds us together is reflected in our motto; that we are one nation under God. President Trump understands that our freedom to unite under God has been under steady assault-- and he's spent the last year reversing this devastating trend. The reality is that if Americans don't have the freedom to live according to their faith -- whether it's in the home, in the workplace, or in school -- then we really can't be free."

**Rabbi Jack Moline, president of Interfaith Alliance**

"Trump clearly doesn't know what the words 'religious liberty' mean if he thinks he's taken historic action to protect it. His actions in his first year as president have in fact significantly undermined the rights of people of faith whose beliefs don't align with the president's allies in the Religious Right."

Advertisement

**Sisters of Mercy**

Family unification has long been a pillar of US [#immigration](#) policy. Referring to family unification as [#ChainMigration](#) is dehumanizing and degrading to families. [#SOTU](#)

— Sisters of Mercy (@SistersofMercy) [January 31, 2018](#)

**Gary P. Saltzman and Daniel S. Mariaschin, officials of B'nai B'rith International**

"In his address, Trump also stressed infrastructure rebuilding. We had hoped his plan would call attention to the dearth of affordable housing for seniors. B'nai B'rith, the largest national Jewish sponsor of low-income housing for older Americans, has a nearly half-century commitment to safe, affordable housing for older persons. Any infrastructure plans should include helping seniors of low-income live independently, safely and securely."

## **The Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference**

"In order to solve the nation's most serious challenges, we all must come together as one people who share one common destiny. We must work together, Democrats and Republicans, Independents and Libertarians, the Green Party and the Tea Party, to care for the both Dreaming child and the unborn; for the addict and the inmate; for the alien on our shores and the native-born forgotten man and woman. We can do it all, but it will require us all."

## **Council on American-Islamic Relations**

[@CAIRNational](#) prefers the 5 pillars of Islam and a vibrant and inclusive American Democracy over Trump's 4 pillars of dismantling our nation's immigration system. Keeping families together is the bedrock of a great American society. [#CAIR](#) on [#SOTU](#). [#FaithOverFear](#)

— CAIR National (@CAIRNational) [January 31, 2018](#)