

[News](#)



President Donald Trump stands before speaking at the Faith & Freedom Coalition's policy conference at the Washington Hilton, Friday, June 26, 2026, in Washington. (AP/Julia Demaree Nikhinson)

Peter Smith

[View Author Profile](#)

Associated Press

[View Author Profile](#)

[**Join the Conversation**](#)

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

Manhattan, N.Y. — July 28, 2026

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

A federal judge tossed out a lawsuit Monday from an interfaith group that challenged the legitimacy of President Donald Trump's [Religious Liberty Commission](#), dismissing claims that its overwhelmingly conservative Christian makeup lacked a legally required balance of viewpoints.

Judge John P. Cronan said that although a federal law requires that advisory commissions have a balance of viewpoints, it didn't specify how this should be done. The New York judge said Trump has wide discretion in picking members.

The lawsuit was filed by several plaintiffs, including the progressive Interfaith Alliance as well as Hindu, Muslim and Sikh groups. They argued that the commission was imbalanced because it consisted almost entirely of conservative Christians, along with one Orthodox Jewish rabbi, and that several commissioners were on record questioning church-state separation and supporting the idea of America as a Judeo-Christian country.

Critics of the the commission said such fears were borne out when it issued a [draft report](#) in June that challenged the understanding of a separation of church and state in recent generations, calling instead for "bridges" between the two.

But Cronan said the lawsuit, which sought a more ideologically and religious diverse commission, failed to meet legal criteria to proceed.

He also wrote that the commission is diverse in other ways, such as including both clergy and lay people. And he said the commission has "adherents of at least five different religions" — by citing the one Jewish member and then members of various Christian denominations and identities.

Advertisement

The Interfaith Alliance argued that the commission lacked balance because members believed "the law should protect the exercise of religious beliefs over the civil rights of minority groups." But Cronan wrote that because Trump's executive order creating the commission rejected the idea of "religious liberty as inconsistent with civil rights," he wasn't obligated to appoint someone who disagreed with that founding premise.

The Interfaith Alliance has been vocal in criticizing the commission, saying its recent draft report failed to address crucial issues such as anti-Muslim attacks and saying it supports policies privileging some religious groups over others.

"Today's dismissal wrongly ignored that the Commission privileges one narrow religious and ideological view," the Rev. Paul Brandeis Raushenbush, president and CEO of Interfaith Alliance, said in a statement. "Interfaith Alliance and our multifaith partners will keep standing up to Christian nationalism wherever it threatens our democracy. Our fight for true religious freedom continues."