

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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August 18, 1955

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To Floyd Nute, Press Secretary to the Governor
Re: Religion in the Schools

In response to your request with regard to Constitutional provisions which may relate to religion, we herewith quote Article I, Section 3, of the Maine Constitution, which is the only section in the Constitution relating to religion:

"All men have a natural and unalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and no one shall be hurt, molested or restrained in his person, liberty or estate for worshipping God in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience, nor for his religious professions or sentiments, provided he does not disturb the public peace, nor obstruct others in their religious worship;- and all persons demeaning themselves peaceably, as good members of the state, shall be equally under the protection of the laws, and no subordination nor preference of any one sect or denomination to another shall ever be established by law, nor shall any religious test be required as a qualification for any office or trust, under this state; and all religious societies in this state, whether incorporate or unincorporate, shall at all times have the exclusive right of electing their public teachers, and contracting with them for their support and maintenance."

We also quote Section 145 of Chapter 41, R. S. 1954:

"Sec. 145. Readings from scriptures in public schools; no sectarian comment or teaching. To insure greater security in the faith of our fathers, to inculcate into the lives of the rising generation the spiritual values necessary to the well-being of our and future civilizations, to develop those high moral and religious principles essential to human happiness, to make available to the youth of our land the book which has been the inspiration of the greatest masterpieces of literature, art and music, and which has been the strength of the great men and women of the Christian era, there shall be, in all the public schools of the state, daily or at suitable intervals, readings from the scriptures with special emphasis upon the Ten Commandments, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's prayer. It is provided further, that there shall be no denominational or sectarian comment or teaching and each student shall give respectful attention but shall be free in his own forms of worship."

James Glynn Frost
Deputy Attorney General

Jgf/c