



# TEXAS HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES

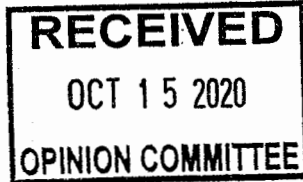
*James White*

*House District 19  
Jasper, Newton, Hardin, Polk, Tyler*

CORRECTIONS  
CHAIR

REDISTRICTING

JUDICIARY &  
CIVIL JURISPRUDENCE



October 15, 2020

**RQ-0383-KP**

**FILE# ML-48895-20**

**I.D.# 48895**

Office of the Attorney General  
Attention Opinion Committee  
P.O. Box 12548  
Austin, Texas 78711-2548  
opinion.committee@oag.texas.gov

General Paxton:

Without the free exercise of religion, there is no freedom of speech, press, or assembly. Frankly, since so many Texans acknowledge an existence of a supreme being, hostility to the free exercise of religion equates to the hostility of the to petition government.

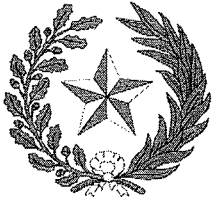
The First Amendment of the United States Constitution reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Sec. 6 of Texas Constitution reads: "FREEDOM OF WORSHIP. All men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences. No man shall be compelled to attend, erect or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent. No human authority ought, in any case whatever, to control or interfere with the rights of conscience in matters of religion, and no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious society or mode of worship. But it shall be the duty of the Legislature to pass such laws as may be necessary to protect equally every religious denomination in the peaceable enjoyment of its own mode of public worship."

In Texas statutes, the Legislature has passed and Governor George Bush signed into law the Texas Religious Freedom and Restoration Act (RFRA).<sup>1</sup>

Can any government agency or official direct anyone to restrict a citizen's free exercise of religion by requiring that the citizen face the imminency of death in order to see a clergy of their

<sup>1</sup> <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/CP/htm/CP.110.htm>



# TEXAS HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES

*James White*

*House District 19  
Jasper, Newton, Hardin, Polk, Tyler*

CORRECTIONS  
CHAIR

REDISTRICTING

JUDICIARY &  
CIVIL JURISPRUDENCE

choice. I pray that this request for opinion earns your expedited attention? The constitutional right of freedom of religion is too dispositive to become a viral casualty.

For God & Texas!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. White'.

James White  
State Representative  
House District 19