

Kentucky's Anti-Terror Law Stresses Dependence on God

A Baptist pastor and state legislator helped establish a provision in Homeland Security legislation acknowledging the state's need for God's protection first and foremost.



[] A Kentucky lawmaker believes God is the state's first line of defense against terrorism.

In legislation organizing the state's Homeland Security division, state Sen. Tom Riner tacked on a provision that lists the agency's "dependence on Almighty God as being vital to the security of the Commonwealth" before its other duties, which include analyzing terror threats and distributing millions of dollars in federal grants.

The department is also required to credit God in its annual reports and to post a plaque at the entrance of the state Emergency Operations Center with an 88-word statement that begins, "The safety and security of the Commonwealth cannot be achieved apart from reliance upon Almighty God."

Riner, a Southern Baptist minister, said acknowledging the state's need for God's protection is appropriate. "This is recognition that government alone cannot guarantee the perfect safety of the people of Kentucky," Riner told the *Lexington Herald-Leader*.

Some lawmakers say crediting God distracts from the department's mission. "It's very sad to me that we do this sort of thing," said state Sen. Kathy Stein, D-Lexington, who is a frequent critic of mixing church and state. "It takes away from the seriousness of the public discussion over security, and it clearly hurts the credibility of this office

if it's supposed to be depending on God, first and foremost.” But Riner says keeping Kentucky safe is too big a job for the government alone. “Government itself, apart from God, cannot close the security gap,” he said. “The job is too big for government.”