

South Dakota Governor Slams Critics Who Misunderstand Faith and the First Amendment

South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, a Republican, believes too many critics misunderstand the First Amendment, particularly regarding the presence of faith in the public square.

“I have been, over the last 10 years, just constantly surprised by the amount of people who think that religion and prayer cannot be in our schools,” Noem recently told *The Prodigal Stories Podcast*. “And that that is what our Constitution and Founders intended, which is not true whatsoever.”

The governor said the real purpose of the constitutional language surrounding religious freedom was to ensure “our religion could not be unduly burdened by the government.”

Noem maintains Americans’ “freedom of religion is incredibly important,” a stance at the baseline of her recent legislative journey to try to protect prayer in public schools.

A now-defunct bill Noem championed, titled “A Moment of Silence,” would have created a moment during which students could “pray in schools at the start of every school day,” or simply just reflect on the day ahead. The measure was shot down in committee by her fellow Republicans.

She said it was unfortunate to see members of her own party derail the prayer effort, detailing her belief that the public school system deserves to be a place where such freedoms are defended and clarified.

“I think that it was a discussion necessary to have in our public school systems,” Noem said. “It would have allowed them

to have a moment of silence every day that gave the students an opportunity to reflect, pray, meditate, have a moment where they found a purpose in how they were going to approach their day.”

Noem said she wanted every administrator, teacher and student to know they are free to pray in schools personally—and, despite the bill being blocked in the state’s GOP-dominated House Education Committee, the governor has no plans to drop the effort.

“I’ll continue to bring this issue because I think it’s important to have these protections in place for our students,” she said.

Noem also tackled a plethora of other matters during the podcast, candidly addressing her political future, ideological stances and other governance issues.

She was remarkably frank about the legislative clashes between her and other Republicans, divulging her belief that some fellow GOP members potentially “don’t embrace” the same “kind of conservatism” she does.

“I may be a little more conservative than the state is—I only won my last race by three points,” she said. “I brought a lot of bills that embraced conservative ideals and values. ... I’ve been very proactive on pro-life issues and gone to bat defending innocent life.”

Listen to the full interview for more.

For the rest of this article, visit our content partners at CBN News. {eoa}

Reprinted with permission from . Copyright © 2022 The Christian Broadcasting Network Inc. All rights reserved.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.