

America's Return to First Amendment Rights Will Take 'Grassroots Movement,' Sam Brownback Says

As the cancel culture rises, and the political left gains control, Americans' First Amendment rights seem all but forgotten. Former Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback, who also served as a U.S. senator and as the ambassador for religious freedom under the Trump administration, says we can bring them back—but it will take what he calls “a movement of the people at the grassroots level.”

Americans take those rights for granted, Brownback tells Charisma founder and CEO Steve Strang in a recent interview for the *Strang Report* podcast. “And I think, *People, just look. It's in our Constitution,*” he says. “It's in the First Amendment. We had The Free Exercise Clause; we really originated the concept for the government's implementation of it. And we just think it's part of our DNA, part of who we are.”

Brownback says this is where former President Ronald Reagan's statement in his 1967 inaugural address as governor of California comes true: “Freedom is a fragile thing, and it's never more than one generation away from extinction.”

“Freedom is only a generation away from being lost at any time,” Brownback says. “And that can be true even with our religious liberty in this country, as people in the culture now say, ‘Well, we don't like your values, and we don't think you should bring your values into the public square.’”

This is true even though The Free Exercise Clause attached to the First Amendment of the Constitution grants us that

authority, he adds.

"I think it's something we've got to become far more aggressive about pursuing—doing it peacefully, doing it in an encouraging way," Brownback says. "But we've got to stand up for these rights, or you're going to quickly start seeing all adoption centers closed down if they won't do same-sex adoptions; maybe hospitals shut down if they won't do transgender surgeries; maybe pharmacists not being able to practice if they won't prescribe abortion drugs. You're going to continue to see those threats and pushes in the culture."

Brownback says it's time for us to stand up and say no. "If you're a person of sincere faith, and you want to peacefully practice your faith, you are entitled under our Constitution and under our laws, and this is good for the country."

"If you're going to have a pluralistic, diverse society, you have to protect the minority views along with the majority views, as long as these are peacefully practiced," he adds. "And this is what we built this very diverse nation around: the protection of everybody's right to peacefully be who they want to be, including if you want to be a committed Christian."

Brownback also says many on the left no longer act in a democratic way.

They're acting against the First Amendment right of freedom of speech," he says. "I remember years ago, the Vietnam War was just tailing off. And Jane Fonda came to speak at the college campus that I was on, and she was a controversial figure toward the end of the Vietnam War. And one person was there saying, 'You know, I would defend my dying breath for her right to get up there and say what she sees fit,' even though he diametrically disagreed with what she was saying at the time."

"It needs to be that way now," Brownback says. "That's a

hallmark of an open society, this ability to freely debate controversial ideas. ... I think we've got to get back to these first principles. I think we have to have a discussion with the nation on why it's so important that we have free speech, why it's so important that we have religious freedom. And you may not agree with me, but you have the right to say what's on your mind and to peacefully express it. And I think we're going to have to get back to the basics of why this is so important."

For more from Brownback on First Amendment rights, religious freedom and what we can do to return to the guarantees of the U.S. Constitution, listen to this entire episode of the *Strang Report* here. Subscribe to the *Strang Report* on Apple Podcasts or your favorite podcast platform for more stories that will inspire and inform you in the power of the Holy Spirit. {eo}

Follow breaking news like this and more in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.

✖ For more information on how you can fight back against cancel culture, make sure to get a copy of what Charisma founder and CEO Stephen Strang says is his most important book yet. **God and Cancel Culture** releases Sept. 7, the day after Labor Day, wherever fine books are sold. Pre-order it at and, for a limited time, receive \$120 worth of gifts, including four e-books and a subscription to *Charisma* magazine.