

Arkansas Leads the Way for America's Religious Freedom

Arkansas has been ranked as one of two states to earn the nation's first-ever "excellent" rating for religious freedom. The 89.2% score, provided by First Liberty Institute's Center for Religion, Culture & Democracy's (CRCD) Religious Liberty in the States (RLS) index, places the state at the top.

Tennessee ranked second in the nation for religious liberty, earning a score of 85%.

Factors considered for the assessment religious liberty safeguards in education, healthcare, family, economics, and other areas.

"Religious liberty is America's First Freedom, and Arkansas is leading the nation in protecting it," Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders said in a statement. "Our rights come from God, not government, and every American should be free to live according to their faith and conscience. We'll continue defending that freedom and ensuring the Natural State remains the best place in the country to live, work, and worship."



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"Religious liberty is best protected when leaders are willing to act before the rights of people of faith are threatened," said Kelly Shackelford, President, CEO, and Chief Counsel at First Liberty. "Governor Sanders and Arkansas lawmakers have taken that responsibility seriously, adopting strong protections that help ensure Arkansans can live and work according to conscience. Arkansas' top ranking is a well-earned recognition, and it should motivate leaders across the country to strengthen religious liberty protections in their own states."

Arkansas' jump from sixth in the nation to first for religious liberty stems from the passage of Act 677, which strengthened protections for individuals and organizations recognizing the differences between the sexes and maintain religious views concerning sex and marriage.

Both Arkansas and Tennessee, as well as other states, swapped Pride Month for Fidelity Month and Nuclear Family Month, respectively. Arkansas' resolution states that the United States was "founded on the values of faith, liberty, and patriotism," and quotes George Washington as having said, "Virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government" when discussing virtue for self-government.

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