



Feb 4, 2026

NH House Education Policy and Administration comm

Re: oppose CACR 28

Dear Chairman and members of the House Education Policy and Administration comm,

My name is Lisa Beaudoin, I serve as the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Council of Churches. NHCC is an association of seven denominations, representing approximately 300 congregations across our beautiful Granite State. For more than seven decades, the Council has worked to support faith communities, strengthen civic life, and uphold the dignity and worth of every person. We respectfully oppose CACR 28.

CACR 28 proposes to revive language first written into the NH Constitution in 1784, at a time when church establishment and civic governance were still closely intertwined. That original clause explicitly privileged evangelical Protestant instruction and Christian denominations within public life. New Hampshire voters deliberately removed this sectarian language through a constitutional amendment adopted in 1968, recognizing that such language no longer reflected either constitutional law or the religious diversity of the NH. This was a conscious decision by the people to reject sectarian governance in favor of religious freedom for all.

With that history in mind, CACR 28 seeks to restore explicitly sectarian, antiquated language that aligns with a modern national statehouse strategy wherein groups like the Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation distribute model legislation then explicitly advise legislators that these measures may be advanced as constitutional amendments. Sectarian governance, by definition, elevates *one* religious tradition above others. That approach is fundamentally contrary to the constitutional framework of the United States which rejects religious establishment in order to protect both religious liberty and democratic governance.

Sectarian language is also contrary to the theological commitments of the NH Council of Churches. In the Christian tradition, Jesus consistently distinguished between the authority of the state and the authority of God. When asked about political power and taxation, he responded, "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and unto God what is God's." This teaching affirms the existence of two distinct bodies, government and religion, each with its own purpose and limits. Jesus made this distinction not to weaken faith, but to protect it from being co-opted by political power.

Precisely because CACR 28 contradicts the teachings at the heart of Jesus' ministry, our faith leaders and their congregants oppose a constitutional amendment that revives sectarian language. Our faith calls us to humility, to love our neighbor, and to have freedom of conscience. It does not call us to assert constitutional privilege for one faith tradition over others. We respectfully urge the committee to oppose CACR 28.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa D Beaudoin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Lisa D Beaudoin, Executive Director
New Hampshire Council of Churches