

**SENATE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
NINETY-SECOND SESSION**

S.F. No. 135

(SENATE AUTHORS: MARTY)

DATE
01/14/2021

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Introduction and first reading
Referred to Civil Law and Data Practices Policy

OFFICIAL STATUS

1.1 A joint resolution

1.2 relating to Religious Freedom Day.

1.3 WHEREAS, on January 16, 1786, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which was
1.4 written by Thomas Jefferson and championed by James Madison and served as the model for the
1.5 relationship between religion and government taken by the Framers of the Constitution in 1787,
1.6 and the First Amendment in 1789, was enacted in Virginia; and

1.7 WHEREAS, today we understand that religious freedom is a fundamental American and
1.8 human right. We declare that religious freedom is a cornerstone of democracy. We declare that
1.9 religious freedom is not a privilege for the few, but a right for all. We embrace this fundamental
1.10 right as one that applies to people of all religious affiliations or beliefs and people of no religious
1.11 affiliations or beliefs; and

1.12 WHEREAS, we recognize that the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom has equality as a
1.13 guiding and governing principle in declaring: "...all men shall be free to profess, and by argument
1.14 to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge,
1.15 or affect their civil capacities." Thomas Jefferson rightly understood that religious freedom
1.16 encompasses "the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan, the Hindoo, and infidel of
1.17 every denomination"; and

1.18 WHEREAS, we hold that religious liberty remains essential to the health and future of our
1.19 democracy; and

1.20 WHEREAS, in 1992, Congress designated January 16th as Religious Freedom Day to celebrate
1.21 the enactment of the Virginia Statute; and

1.22 WHEREAS, in that spirit, we recall the centrality of the Virginia Statute in shaping religious
1.23 freedom as one of the highest aspirations of the American experiment; NOW, THEREFORE,

1.24 BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota that it recognizes January
1.25 16th as Religious Freedom Day, a day in which the legislature celebrates the diversity of Minnesotans
1.26 and recognizes the right of each person to hold beliefs and practice religion according to their
1.27 conscience.

1.28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of the State of Minnesota promotes and
1.29 encourages respect for all individuals regardless of their religious beliefs or affiliations or lack of
1.30 such beliefs.

1.31 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota that it will work
1.32 to protect the rights of all people to practice their religion, free from interference in their beliefs,
1.33 whether from government or any other institution or group.