

FIRST AMENDMENT / FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS INITIATIVE: Description and Guidelines



The J. Reuben Clark Law Society (“JRCLS”), as part of its mission to perform “public service” that helps “promote fairness and virtue founded upon the rule of law,” announces its “First Amendment / Fundamental Freedoms Initiative.” JRCLS seeks to encourage its members, in their individual capacities, to find ways to support and promote the fundamental freedoms reflected in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, and similar worldwide documents, including freedom of religion and freedom of expression.

Objectives: To assist JRCLS members by providing a variety of materials from which they can choose and select, and to which they can add, as they perform individual public service learning, sharing and teaching about fundamental freedoms. To accomplish this purpose, JRCL will:

- (1) Promote discussion in local chapter meetings and elsewhere of the fundamental freedoms embodied in the First Amendment and in other constitutions and “bills of rights;”
- (2) Maintain a web-page (www.jrcls.org/first_amendment/) on which JRCLS members can find materials from multiple sources about the First Amendment and related worldwide principles, including original texts, background information, case law, and lesson plans;
- (3) Facilitate and encourage the sharing (through “wikis” and other means) of JRCLS member experiences regarding, among other things, teaching formats, appropriate teaching opportunities, organizations with similar objectives.

This Initiative will assist members in their personal public service, and is consistent with divine injunctions to “befriend” the “constitutional law of the land” (D&C 98:6), and to maintain it for the “rights and protection of all flesh” (D&C 101:77).

Participation: JRCLS encourages its members to learn about these fundamental freedoms, and find ways to share and promote them. JRCLS members might:

- Volunteer to teach these principles to, e.g., their local JRCLS chapters, student groups, civic gatherings, church and other groups, or in continuing education classes;
- Contribute to the discussion of these principles in newspaper or magazine “op-ed” pages, on social media web sites, on blogs, or elsewhere;
- Participate on school boards, city councils, or other government committees to assure that fundamental freedoms and the First Amendment are defended and promoted;
- Participate with other like-minded individuals or organizations that similarly promote fundamental freedoms like those embodied in the First Amendment;
- Volunteer to help the First Amendment / Fundamental Freedoms Initiative committee.

Members are encouraged to reflect thoughtfully and then energetically implement their personal ideas to support, teach and promote fundamental freedoms.

Guidelines: In undertaking teaching or other activities for this Initiative, remember:

YOU DO NOT REPRESENT JRCLS, BYU OR THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS. Under JRCLS Bylaws, members must “comply with BYU’s Political Neutrality Policy” (Article II), which provides that persons participating in “partisan political activities as well as activities involving matters of public policy, including legislation, referenda, ballot initiatives, or constitutional amendments,” must do so in an individual capacity and should not put forward their affiliation with the university or, by extension JRCLS (which bears the name of BYU’s J. Reuben Clark Law School).