

Introduction to
Secular Coalition for America
&
Secular Coalition for Ohio

History of Secular Coalition for America

Founded in 2002 by the leaders of **Atheist Alliance International**, the **Institute for Humanist Studies**, and the **Internet Infidels** groups. In 2003, the 4th founding member organization, **Secular Student Alliance**, was added.

Because of all these groups' status as 501(c)3 educational nonprofits with strict limits on lobbying activities, they decided to incorporate the Coalition as a 501(c)4 advocacy organization in order to facilitate, for the first time, **unlimited lobbying on behalf of nontheistic Americans**.

Mission of Secular Coalition for America

“The mission of the Secular Coalition for America is to increase the visibility and respectability of nontheistic viewpoints within the larger culture and to protect and strengthen secular government as the best guarantee of freedom for all. As resources allow, we will actively cooperate in projects that support our position, with priority given to political action initiatives and public relations opportunities.”

What is a Coalition?

coalition

/ˌkəʊəˈlɪʃən/

noun

1. a. an alliance or union between groups, factions, or parties, esp for some temporary and specific reason
b. (*as modifier*): *a coalition government*
2. a fusion or merging into one body or mass

Member Organizations
(19) voting members are national 501(c)3 organizations

Associate Organizations (5) qualify for tax-exempt status and committed to separation of religion and government

Endorsing Organizations endorse the mission of the Secular Coalition for America



Key Issue Areas of Secular Coalition for America

Health & Safety

The health and safety of an individual should not be compromised by the religious beliefs of another person or group.

Discrimination

Personal religious beliefs do not justify prejudicial actions that violate discrimination laws.

Education

Children should not be subjected to religious education or exercises in our public schools.

Tax Policy

Religious organizations and individuals should not be exempt from the requirements and restrictions of tax policy.

Military

The taxpayer funded U.S. military must serve the beliefs of all service members without privileging one belief over another.

Government Actions

The government and officials acting in their government capacity, should not endorse religious beliefs, one religion over another or religion over non-religion.

International

Even abroad, U.S. government funds, policies, or actions should not endorse religion.

Recent Ohio Legislation Lobbied By SCO

Ohio Fairness Act - would protect LGBTQ people from employment and housing discrimination in the state.

Ohio Pastor Protection Act - would allow anyone ordained in the state of Ohio, to reject any request to solemnize a marriage "that does not conform to the ordained or licensed minister's or religious society's sincerely held religious beliefs." It would also give the same "protection" to any "religious society" who does not wish to allow their buildings or property to be used for a marriage ceremony that doesn't conform to its religious beliefs.

"Heartbeat" Bill - would prohibit an abortion if a fetal heartbeat is detected. (vetoed by Governor Kasich in Dec 2017)

Religious immunization exemption - would remove all non-medical exemptions from children's immunization requirements.

Secular solemnization - change state law to allow anyone registered with the state to solemnize a marriage. Currently one must be "ordained" with a religious society to marry people in Ohio.

Membership in Secular Coalition for Ohio



Advantages of being a member:

Training - on-line or in person

Work together toward a common goal

Visit/contact legislators together and/or work together in other ways

Improve networking and recruiting for the group

WHY Lobby?

- Don't just complain about the way things are - do something about it!
- We elect people to represent us, but how can they do this if they don't know what we want?
- If citizens do not participate in government, the only ones left running it are legislators and lobbyists.
- YOU have more influence than lobbyists - you are a real person who cares and votes!
- It's not difficult - different levels of advocacy to suit your time availability.

WHY Lobby?

- Look at the news
- Social media sites you can follow for this type of news:
 - Secular Coalition for America
 - Secular Coalition for Ohio
 - ProgressOhio
 - Roll Call
 - Vote Smart
 - ACLU of Ohio
 - International Humanist and Ethical Union - IHEU
 - Americans United for Separation of Church and State
 - Friendly Atheist

Secular Coalition for Ohio

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead

