

What the changes would mean -

Freedom of conscience and free profession and practice of religion are guaranteed in Article 44.2.1. This should be extended so as to apply to having no religion.

The Prologue of the Constitution invokes God as a Trinity. It thus says that people with other religions or no religion are second- class.

Article 44.1 says “homage of public worship is due to Almighty God”. This denies the freedom to not worship.

Both Article 44.1, and the Prologue's religious part, contradict the freedom of religion that Article 44.2.1 provides, so freedom will be clearer when both are deleted.

Article 6 says that power (of government) derives from the people “under God”. That power derives from the people is sufficient.

Article 44.2.5 & .6 promise extra property rights to religious organisations. Many people think churches don't merit extra protection.

On appointment, a judge must promise to do the job faithfully “in the presence of Almighty God”. Some judges have no religion, and thus on the first day of work they are forced to lie. We need honest judges.

The President must also mention God. Members of the Council of State also must mention God. At least one member of the Council was forced to lie in 2013.

“God” must be deleted from the declarations.

There is a separate Mid-West Humanist leaflet on removing the Blasphemy clause.

Mid West Humanists

The Mid West Humanists are a group of people (in Limerick, Clare, and Tipperary) with no religion, or leaning that way (since 2008), who meet in Limerick, 3rd Wednesday of the month at 20:00, now in the Absolute Hotel. They meet similar people, with no rule about what a person thinks or believes in order to attend.

Meeting details at
www.midwesthumanists.com

Inquiries to
info@midwesthumanists.com



Humanism

Humanism is the idea that humans can think, plan, and do all the things that humans need for a good life. For most humanists this means a life with other people - being and doing good for other people as well as for themselves.

Humanism means that humans can get the knowledge they need, by reason and science, and that they do not need information about the world that is said to be revealed by a god/ gods.

Humanism also means that humans can make good moral rules.

Mid-West Humanists' Leaflets

Remove Blasphemy from the Constitution

Schools should be Secular

National School Leases are Secular

A National School Lease (example lease)

Mid-West Humanists and Humanism

Mid West Humanists

Let Ireland's Constitution be Secular

- Ireland's constitution should not specially favour any religion.

The Constitution should *keep* freedom of religion and forbid discrimination, but this should extend also to those with no religion.

The Constitution should not say power *comes* from god, nor promise special honour *to* god, or give any special power to religious organisations.

The words you must say on becoming President, or a judge, or a member of the Council of State, should not mention a god.

Blasphemy should not be an offence.

*These changes, modifying the various articles, **will not** reduce your freedom to practise your religion.*

Changing the Constitution

These Articles can be changed by your vote in referendums, after the Dáil and Senate have passed a Bill for the referendum(s).

You can buy the Constitution in most bookshops for about 2.54.

Religion, Private / Public, a Secular view

We divide this into 3 parts rather than 2 parts.

Private aspect of religion means -

You can pray, and practise religion, in private, and talk about it to your friends. You have complete freedom to think and believe (or not). *This is entirely right.*

Public visibility aspect of religion means -

People can talk or meet for religion in publicly visible places (a church is a private building, but visible on the street); religion can be in public discussions and on public media, without social or State interference. A religious event could take over a public street, like other events. Government would meet religious organisations the same as other organisations -- though with no right to meet ministers, and no right that the State take their views into consideration. *This is also entirely right.*

Public or State involvement aspect means -

The State gives special influence to religious organisations. This includes: schools (by default) are run by religions; and, if a religion runs a school or a hospital, the religion has rights on how they run it (even if the service of education or medicine is for all people). *This is entirely wrong, and should never happen.*

More details on the Constitution

The Prologue:

“In the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, from Whom is all authority and to Whom, as our final end, all actions both of men and States must be referred,

We, the people of Éire,

Humbly acknowledging all our obligations to our Divine Lord, Jesus Christ, Who sustained our fathers through centuries of trial, ... ”

Its precise legal effect is not certain, but the Prologue thus says that the State of Ireland is primarily for Trinitarian Christians. This seems to say that people with other religions and with no religion are second- class. Every person's freedom to believe a religion, to speak of it in public, and to act by it (while not harming another person) will remain (Article 44.2.1) when the Prologue's religious part is deleted.

Article 44.2, parts 5 & 6:

promise property rights to religious organisations. Property rights apply to people and organisations generally from Article 43. Either 44.2.5 & 6 give no extra protection, or they do give extra power to religions. Many people have decided that churches do not merit extra power or protection.

Article 34.5.1: a judge on the first day must say: *“In the presence of Almighty God I, , do solemnly and sincerely promise and declare that I will duly and faithfully and to the best of my knowledge and power execute the office of Chief Justice (or as the case may be) without fear or favour, affection or ill-will towards any man,*

and that I will uphold the Constitution and the laws. May God direct and sustain me.”

A judge with no religion would be lying. The parts that mention God should be deleted.

If we instead gave a choice of mentioning God or not, this would be a *mistake* - every judge would then be known as either religious or not religious. Some people before the judge would fear that he or she was biased either for or against religion, which will be relevant to some cases in court. The clauses with “God” must go.

The President's declaration in Article 12.8 is similar to that of a judge, and must also be changed to a single secular declaration.

The Council of State (Article 31) advises the President before deciding about referring a new Bill to the Supreme Court. The current Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Attorney-General, chairpersons of the Dáil and Senate, Presidents of the Appeal Court and the High Court, and Chief Justice automatically attend.

On first attending the Council, each must say: *“In the presence of Almighty God I, , do solemnly and sincerely promise and declare that I will faithfully and conscientiously fulfil my duties as a member of the Council of State.”*

In 2013 Éamon Gilmore was Tánaiste and went to the Council meeting. He had said in public that he does not believe in a god. In 2013 he got legal advice that he *must* attend and *must* speak those words, and he did so.

It is wise not to force politicians to lie, so the first 6 words of the declaration must go.