



PRESS RELEASE
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**Ten Democratic Presidential Candidates
Including Warren, Sanders, and Buttigieg
Respond to Questions on Religious Freedom, the Intersection
of Religion and Public Policy, and Civility**

Des Moines, IA – Ten democratic candidates running for president responded to questions about religious freedom and public policy posed by Interfaith Alliance of Iowa & Action Fund through its *Faith & Democracy Caucus Project* questionnaire. The full set of answers is available at interfaithallianceiowa.org/faithanddemocracy/

Connie Ryan, executive director of Interfaith Alliance of Iowa & Action Fund, released the following statement regarding the project:

“Having a robust public dialogue about religious freedom and the intersection of religion and public policy is an important part of the vetting of any field of candidates for public office and, in particular, presidential candidates. We are thrilled that the presidential candidates are addressing these issues at the center of religion and politics – all important issues that matter to Iowans and our nation.”

Candidates agreed on the value of separation of religion and government in our nation. Senator Elizabeth Warren answered, “Separation of church and state means it is important and it is truly American for each person to be able to exercise their religion freely and worship as they want. But this constitutional right should not be turned into a weapon to trample on people’s rights.”

Senator Bernie Sanders stated, “Religious freedom in this country is part of our Constitution and one of the founding principles of the nation. Religious diversity is what America’s beauty is about, but we also have the separation of religion and state and that is something we must protect.”

The Interfaith Alliance of Iowa Action Fund initiated its *Faith & Democracy Caucus Project* this summer to discuss religion and politics in our nation. All candidates were provided the opportunity to participate. Ten campaigns have submitted responses, including three of the five candidates considered to be in the top tier. Other responses are expected in the coming weeks. Candidates will be invited to continue the

conversation on the issues through various public opportunities such as round table discussions.

Top tier candidates Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Bernie Sanders, and Mayor Pete Buttigieg submitted responses to the questionnaire. Seven additional candidates also submitted responses including Senator Amy Klobuchar, Senator Cory Booker, Representative Beto O'Rourke, Representative Tulsi Gabbard, Representative John Delaney, Governor Steve Bullock, and Admiral Joe Sestak.

Candidates answered questions on religious freedom, if and how to share their own religious beliefs, civility and civil dialogue, the proper boundaries between religion and government, protecting civil rights, keeping politics out of the courts, using public funds for private educational choices, addressing the immigration crisis at the border, and protecting women's reproductive rights.

The Faith & Democracy Caucus Project and the full responses to all candidate questionnaires can be viewed at:

<http://www.interfaithallianceiowa.org/faithanddemocracy/>

Founded in 1996, the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa (www.interfaithallianceiowa.org) is a statewide, non-partisan organization that celebrates religious freedom by championing the rights of individuals, promoting policies that protect both religion and democracy, and empowering diverse voices to challenge extremism.