

## **AMERICAN ATHEISTS, INC.**

<http://www.atheists.org>

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### **YOU'RE NO JOHN KENNEDY, MR. ROMNEY -- PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL FAILS TO COURT AMERICA'S ATHEISTS & OTHER NONBELIEVERS, MAKE FULL PLEDGE TO DEFEND ROBUST SEPARATION**

An Atheist civil rights group declared that Gov. Mitt Romney's statement made earlier today regarding his positions on religion and the separation of church and state failed to reach out to millions of Atheists, Freethinkers, Secular Humanists and other citizens who profess no religion, and that he was "no John Kennedy."

The Massachusetts Republican had been comparing his speech to that of John Kennedy in 1960 before the Houston Ministerial Association. Kennedy, a Roman Catholic, defended his political record and unabashedly supported the full, robust separation of church and state.

Ellen Johnson, President of American Atheists, said that Romney "is no John Kennedy when it comes to the First Amendment."

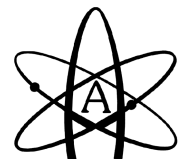
"His speech was a 'pitch' to the religious right which already has too much political clout in this country," said Johnson. "Like other candidates, Romney is overlooking the 13% of Americans who profess no religious beliefs, and will voting their principles next November."

Johnson added that Romney "drapes himself in the mantle of religious self-righteousness, and then gives token mention to the First Amendment."

Dave Silverman, Communications Director for American Atheists said that "while there should be no religious test for public office, public officials -- including the President -- take an oath of office to defend the Constitution, not preach from some holy book like the Bible or the Koran."

"The President is supposed to represent all of the people in this country, not just the minority who say they go to church once a month." Said Silverman. "Romney ignored America's Atheists and other secularists, and he -- along with any other candidate who makes the same error -- is missing out on millions of potential votes."

AMERICAN ATHEISTS is a nationwide movement that defends civil rights for Atheists; works for the total separation of church and state; and addresses issues of First Amendment public policy.



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