

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview
Short Film: “Supreme Court Breaches Separation Between Church and State”
(TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY)

Goal

Students analyze a Supreme Court decision regarding “separation between church and state.”

Time

8-10 minutes

Instructions

1. Play this short film for students:

<https://youtu.be/NkR000g7yiA>

2. Ask students for their overall thoughts.

3. Ask students these questions:

- What did the Danbury Baptists complain to President Jefferson about in their letter?
Their state (Connecticut) had an official state religion.
- What points did Jefferson make in his reply?
That religion was a matter between man and God, and not for the state to interfere in (that there should be a “wall of separation between church and state”).
- In another part of his reply (not included in the book), Jefferson, after agreeing that states should not have official religions, basically told the Danbury Baptists that there was nothing he could do about Connecticut’s state religion of Congregationalism. How is this different from how the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the Maine school case?
In this modern case, the Supreme Court ordered states to pay for Christian schools for those families who want their children to attend them.
- If you weren’t a Christian, would you want your taxes to pay for Christian schools? Why or why not?
Answers will vary, but probably not, because you wouldn’t want your money to pay for something that you disagreed with.
- If you were a Christian, would you want your taxes to pay for Muslim schools? Why or why not?
AWV, same reason.
- What would be a better way to solve the issue of whether taxpayers should pay for religious schools?
Get government out of education entirely! Then people would pay for their own schools, taught the way they wanted their students to learn, and churches/charities would take up the slack for those too poor to afford schooling (if they didn’t homeschool).
- Do you see how the Bible’s standards for what government should do does NOT include things like paying for schools—just executing judgment and justice, threatening and punishing those who harm and steal from others, and so on? How does this show that God knew exactly what He was doing?
AWV!