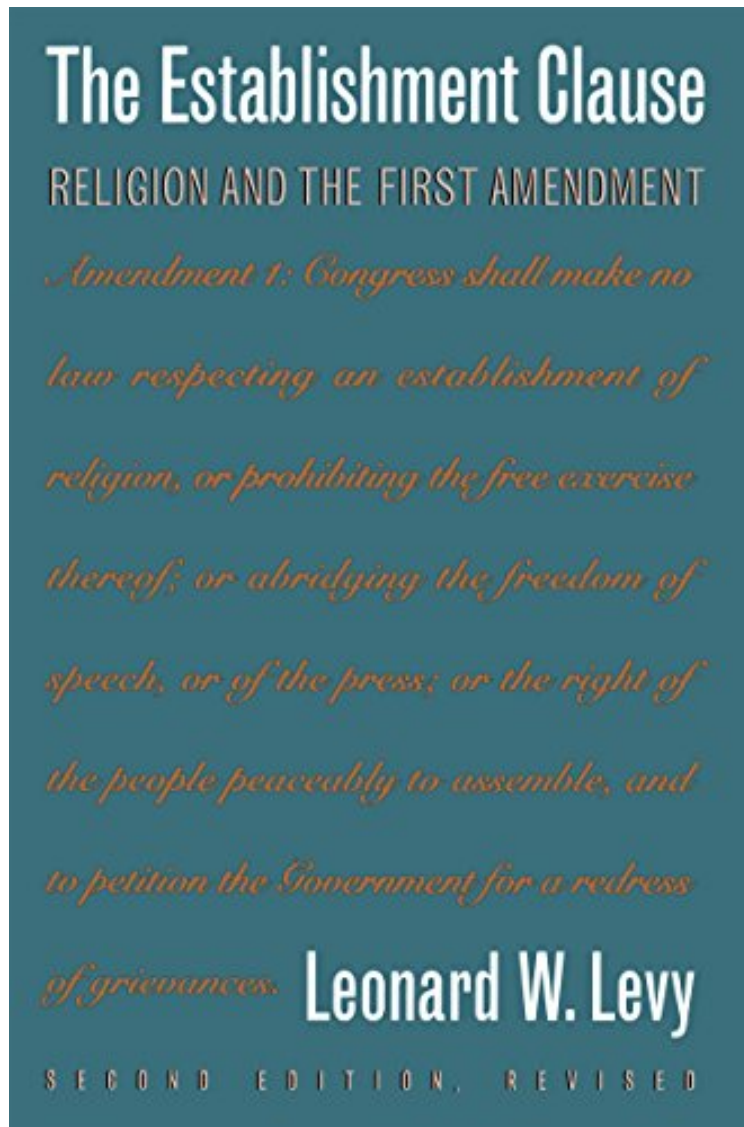


The Establishment Clause: Religion and the First Amendment

Leonard W. Levy

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Leonard W. Levy : The Establishment Clause: Religion and the First Amendment before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Establishment Clause: Religion and the First Amendment:

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Church versus StateBy Gerard D. LaunayThe confrontation between religious and secular values is one of the hottest issues that will confront the Supreme Court in the twenty-first century. Surprisingly, few Americans are schooled in the origins of the First Amendment and the thinking of James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and other founding founders in including this clause as part of the Bill of Rights. A good

portion of the volume discusses this extremely relevant topic. We learn that Madison was instrumental in the passage of the Establishment Clause. He saw it as a limitation on the power of Congress to coerce individuals to worship God in any manner inconsistent with their conscience, indeed to enact any law that involved religious topics. The book continues its discussion of efforts to promote prayer and religious doctrine through government backing by examining leading 19th and 20th century Supreme Court cases. I learned that the celebrated liberal Justice William O. Douglas wrote opinions that weakened the wall of separation; he authored conservative decisions that called for the encouragement of religion by the state... (I expected the opposite). Every informed citizen probably should read this book to discover why the establishment clause is an essential pillar of American liberty. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The definitive book on "The Establishment Clause" By Pinky Leonard Levy, one of the country's leading constitutional historians, gives an incisive and informative history as to how and why the Establishment Clause (and the entire First Amendment) came into being. While it is true that the original colonists escaped religious (read that "christian") persecution in Europe, Mr. Levy exposes the lie that they came here for "religious freedom." That's not entirely the case as the original colonies were, in fact, little theocracies. A great book, well written and easy to understand. If you are a "First Amendment" enthusiast, this is the book for you. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. History of Religion in America By TED LA scholarly review of the 1st Amendment as applied in America throughout its history since 1492. It describes the beliefs and laws in the various colonies as well as the States after 1776. Just might surprise you what the Founding Fathers actually meant by this Amendment.

Leonard Levy's classic work examines the circumstances that led to the writing of the establishment clause of the First Amendment: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion. . . .' He argues that, contrary to popular belief, the framers of the Constitution intended to prohibit government aid to religion even on an impartial basis. He thus refutes the view of 'nonpreferentialists,' who interpret the clause as allowing such aid provided that the assistance is not restricted to a preferred church. For this new edition, Levy has added to his original arguments and incorporated much new material, including an analysis of Jefferson's ideas on the relationship between church and state and a discussion of the establishment clause cases brought before the Supreme Court since the book was originally published in 1986.

From Library Journal Like Levy's earlier work, this new book on the establishment clause of the First Amendment is exhaustively researched, forcefully and relentlessly argued. It traces the sources of disestablishment in the colonial experience, offers exegetical commentary on the relevant discussion at the constitutional convention and in the ratification contests, and insistently concludes that Congress, in writing the religious freedom clause, took the broad view, flatly prohibiting government support to religion in general i.e., to all denominations, without discrimination. Opponents argue that the Framers did not intend to forbid aid to all denominations on a nondiscriminatory basis. Levy takes on McCloskey, Corwin, Justices White, Burger, Rehnquist, the Attorney General, the President himself. It is no contest. The argument for absolute disestablishment has been made, once and for all. Milton Cantor, History Dept., Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc. "A lively, informative work and often fascinating reading." Appellate Practice Journal "Levy [is] one of the best of our constitutional historians. . . . This is a strong, admirable book--at times, even passionate." New York Times Book "A profoundly intelligent contribution to an issue that regularly gets confused in the hands of superficial commentators. . . . A powerful argument." Philadelphia Inquirer "A model of policy history, demonstrating the relevance of disinterested historical scholarship to the formation of public policy." Stanley N. Katz, American Council of Learned Societies "A lively, informative work and often fascinating reading." Appellate Practice Journal "Levy is one of the best of our constitutional historians. . . . This is a strong, admirable book--at times, even passionate." New York Times Book "A model of policy history, demonstrating the relevance of disinterested historical scholarship to the formation of public policy." Stanley N. Katz, American Council of Learned Societies "Levy [is] one of the best of our constitutional historians. . . . This is a strong, admirable book--at times, even passionate." New York Times Book "America's foremost historian of law provides a profoundly intelligent contribution to an issue that regularly gets confused in the hands of superficial commentators. . . . A powerful argument.--Philadelphia Inquirer Much more than a revision of the 1986 publication. It is significantly rewritten and expanded--and improved. No other scholar is capable of this level of work. . . . This book is a model of policy history, demonstrating the relevance of disinterested historical scholarship to the formation of public policy.--Stanley N. Katz, American Council of Learned Societies A lively, informative work and often fascinating reading.--Appellate Practice Journal "Levy [is] one of the best of our constitutional historians. . . . This is a strong, admirable book--at times, even passionate.--New York Times Book