

'Anti-Christian bias' report released

Panel critical of Biden on religious freedoms

BrieAnna J. Frank
USA TODAY

President Donald Trump's task force to investigate "anti-Christian bias" in the federal government published a report on April 30 that criticized former President Joe Biden's administration for what it characterized as actions and policies that negatively impacted Christians around the country.

Several advocacy groups challenged the report's findings, describing them as deceptive and contradictory.

Trump established the task force in a February 2025 executive order that said his administration would "ensure that any unlawful and improper conduct, policies or practices that target Christians are identified, terminated and rectified."

Trump also established the White House Faith Office, which replaced Biden's White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and the Religious Liberty Commission in the first few months of his second term. In the commission's first public hearing in June, then-U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi said religious liberty had "come under attack."

Those sentiments were reiterated in the task force's nearly 200-page report, which criticized Biden's "Transgender Day of Visibility" proclamation, charges against Christian anti-abortion activists, and alleged discrimination against Christian foster care families.

USA TODAY reached out to Biden's office for comment.

Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons, vice president of programs and strategy at Interfaith Alliance, called the administration's accusations an example of "gross hypocrisy" considering Trump's criticism of Pope Leo XIV and Truth Social posts including an AI-generated image appearing to depict the president as Jesus, which even many of Trump's supporters criticized.

"This administration is the most harmful to religious liberty in modern American history, and so it has no grounds to go back and relitigate these



President Donald Trump has established the White House Faith Office, which replaced former President Joe Biden's White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. KENNY HOLSTON/POOL VIA GETTY IMAGES FILE

minor controversies from the Biden administration," he told USA TODAY.

Interfaith Alliance is among the groups that sued the Trump administration in February, alleging that the Religious Liberty Commission has an illegal lack of diversity by only having Christian and Jewish members. Graves-Fitzsimmons said oral arguments will be held in late May.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation said the report "appears to be a partisan political attack masquerading as an objective civil rights analysis" and criticized what it described as the task force's "framing of routine legal and regulatory actions as persecution."

"This report chillingly signals an escalation of the Trump administration's ongoing attacks on the constitutional principle of separation between state and church, so vital to our secular democracy," Annie Laurie Gaylor, the organization's co-founder and co-president, told USA TODAY.

The report said the Biden administration used the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances, or FACE, Act to target Christian anti-abortion activists.

The law prohibits individuals from interfering with another's access to reproductive health services or houses of

worship "by force, threat of force or physical obstruction."

A White House spokesperson previously pointed to a group of nearly two dozen people whom Biden's Department of Justice charged under the act for conspiring to storm a reproductive health clinic in Washington, DC, in October 2020.

Trump pardoned the activists days after returning to office.

The Trump administration charged former CNN anchor Don Lemon and independent journalist Georgia Fort under the FACE Act in connection with a Minnesota church protest in January. Both Lemon and Fort have characterized the charges against them as politically motivated.

The report said the Biden administration did not neutrally apply the so-called Johnson Amendment, which bars 501(c)(3) organizations including churches and nonprofits, from endorsing political candidates.

Trump told reporters in April 2025 that several pastors had described being "targeted" by the IRS over their political activity under the Biden administration.

Though the law has been on the books since the 1950s, it has rarely been

enforced. The IRS said in a July court filing that it would allow churches and other religious organizations to endorse political candidates in certain circumstances.

The filing was part of a lawsuit that the National Religious Broadcasters, an international association of evangelical Christian communicators, and other plaintiffs initiated in 2024. But a federal judge unexpectedly dismissed the lawsuit in March, leaving the restrictions on churches' political speech in place for the time being.

The report further alleged the Department of Health and Human Services under the Biden administration discriminated against Christian foster families.

The department issued a final rule in 2024 that sought to strengthen protections for LGBTQ+ youth in foster care by ensuring placements are "free from harassment, mistreatment and abuse, including related to a child's sexual orientation or gender identity."

The task force's report also said the Biden administration took "steps to limit Christian families from seeking therapy from like-minded therapists on matters of sexual orientation and gender ideology" based on the perceived dangers of such services.

A June 2022 executive order from Biden said his administration "must safeguard LGBTQI+ youth from dangerous practices like so-called 'conversion therapy'" given the "significant harm" of such practices. He said this was demonstrated by studies showing higher rates of suicidal thoughts and actions among those who have experienced conversion therapy.

The report also accused the Biden administration of failing to provide adequate religious exemptions to its COVID-19 vaccine mandate for federal employees and contractors.

The April 30 report said the task force would publish another report in 2027 with policy recommendations in line with Trump's executive order on perceived "anti-Christian bias."

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Surgeon general nominee Saphier shared mixed opinions on vaccines

Sara Moniuszko
USA TODAY

Through her podcast and time as a Fox News contributor, Dr. Nicole Saphier, President Donald Trump's new nominee for U.S. surgeon general, has weighed in on a range of health topics.

Trump's former nominee, Dr. Casey Means, faced opposition in the Senate over her vaccine views and her lack of a current medical license, leading to a stalled confirmation.

Saphier is a breast radiologist who has served as a Fox News contributor. She is the director of breast imaging at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center-Monmouth and an associate professor at Weill Cornell Medical College, specializing in breast and oncologic imaging.

In addition to her medical roles, Saphier also includes the title "farmer" in her Instagram bio and shares posts to social media about gardening and keeping chickens.

She's also promoted wellness tincture brand Drop RX on her social media. A disclosure of her involvement with the company is listed on her Memorial Sloan Kettering bio page.

Here are some of the comments Saphier has made about vaccines, mental health and new dietary guidelines:

● **Vaccines:** Saphier has shared mixed views on vaccines, blaming the Biden administration, not Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. or Trump, for the public's vaccine distrust during a September radio segment.

On claims about vaccines causing cancer or autism, she explained that evidence linking vaccines directly to either is limited and inconclusive. Most leading health organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization, deny any link. She emphasized the importance of measles and polio shots while questioning mandates for hepatitis B and certain boosters.

Speaking on her podcast "Wellness

Unmasked," she spoke about her "old friend and colleague from Fox News" Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth stopping the flu vaccine mandate for the military.

"Some will call it a win for medical autonomy, others will say it puts readiness at risk - and as usual, the truth, it's definitely somewhere in between and definitely more nuanced than that," she said.

She said she pushes for more "risk-based [vaccine] recommendations versus one-size-fits all."

● **Mental health:** In one segment of her podcast "Wellness Unmasked," Saphier recognized the seriousness of mental health and its connection to physical health.

She said while some downplay mental health challenges, they can lead to actual physiological changes. She used stress as an example of how that can raise cortisol levels and inflammation.

In a segment on Fox News, she said one driver of child mental illness is being raised in unstable or nontraditional households, including statements that critics say echo rhetoric targeting transgender people and are not supported by scientific research.

● **New dietary guidelines:** Saphier has promoted the new dietary guidelines set forth by Kennedy.

In a Fox News segment in January, she also praised Trump's "Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act," saying, "Hallelujah for bringing common sense back when it comes to milk and our children."

Experts say the biggest potential pitfall of too much full-fat dairy is its high fat content. Only 10% of a person's calories a day should come from saturated fats, a percentage easy to meet or surpass through dairy consumption alone, according to Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

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