

Texas Lyceum Hosts Public Conference On Separation Of Church & State

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*Event features noted experts including University of Michigan law professor Doug Laycock, Matthew Dowd and others
(See conference schedule below)*

(AUSTIN, TX) The Texas Lyceum, the statewide, non-profit, non-partisan organization focused on public policy issues facing Texas and the nation will hold its 2007 public conference this Friday, July 13th entitled: Separation of Church and State –Why?

"The debate about the roles of church and state in America has been ongoing since the founding of this country. Jefferson wrote about it and we continue to have the discussion in state legislatures, Congress, and the US Supreme Court," said Maggie Radford, president of the Texas Lyceum. "Our conference is designed to look at the issues beyond the buzz words and see how the First Amendment continues to be relevant for 21st century Americans."

The daylong event will focus on the First Amendment and explore today's current tensions surrounding school vouchers, faith based initiatives, public displays of religion, teaching the Bible in public schools and the policy implications for competing viewpoints.

"We have a great line-up of experts for the conference," said Shawn Stephens, Chairwoman of the 2007 Public Conference. "We have tried to include every perspective so that our presentations will be balanced - we have academics who study the issues as well as practitioners who work on this topic area every day."

The general topic areas of the conference are **Public Policy and Religiosity** and **Religion in Education** featuring speakers such as: **Matthew Dowd**, former advisor to Governor Schwarzenegger and President Bush, will speak about his research on evangelicals in politics and the influence of mega churches; **Jay Hein**, Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives; **Barry Lynn**, Executive Director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State; **Ron Wilson**, former Texas State Representative; and **Steven Schafersman**, President of Texans Citizens for Science.

The Texas Lyceum received national attention recently for its Texas Lyceum Poll, which measured Texans' attitudes about religion among other issues.

The Lyceum is hosting the event at the Barton Creek Conference Center located at 8212 Barton Creek Club Drive Austin, Texas in the Royal Ballroom from 8am to 5:30pm.

Members of the media wishing to cover the conference should please contact Margaret Justus at 281-250-8253 and express which events you wish to attend. See conference schedule below or go to www.texaslyceum.org

The program has been approved for 5.00 hours of clergy CEU credit and accredited by the State Bar of Texas Committee on MCLE for 7.5 hours of Continuing Legal Education credit, including one hour of legal ethics/professional responsibility.

Thank you to the sponsors of the 2007 Public Conference: Time Warner Cable; Baker Hostetler; Chase; Jackson Walker; Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld; Altria; Houston Endowment; Episcopal Diocese of Texas; the Texas Commission on the Arts; South Texas College of Law; J. McDonald Williams; IBC; Christ Church Cathedral, Houston; The Center at the Cathedral; Austin Bank; and Vinson & Elkins.

About the Texas Lyceum

The 27 year-old Texas Lyceum is comprised of 96 Texas men and women who begin their tenure as Lyceum Directors before the age of 46. Each of them has demonstrated leadership in their community and profession, together with a deep commitment to Texas. The organization acts as a catalyst to bring together diverse opinions and expertise to focus on national and state issues, and seeks to emphasize constructive private sector, public sector and individual responses to the issues.

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