



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 9, 2025

GOP Congresswoman Mistakes Sikh for Muslim; Her Critics Mistake U.S. for USSR Constitution

A congresswoman created quite a stir Friday when she mistook a Sikh religious leader for a Muslim and then criticized his “Islamic” prayer before Congress. The condemnation this inspired came from both sides of the aisle, too, with many mocking her grasp of civics. Of course, it’s not unusual for Americans to mistake Sikhs for Muslims, as most people aren’t comparative-religion experts. Far more troubling, though, is what has gone unmentioned: The representative’s critics apparently aren’t even constitutional experts.



Congressman Adam Gray/X
Giani Surinder Singh

The *Daily Mail* [reported](#) on the story Friday:

A Republican congresswoman is under fire after she misidentified a Sikh religious leader as Muslim and declared he should never have been allowed to deliver the House’s morning prayer.

Rep. Mary Miller (R-Illinois) ... drew immediate condemnation from both sides of the aisle after the shocking social media post on Friday.

Miller claimed it was “deeply troubling” for a non-Christian to lead the prayer and falsely stated the United States was founded as a Christian nation.

The backlash was swift....

Leaders in both parties slammed her remarks as ignorant, bigoted, and fundamentally un-American.

The controversy began after Miller misidentified Giani Surinder Singh, a Sikh religious leader from New Jersey, as a Muslim declaring on X that he “should have never been allowed” to lead the House of Representatives’ morning prayer.

Even worse, she invoked a debunked claim that America was “founded as a Christian nation” and demanded the government “reflect that truth.”

Her comments, posted in the early morning hours, were later edited and saw her replacing “Muslim” with “Sikh”, before ultimately being hastily deleted altogether.

The Critics

A sampling of the criticism follows. The first tweet, from the House Democrats’ leader Hakeem Jeffries, includes a response (immediately below) from some wiseguy. (Or is it wise guy?)



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You got me, Hakeem. When you wrote that it's deeply troubling that "an ignorant and hateful extremist is serving in the United States Congress," I thought you were talking about yourself for a moment. I thought it you'd had an epiphany.

— SL Duke (@SelwynLDuke) [June 9, 2025](#)

MAGA [@RepMaryMiller](#) of Illinois is so dumb and uneducated.

Today's House floor prayer was by Sikh of New Jersey NOT by a Muslim.

Someone please Primary Miller in IL-15 in 2026...she needs to go! [#IL15](#)
pic.twitter.com/all3eZd8aV

— Allen J. Wilson ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐ (@AllenJWilson) [June 6, 2025](#)

NEW: GOP Rep. Jeff Van Drew, who invited Sikh Giani Singh to deliver the House prayer, pushes back on Rep. Mary Miller saying he should have "never been allowed" to do so.

"Part of being American is respecting other people's faiths," he told [@axios](#)
<https://t.co/bgyB1Ntxcy> pic.twitter.com/MNnxn5sSNe

— Andrew Solender (@AndrewSolender) [June 6, 2025](#)

Unfortunately, though, and as is typical, the deeper issue has been missed. That is, in this case, the criticism from Miller's detractors is far more tragically errant than hers is.

Consider, for instance, input by Congressman Nick LaLota (R-N.Y.). Along with making some anodyne statements and concluding with "Live and let live," he opined:

While our nation's founding was indeed shaped by Judeo-Christian values, the First Amendment unequivocally guarantees that our government remains neutral toward all religions.

Does it really, though, mandate blanket "neutrality"? It depends on what's meant by the term, but it's overly broad. And another tweeter, documentary filmmaker Errol Webber, pointed out a problem with this claim, writing:

[@ErrolWebber](#) Your claim about Satanists leading prayers in legislative contexts is supported by instances at the local level, such as:

1. Pensacola, FL (2016): A Satanic Temple member gave a prayer at a city council meeting.
2. Kenai Peninsula, AK (2016): A Satanist delivered an...

— Grok (@grok) [June 6, 2025](#)

Yet predictably and lamentably, [other respondents](#) defended Satanists' inclusion. And the problem was perhaps perfectly illustrated, inadvertently, by yet another Miller critic. As the *Mail* relates:

Rep. Jared Huffman (D-California) couldn't resist a biting historical jab: "I often say that I



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serve in Congress with some of the greatest minds of the 18th century. With Miller, I may need to take it back a few more centuries.”

In reality, though, if Huffman and so many other secularists *were* acquainted with some of the 18th century’s greatest minds, they might actually understand our Constitution. There are two aspects to this, too: the legal and the cultural.

The Law of the Land

To the *Daily Mail*’s credit, it does get a couple of things right. First, it doesn’t make the now quite stale mistake of citing the “separation of church and state” as constitutional principle. For that is not actually in the Constitution; all the First Amendment forbids is the “establishment” of an official national church. This doesn’t mean that “separation” is not a constitutional principle, however.

After all, it is found in the [1936 Soviet constitution](#).

Second, the *Mail* also correctly points out that our Constitution’s Article VI states:

No religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

Yet this isn’t synonymous with “neutrality” in the radical-secularist sense of meaning “equality of presence in, or exclusion from, government.”

The Consequences of Callow “Constitutional” Understanding

This neutrality notion [has already bred](#) profound absurdity. [Examples are](#) Festivus poles and “Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster” displays on government grounds. The rationale is that if, let’s say, a Nativity Scene is present, such things must be afforded “equal time.” But the correct understanding here is simple:

The right to freedom of religion does not equate to the right to the equal government *showcasing* of religion.

Asserting otherwise is like saying that government is “abridging” speech if it doesn’t pair the Lincoln Memorial’s words — that our nation was “conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal” — with pro-tyranny and pro-slavery sentiments. Whether the matter is speech or religion, you can say and believe whatever you wish. That doesn’t mean that we have to give your ideas a place in government spaces.

And what of invocations before Congress? For the first 70 years of U.S. history, beginning in 1789, such prayers were exclusively Christian. So no “neutrality” there. In 1860, a rabbi was allowed to give the invocation. A non-Judeo-Christian congressional morning prayer wasn’t a reality until 2000, when a Hindu invocation was offered. Yet to this day, the prayers are primarily Christian.

So, in summary, allowing a Sikh prayer (or any other) is not unconstitutional. But neither is choosing only Christian prayers. The *government does not have to stay neutral in its own expression of religion*.

The Cultural Arena

As for our country’s nature, it’s true that we weren’t *officially* founded as a Christian nation. This does



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not mean, however, that this wasn't our essential character (or that it shouldn't still be). Note as well that at the United States' birth, in 1776, our country was approximately 99 percent Christian. Note also what then-general George Washington [wrote](#) in orders on May 2, 1778. To wit:

To the distinguished Character of Patriot, it should be our highest Glory to add the more distinguished Character of Christian.

There also were other Founders/Founding-era figures who emphasized religion's importance, as I illustrated in the following tweet. (Note: When they wrote "religion" below, implied was Christianity in practice, as these were men living in *Christendom*.)

Separation of church and state . Constitution, end of story

— Capone🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸 (@Capone2434) [June 9, 2025](#)

This said, our civilization has obviously strayed far from its roots. Yet what this means, among other things, is that there's a tendency to project our secular, comparative-religion mindset onto the Founders. But they were very different people, and it's notable that every single congressional prayer was Christian — until long after the Founders left this fold and went to God.



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