

THIS WEEK IN CONSCIENCE & JUSTICE

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Friday, February 21, 2025



Faith groups' environmental projects halted by Trump's climate funding freeze

In the more than five years that Stillmeadow Community Fellowship in Baltimore has worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service to rehabilitate the 10-acre forest on its urban land, what stands out to the Rev. Michael Martin is kids' reactions to the "great things in (God's) original architecture of nature."

Children who are unfamiliar with nature may get the "heebie-jeebies" when they first walk through the church's walking trails by the stream and the pond, Martin, the Evangelical Free Church of America pastor, said. But after a few days of learning about their surroundings during summer camp or an after-school program, that nervousness changes so much that the adults have to coax them back inside for music classes.

But as a result of President Donald Trump's federal funding freeze, Stillmeadow's summer camps are now at risk as promised grant money isn't coming in. And, the urban forestry program that would have allowed others to experience Stillmeadow's land transformation is in jeopardy, Martin said.

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Top News

- Faith groups' environmental projects halted by Trump's climate funding freeze
- Lawmakers, faith groups push bill to prevent ICE raids on churches, sensitive locations
- 'Millions will die,' Catholic humanitarian organizations warn, if halt in US aid continues
- Most Americans say it would be 'too risky' to give presidents, including Trump, more power



Students plant trees in the West Greenville neighborhood of Greenville, South Carolina, for Community Tree Day on Nov. 10, 2022. (Photo courtesy of Flickr/RawPixel.com/Creative Commons)

Lawmakers, faith groups push bill to prevent ICE raids on churches, sensitive locations



People place papers with their fears written down into a basin during an interfaith vigil for sanctuary at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2025, in New York. (AP Photo/Julia Demaree Nikhinson)

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'Millions will die,' Catholic humanitarian organizations warn, if halt in US aid continues

As the Trump administration put a 90-day hold on foreign aid payments in order to look for what it termed wasteful spending, leaders of Catholic aid groups are warning that even short delays will result in the deaths among aid recipients, as well as breaks in significant help being offered Sudanese threatened by famine, unaccompanied Ethiopian refugee children, and Yazidis and Christians in Iraq.

"It's a complete stop. Millions of people will die, and hundreds of millions more will suffer," said Alistair Dutton, secretary general of Caritas Internationalis, a federation of Catholic aid groups with 162 member organizations around the world.

U.S. government funding made up 40% of all global humanitarian aid tracked by the United Nations in 2024, and Catholic organizations play a major role in running programs funded by that aid.

Catholic Relief Services, a U.S. member of Caritas Internationalis, is the top recipient of funds from the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID, which Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency has largely dismantled. More than half of CRS' revenue and support came from the U.S. government in 2023.

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Demonstrators and lawmakers rally Feb. 5, 2025, on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., against President Donald Trump and his ally Elon Musk over their disruptions of the federal government.



Most Americans say it would be 'too risky' to give presidents, including Trump, more power



President Donald Trump signs an executive order in the Oval Office on Feb. 10, 2025. (Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/AFP via Getty Images)

In his first few weeks in office, President Donald Trump has moved quickly to assert – and attempt to expand – the power of the presidency. He has issued a record number of early-term executive orders and taken accompanying actions, many of which face legal challenges.

But a new Pew Research Center survey finds that Americans are skeptical about expanding the scope of presidential powers – both for Trump specifically and for presidents in general:

- 65% of U.S. adults say it would be “too risky” to give Trump more power to deal directly with many of the nation’s problems. Just 33% take the view that “many of the country’s problems could be dealt with more effectively if Trump didn’t have to worry so much about Congress or the courts.”
- Even more Americans – 78% – express concerns about expanding presidential power when asked about U.S. presidents in general.

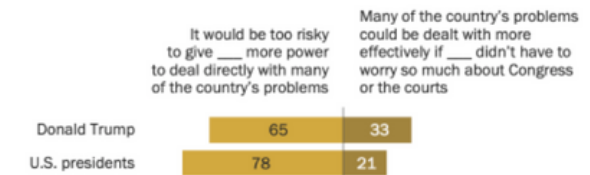
An overwhelming majority of Democrats and Democratic leaners (90%) view the prospect of expanding Trump’s presidential power as too risky.

In contrast, a 59% majority of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say many of the country’s problems could be addressed more effectively if Trump didn’t need to worry so much about Congress or the courts.

Republicans who say they “strongly” identify with the GOP are particularly likely to say the nation’s problems could be more effectively addressed by giving Trump more power: 78% say this. This compares with about half of both Republicans who less strongly identify with the party (46%) and independents who lean Republican (47%).

Wide majorities of Americans say giving presidents more power would be ‘too risky’

% who say ...

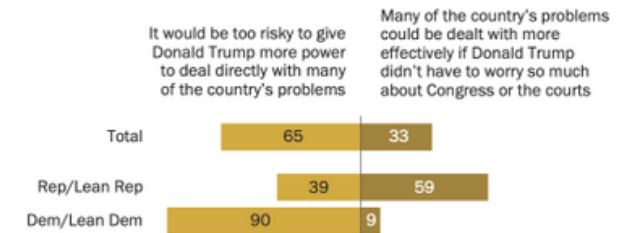


Note: Half of survey respondents were asked about “U.S. presidents,” while the other half were asked about “Donald Trump.” No answer responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 27-Feb. 2, 2025.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Most Americans – but not most Republicans – say giving Trump more power would be ‘too risky’

% who say ...



Note: No answer responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 27-Feb. 2, 2025.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



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25-28 SEPT.

CJC2025

ANNUAL CONVENTION

OVERCOMING SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION

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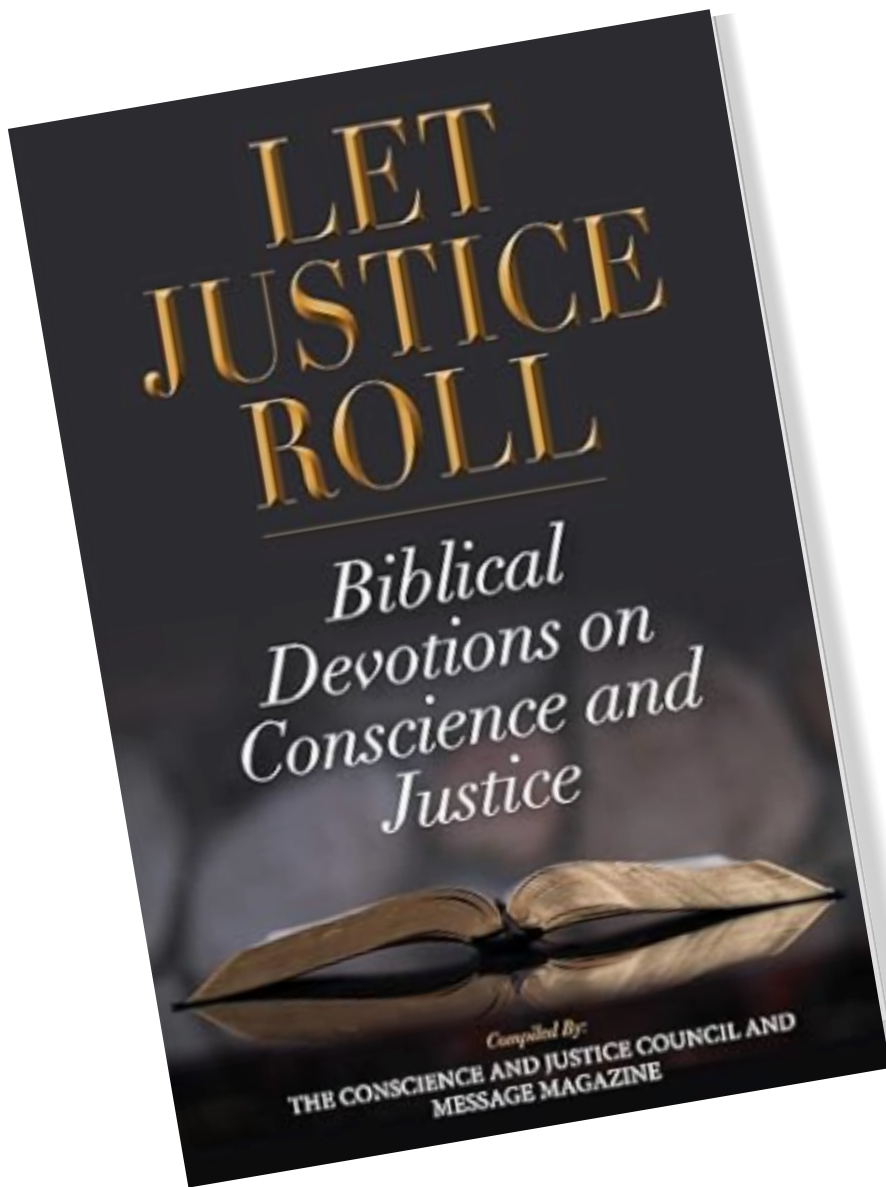
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OPENS FEB. 1, 2025

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Let Justice Roll: Biblical Devotions on Conscience and Justice

"Let Justice Roll" is a compelling devotional that walks the reader through 365 days of biblical insights in freedom of conscience, and social justice. This compilation of articles represents the work of a nationwide network of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) advocates and other connected community activists.

The components of conscience and justice ministry include conscience, discipleship, engagement, fellowship, the power of the Holy Spirit, love, and prophecy. This is a must-read book for all followers of Christ and those who seek spiritual growth. Get ready to explore the profound biblical insights in this masterful book.

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OUR PURPOSE

This newsletter aims to highlight news articles relating to religious liberty, civil rights, and social justice. The Conscience & Justice Council desires to be attuned with society so that we may change the nation by impacting one community at a time. Articles linked above are meant to provoke thought and discussion on important topics, and do not always express options or views endorsed by the CJC.

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TUNE IN FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY!

