

The relationship between the state and religious communities in the USA

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to introduce the relevant aspects of the relationship between the state and religious communities in the United States of America. The focus of the thesis lies in the introduction of the development of interpretation of both religious clauses of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by the Supreme Court, especially in the 20th century. This thesis aims to show, how both religious clauses, even though they were created to serve the same purpose, are in some cases interpreted in a contradicting way. The thesis also elaborates on religious freedom in the sensitive environment of armed forces, as the soldiers depend totally on services provided to them by the government. In the final part, the thesis introduces certain exceptions from the generally applicable legal provisions for the churches and religious legal entities, as well as recent development from the perspective of admitting religious freedom to business corporations.

Keywords: freedom of religion, Constitution of the United States, First Amendment, churches, Supreme Court, USA