

'SETTLEMENT' CON'T FROM PAGE 5

Committee was established as a requirement for the state to receive and spend opioid remediation settlement funds, received through court-approved settlements with opioid manufacturers and distributors, to address and remediate the public health crisis caused by the opioid epidemic. The Committee is responsible for providing input and making recommendations regarding specific opioid remediation or abatement

priorities, and expenditures for the use of opioid remediation funds on approved opioid remediation uses, to the Department of Health and Human Services. The Committee consists of six voting members, three of whom are appointed by the chairman of legislative management, three who are representatives of state agencies, and one non-voting chairperson who is appointed by the Governor.

NDNC ARTICLE CON'T FROM PAGE 5

your country right or wrong, and that this is embedded in your faith as a Christian, from our perspective, we have to reject that,” Jorritsma said.

“Ultimately our allegiance is to our Lord, and it’s based on Biblical values, right? Not a particular nation,” Jorritsma said. “There’s nothing wrong with loving your country, but it has to be properly ordered love that doesn’t result in blind obedience.”

According to a North Dakota News Cooperative Poll conducted in May, 73% of likely Republican voters in the state fear that if the U.S. moves away from Christian foundations, the country will be in peril.

The poll also found that 71% believe U.S. laws should be based on Christian values, 61% believe being Christian is an important part of being “truly American,” and 42% feel Christians should have dominion over all aspects of American society.

Fringe views?

Jorritsma said that if you look more closely at the polling numbers, the more extreme views soften. For example, 26% of respondents supported the idea of Christians exercising supreme dominion in the state.

“We’re a deep red state so the fact that we have conservative opinions on this doesn’t surprise me,” he said. “Would I characterize most of the Christians in North Dakota as Christian nationalist? Not a chance. They are most definitely outliers.” Robert Wefald, a long-time Republican, former North Dakota attorney general (1981-1984) and a former district judge, has publicly expressed concerns about Christian nationalism filtering into state politics.

“These extreme right-wing people are not in the mainstream,” Wefald said. “I think people here are basically pretty conservative, but the idea of us becoming a Christian state, and having that enshrined in the government?”



Exterior view of Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, a Catholic church in Bismarck, and part of the Bismarck diocese.

Wefald said that while being Christian is important to him, the idea that one has to be Christian to be “truly American” just doesn’t fly with most North Dakotans.

Trygve Hammer, running as a Democrat candidate for North Dakota’s open U.S. House seat, said it was “quite concerning” that some people hold the view that a citizen needs to be Christian to be considered truly American.

“We’re seeing that a lot on the conservative side, where they’re also saying you’re a RINO (Republican in Name Only), you’re not a real Republican, you’re not a real conservative, unless you believe the same kinds of conservatism that I believe,” Hammer said.

“So they’re applying that to other religions, and I think for a lot of those folks, they may need to get out of

North Dakota a little bit and go meet some more people,” Hammer said.



The North Dakota News Cooperative is a non-profit news organization providing reliable and independent reporting on issues and events that impact the lives of North Dakotans. The organization increases the public’s access to quality journalism and advances news literacy across the state. For more information about NDNC or to make a charitable contribution, please visit newscoopnd.org.

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