

The AHS is an association of atheist, humanist and secular student societies facilitated and supported by the British Humanist Association.

Its vision is to see a thriving atheist, humanist or secular student society in every institute of Higher Education in the UK and Republic of Ireland, networked together, with a shared voice in public life, whose members can contribute to and be part of the wider national and international movement. As a means of achieving its vision the AHS aims to build, support and represent atheist, humanist and secular student societies, facilitate communication between them, and encourage joint actions and ensure that their members have opportunities to be part of the wider national and international movement.

You can find out more at www.ahsstudents.org.uk.



National Federation
of Atheist Humanist
& Secular Student
Societies

What is...

SECULARISM?

A rough guide from the



Secularism is a separation of religion and the state.

It is a stance held by both the religious and non-religious and is key to ensuring equality between people of all beliefs and ending religious discrimination.

Secularists support secularism and believe that government and public institutions should allow both freedom of religion and freedom from religion, that is, people should be able to practise their religion (so long as it doesn't harm others) and people should not be forced into situations where they have to engage in someone else's religious practices.

So why is it important? Tragic cases like the **death of Savita Halappanavar** in Galway, Ireland - after she was refused an emergency abortion on the grounds that she was in a **"Catholic country"** in October 2012 - demonstrate to secularists just how religious influence can be damaging to the quality and safety of our public services.

Many secularists campaign against the presence of **26 unelected bishops in UK Parliament**. These bishops have all been awarded a seat in the House of Lords, purely because of their position in the Anglican Church. To

secularists this goes against the spirit of democracy as **no other religion or denomination has access to this privilege.**

These bishops have **attempted to hinder important reform**, including opposing civil-partnerships and same sex marriage. No to mention that no bishop is from a diocese in Northern Ireland, Wales or Scotland, and **almost all are white, male, middle class and middle-aged.**

A number of secular groups and societies work on a various projects and campaigns. They seek to end caste discrimination; promote freedom of expression and end criminalisation of blasphemy and apostasy across the globe; remove unelected bishops from the House of Lords; end the social division caused by faith schools; and tackle acts of compulsory worship.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

- Article 18, Universal Declaration of Human Rights.