

## When the Wall Comes Tumbling Down

Letter to the Editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 12.08.22

I was happy to see America beat Iran 1-0 in soccer. I was stunned to see jubilant Iranians dancing in the streets shouting [“Death to the dictator!”](#)

Iran is experiencing its [largest protests ever](#) following the death of Mahsa Amini on Sept. 16. Iran’s “morality police,” who enforce strict religious codes, arrested her for wearing “skinny jeans” and “immodestly” exposing her hair. Eyewitnesses say she was badly beaten and taken to a “re-education center.” She died in custody.

Protests rapidly spread. The regime tried to stifle them with internet blackouts, which backfired. Iranians [demonstrated](#), demanding women’s rights, and, for the first time, the overthrow of theocratic rule. The birthplace of Ayatollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic regime, was [torched](#) in the most serious challenge to Iranian theocracy since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Iranians celebrated America’s win because they want freedoms we take for granted; freedom of speech and the press, freedom to peaceably assemble and petition for redress of grievances, freedom from having others impose their religion upon us.

Thomas Jefferson [wrote](#) Virginia’s Statute for Religious Freedom, which became the First Amendment to the Constitution and codified those freedoms.

[Jefferson said](#) religious freedom requires “a wall of separation between Church & State.” That wall held until the Supreme Court revoked the constitutional right to choose, combined church and state and imposed one religious view on the majority of Americans who disagree. [Jewish, Muslim and other non-Christian groups](#) have sued [several states](#) alleging abortion restrictions violate their religious freedom.

When [Jefferson wrote](#): “I have sworn upon the altar of god eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man” he was speaking of religious tyranny. It resulted, said Jefferson, from [“this loathsome combination of church and state.”](#)

Jefferson understood that freedom OF religion requires freedom FROM religion. Iran’s repression warns us of the evils that result when church and state combine.

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