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**APRIL 1, 2016**

**For Immediate Release**

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*Tanenbaum CEO, Joyce Dubensky is available to speak with the press.*

## **Tanenbaum Urges Tennessee Senate to Reject Efforts to Make the Bible Tennessee's Official State Book**

**New York, NY, April 1, 2016:** The Tennessee Senate is set to vote on a bill that would make the Holy Bible Tennessee's official book.

Speaking on behalf of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, its CEO Joyce Dubensky condemned the bill. "While the Bible is an inspiring book for many, for Tennessee to make it their state book would symbolically exclude citizens of diverse faiths and none at all, including Christians who find the bill to be sacrilegious."

Supporters of the bill argue that the intention is to highlight the Bible's historical significance – however many people see the bill as a violation of the separation between church and state.

Dubensky added, "An official state book is a symbol of the state and, presumably, the people within it. As such, it should inspire a cohesive identity and sense of community. Making the Bible Tennessee's official state book would do the opposite."

One approach that Tanenbaum proposes is to identify an official state book that is non-sectarian, inspirational and speaks to the highest ethics of all traditions. "This way," Dubensky noted, "citizens will not feel as if their government is promoting only one group, one viewpoint within a religion or, worse, infringing on their own personal religious or non-religious beliefs."

*Tanenbaum is a secular, non-sectarian nonprofit that systematically dismantles religious prejudice by tackling religious bullying of students, harassment in workplaces and disparate health treatment for people based on their beliefs. More information about Tanenbaum's offerings can be found here: <https://tanenbaum.org/>*

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