

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 953

BY REPRESENTATIVE SEABAUGH

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS: Provides relative to the free exercise of religion

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 13:5233, relative to the Preservation of Religious Freedom Act;
3 to provide relative to the free exercise of religion; to provide for protection for places
4 of worship; to prohibit certain restrictions against places of worship; and to provide
5 for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 13:5233 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

8 §5233. Free exercise of religion protected

9 A. Government shall not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion,
10 even if the burden results from a facially neutral rule or a rule of general
11 applicability, unless it demonstrates that application of the burden to the person is
12 both:

13 (1) In furtherance of a compelling governmental interest.

14 (2) The least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental
15 interest.

16 B. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the
17 government shall provide protections of the highest order to every church,
18 synagogue, temple, or other place of worship and shall not discriminate against any
19 church, synagogue, temple, or other place of worship by requiring restrictions that

1 are greater than the least severe restrictions that are imposed upon or enforced
2 against any secular business, service, or assembly.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 953 Engrossed

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Seabaugh

Abstract: Requires the government to provide protections to places of worship and prohibits the government from discriminating against places of worship through the requirement of certain restrictions.

Present law provides that government shall not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion.

Present law provides an exception for when the burden on the exercise of religion is both in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest and is the least restrictive means of furthering the compelling governmental interest.

Proposed law provides that the government shall provide protections of the highest order to every church, synagogue, temple, or other place of worship and shall not discriminate against any church, synagogue, temple, or other place of worship by requiring restrictions that are greater than the least severe restrictions that are imposed upon or enforced against any secular business, service, or assembly.

(Amends R.S. 13:5233)