

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 71

BY REPRESENTATIVES HORTON, AMEDEE, BACALA, BAMBURG, BAYHAM, BILLINGS, BOYER, BUTLER, CARLSON, CARRIER, CARVER, CREWS, DEWITT, DICKERSON, ECHOLS, EDMONSTON, EGAN, FIRMENT, GALLE, KERNER, MACK, MELERINE, OWEN, RISER, SCHAMERHORN, TAYLOR, THOMPSON, VENTRELLA, WILDER, AND WILEY AND SENATORS BASS AND HODGES

SCHOOLS: Requires the display of the Ten Commandments in schools

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:2122 and 3996(B)(82), relative to elementary, secondary, and  
3 postsecondary schools; to require display of the Ten Commandments in each  
4 classroom; to provide relative to the use of public funds for this purpose; to provide  
5 for applicability; to provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 17:2122 and 3996(B)(82) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

8 §2122. Ten Commandments; displays

9 A.(1) Each public school governing authority and the governing authority  
10 of each nonpublic school that receives state funds shall display the Ten  
11 Commandments in each building it uses and classroom in each school under its  
12 jurisdiction. The nature of the display shall be determined by each governing  
13 authority with a minimum requirement that the Ten Commandments shall be  
14 displayed on a poster or framed document that is at least eleven inches by fourteen  
15 inches. The text of the Ten Commandments shall be the central focus of the poster  
16 or framed document and shall be printed in a large, easily readable font.

17 (2) The text shall read as follows:

18 "The Ten Commandments

19 I AM the LORD thy God.

20 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

21 Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven images.

1 Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.

2 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

3 Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord

4 thy God giveth thee.

5 Thou shalt not kill.

6 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7 Thou shalt not steal.

8 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

9 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

10 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his

11 cattle, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."

12 (3) This Subsection does not require a public or nonpublic school governing  
13 authority to spend its funds to purchase displays. A governing authority may spend  
14 its funds or donated funds to purchase the displays and may accept donated displays.

15 (4) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall adopt  
16 rules and regulations in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act to ensure  
17 the proper implementation of this Section.

18 B.(1) Each public postsecondary education management board and the  
19 governing authority of each nonpublic postsecondary education institution that  
20 receives state funds shall require each institution under its jurisdiction to display the  
21 Ten Commandments in each classroom on the institution's campus. At a minimum,  
22 the Ten Commandments shall be displayed on a poster or framed document that is  
23 at least eleven inches by fourteen inches. The text of the Ten Commandments shall  
24 be the central focus of the poster or framed document and shall be printed in a large,  
25 easily readable font.

26 (2) The text shall read as provided in Paragraph (A)(2) of this Section.

27 (3) This Subsection does not require a public postsecondary education  
28 management board, the governing authority of a nonpublic postsecondary education  
29 institution that receives state funds, or any public or nonpublic postsecondary

1 education institution to spend its funds to purchase such displays. An institution or  
2 such a management board or governing authority may spend its funds or donated  
3 funds to purchase such displays and may accept donated displays.

4 \* \* \*

5 §3996. Charter schools; exemptions; requirements

6 \* \* \*

7 B. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary and  
8 except as may be otherwise specifically provided for in an approved charter, a  
9 charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this  
10 Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees shall be  
11 exempt from all statutory mandates or other statutory requirements that are  
12 applicable to public schools and to public school officers and employees except for  
13 the following laws otherwise applicable to public schools with the same grades:

14 \* \* \*

15 (82) Ten Commandments; displays, R.S. 17:2122.

16 \* \* \*

17 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not  
18 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature  
19 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If  
20 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become  
21 effective on the day following such approval.

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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)]

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HB 71 Reengrossed

2024 Regular Session

Horton

**Abstract:** Requires display of the Ten Commandments in every elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education classroom

Proposed law requires each school governing authority to display the Ten Commandments in each building it uses and in each classroom in each school under its jurisdiction.

Proposed law requires such display in every classroom in public schools, including charter schools; nonpublic schools that receive state funds; and on public and nonpublic postsecondary education institution campuses.

Proposed law authorizes governing authorities, management boards, and institutions to accept donated displays and to spend funds, including donated funds, to purchase displays. Public funds are not required to be used to purchase displays.

Proposed law requires that the Ten Commandments:

- (1) Be displayed on a poster or framed document that is at least 11 inches by 14 inches.
- (2) Be the central focus of the poster or framed document.
- (3) Be printed in a large, easily readable font.

Effective upon signature of governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 17:2122 and 3996(B)(82))

#### Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

##### The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Require the display of the Ten Commandments in every classroom in nonpublic schools that receive state funds and in every classroom in nonpublic postsecondary education institutions.