
SENATE FLOOR AMENDMENTS

2024 Regular Session

Amendments proposed by Senator Morris to Reengrossed House Bill No. 71 by Representative Horton

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, line 2, after "relative to" insert "public"

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 1, line 3, after "schools;" delete the rest of the line and insert "to provide for the display of certain historical documents; to provide for the display of the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, the Northwest Ordinance, and the Ten Commandments; to provide for displays in each"

AMENDMENT NO. 3

On page 1, line 4, delete "public funds" and insert "donations or the acceptance of donated displays"

AMENDMENT NO. 4

On page 1, line 5, after "applicability;" insert "to provide for legislative intent; to provide for historical context;"

AMENDMENT NO. 5

On page 1, delete lines 8 through 11, and insert the following:

"§2122. Historical documents; displays; legislative intent; historical context; donations

A. The legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) In 2005, the Supreme Court of the United States recognized that it is permissible to display the Ten Commandments on government property in *Van Orden v. Perry*, 545 U.S. 677, 688 (2005).

(2) In 2006, the legislature enacted Act No. 602 of the 2006 Regular Session of the legislature which provided for the secretary of state to publish the Ten Commandments and other historically significant documents for posting in court houses and other public buildings to address "a need to educate and inform the public as to the history and background of American and Louisiana law".

(3) In 2019, the Supreme Court of the United States further recognized that the Ten Commandments "have historical significance as one of the foundations of our legal system. . .", in *American Legion v. American Humanists Association*, 588 U.S. 29, 53 (2019) and, the court also ruled that the displaying of the Ten Commandments on public property may have "multiple purposes" such as "historical significance" and represent a "common cultural heritage". *id.*, 588 U.S. at 54.

(4) Recognizing the historical role of the Ten Commandments accords with our nation's history and faithfully reflects the understanding of the founders of our nation with respect to the necessity of civic morality to a functional self-government. History records that James Madison, the fourth President of the United States of America, stated that "(w)e have staked the whole future of our new nation . . . upon the capacity of each of ourselves to govern ourselves according to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments."

(5) Including the Ten Commandments in the education of our children is part of our state and national history, culture, and tradition.

(6) The text of the Ten Commandments set forth in Subsection B of this Section is identical to the text of the Ten Commandments monument that was

1 upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States in *Van Orden v. Perry*, 545 U.S.
 2 677, 688 (2005).

3 (7) The Mayflower Compact of 1620 was America's first written constitution
 4 and made a Covenant with Almighty God to "form a civil body politic". This was
 5 the first purely American document of self-government and affirmed the link
 6 between civil society and God.

7 (8) The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 provided a method of admitting new
 8 states to the Union from the territory as the country expanded to the Pacific. The
 9 Ordinance "extended the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty" to the
 10 territories and stated that "(r)eligion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to
 11 good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education
 12 shall forever be encouraged."

13 (9) It is the Legislature's intent to apply the decision set forth by the Supreme
 14 Court of the United States in *Van Orden v. Perry*, id, to continue the rich tradition
 15 and ensure that the students in our public schools may understand and appreciate the
 16 foundational documents of our state and national government.

17 (10) The Supreme Court of the United States acknowledged that the Ten
 18 Commandments may be displayed on local government property when a private
 19 donation is made for the purchase of the historical monument. *Pleasant Grove City,*
 20 *Utah v. Summan*, 555 U.S. 460 (2006).

21 (11) It is the intention of the legislature that this Section shall not create an
 22 unfunded mandate on any public school governing authority. The school boards are
 23 encouraged to use documents that are printed and made available to the schools free
 24 of charge.

25 B.(1) No later than January 1, 2025, each public school governing authority
 26 shall display the Ten Commandments in each classroom in each school under its"

27 AMENDMENT NO. 6

28 On page 2, delete lines 12 through 14, and insert the following:

29 "(3) The Ten Commandments shall be displayed with a context statement as
 30 follows:

31 "The History of the Ten Commandments in American Public Education
 32 The Ten Commandments were a prominent part of American public
 33 education for almost three centuries. Around the year 1688, *The New England*
 34 *Primer* became the first published American textbook and was the equivalent of a
 35 first grade reader. *The New England Primer* was used in public schools throughout
 36 the United States for more than one hundred fifty years to teach Americans to read
 37 and contained more than forty questions about the Ten Commandments.

38 The Ten Commandments were also included in public school textbooks
 39 published by educator William McGuffey, a noted university president and
 40 professor. A version of his famous *McGuffey Readers* was written in the early 1800s
 41 and became one of the most popular textbooks in the history of American education,
 42 selling more than one hundred million copies. Copies of the *McGuffey Readers* are
 43 still available today.

44 The Ten Commandments also appeared in textbooks published by Noah
 45 Webster in which were widely used in American public schools along with
 46 America's first comprehensive dictionary that Webster also published. His textbook,
 47 *The American Spelling Book*, contained the Ten Commandments and sold more than
 48 one hundred million copies for use by public school children all across the nation and
 49 was still available for use in American public schools in the year 1975."

50 (4) A public school may also display the Mayflower Compact, the
 51 Declaration of Independence, and the Northwest Ordinance, as provided in R.S.
 52 25:1282, along with the Ten Commandments.

53 (5) This Section shall not require a public school governing authority to
 54 spend its funds to purchase displays. In order to fund the displays free of charge, the
 55 school public governing authority shall do either of the following:

56 (a) Accept donated funds to purchase the displays.

57 (b) Accept donated displays."

1 AMENDMENT NO. 7

2 On page 2, line 15, delete "(4)" and insert "(6)(a)"

3 AMENDMENT NO. 8

4 On page 2, delete lines 18 through 20, and insert the following:

5 "(b) The state Department of Education shall identify appropriate resources
6 to comply with the provisions of this Section that are free of charge. Once identified,
7 the department shall list the free resources on the department's internet website.

8 C.(1) No later than January 1, 2025, each public postsecondary education
9 management board shall require each institution under its jurisdiction to display the"

10 AMENDMENT NO. 9

11 On page 2, delete lines 28 and 29 and insert the following:

12 "management board or any public postsecondary"

13 AMENDMENT NO. 10

14 On page 3, delete lines 2 and 3, and insert the following:

15 "management board or governing authority may spend donated funds to purchase the
16 Ten Commandments or other historical documents provided for in this Section or
17 may accept donated displays."

18 AMENDMENT NO. 11

19 On page 3, between lines 16 and 17, insert the following:

20 "Section 2. If any provision or item of this Act, or the application thereof, is
21 held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items, or applications
22 of the Act which can be given effect without the invalid provision, item, or
23 application and to this end the provisions of this Act are hereby declared severable."

24 AMENDMENT NO. 12

25 On page 3, line 17, change "Section 2." to "Section 3."