



Protect Religious Freedom in Texas

The following bills would undermine religious freedom or force government to promote one religious perspective over all others in Texas.

[HB 79](#) by Rep. Dan Flynn, R-Van, would bar local school boards from prohibiting the posting of the Ten Commandments in local classrooms.

- The U.S. Supreme Court has already ruled that posting the Ten Commandments in public schools is unconstitutional. Texas shouldn't put school districts at risk of expensive lawsuits, especially in a time of tight budgets.
- Schools would be put in the difficult position of choosing which version of the Ten Commandments – Catholic, Protestant or Jewish – to post and promote over others.
- Once a public school allows the posting of religious texts from one faith, it will be required to accept the texts of other religions.

[HJR 57](#) by Rep. Leo Berman, R-Tyler, is a state constitutional amendment that would bar Texas courts from enforcing, considering or applying a religious or cultural law – clearly an attempt to prevent the imposition of Islamic law (Sharia) in Texas (a danger that could hardly be more remote).

- The U.S. Constitution already prohibits U.S. courts from imposing religious law as civil law.
- This amendment threatens the well-established practice of courts enforcing voluntary agreements between private parties, including those based on shared religious beliefs.
- This is a cynical attempt to use faith to divide Texans for political gain.

[HB 3119](#) by Rep. Jim Landtroop, R-Plainview, would expand public school Bible courses to middle school and eliminate the existing requirement that teachers have certification in a relevant field.

- This bill unwisely weakens protections for religious liberty in Bible courses that lawmakers passed overwhelmingly just four years ago.
- The state should respect the study of the Bible enough to require that such classes have qualified teachers.
- Well-trained teachers help ensure that courses don't promote or disparage religion or impose views on students who might not share them.

[HB 2454](#) by Rep. Bill Zedler, R-Arlington, would bar universities from “discriminating against” faculty members or students based on the “conduct of research relating to the theory of intelligent design or other alternate theories of the origination and development of organisms.”

- Our state's colleges and universities should and do protect academic freedom. But they should not be forced to support academic fraud.
- “Intelligent design” creationism is a religious doctrine, not science (according to a federal court ruling).
- Colleges and universities should not be required to look the other way when faculty or students distort mainstream science and research.