



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 21, 2024

Louisiana, Law, and Lies: Is Displaying the Ten Commandments in Classrooms Constitutional?

“The fundamental basis of this Nation’s law was given to Moses on the Mount,” said a famed American figure. “The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teachings which we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul.”

Which evangelist said the above? Billy Graham? Pat Robertson? Jerry Falwell?

Actually, it was Democratic president [Harry Truman](#).

“Give ‘Em Hell Harry” wasn’t alone. In 1935, fellow Democrat and New Deal author President Franklin Roosevelt said in a [statement](#), “We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a Nation, without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic.”

(Note: FDR *didn’t* [call us a “democracy” there](#).)

As for context, ponder what Truman said immediately before his above quoted lines. “The most important business in this Nation — or any other nation, for that matter — is raising and training children,” he stated. “... I don’t think we put enough stress on the necessity of implanting in the child’s mind the moral code under which we live” (i.e., our *religious* moral code).

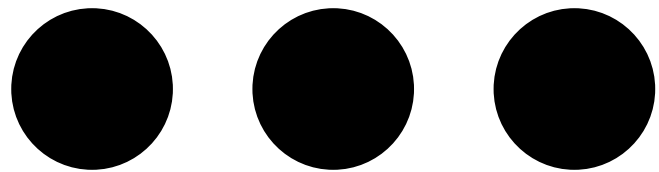
Now, question: Given this, do you think Truman would have taken any issue with Louisiana’s “controversial” new law mandating the Ten Commandments’ display in every government schoolroom?

We don’t have to wonder. Posting the Ten Commandments in schools was common prior to 1980, and neither Truman, FDR, nor any other prominent Democrat (or Republican) complained about it.

Boy, times sure have changed. Citing the “separation of church and state,” today’s Democrats are demonically furious over Louisiana’s measure. For example, Democratic political strategist James Carville [said](#) while slamming the legislation on CNN Wednesday that “if you want to talk about fundamental American values, try the First Amendment.”

Echoing Carville, the ACLU of Louisiana and two other left-wing organizations [said](#) in a joint Thursday statement, “The law violates the separation of church and state and is blatantly unconstitutional.”

And the liberal *Guardian* newspaper [warned](#) that the legislation puts the state “in the vanguard of a decades-long movement to obliterate the foundational US separation of church and state.” “Foundational”?



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In reality, the “separation of church and state” notion was most popularized in the *Everson v. Board of Education* decision (1947) — authored by Supreme Court justice and ex-Klansman Hugo Black. That’s some interesting company today’s Democrats are (ideologically) keeping there.

The “separation” phrase, however, is *not* in the U.S. Constitution; the First Amendment merely states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof....”

Here’s where the “separation” principle is found, though: The [1936 Soviet constitution](#) — also known as the “Stalin Constitution.”

Yes, that’s some *very* interesting company today’s Democrats are keeping.

In contrast, Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry, who signed the Ten Commandments bill into law, channeled Harry Truman. “If you want to respect the rule of law,” he [said](#) last Saturday, “you’ve got to start from the original law giver, which was Moses.”

What does it say about our time that today’s Republicans sound like 1940s Democrats — and today’s Democrats sound like 1936 Stalin?

In fairness, appeals to authority (e.g., FDR) and guilt by association don’t prove the point, as even a broken clock is right twice a day. So what does the Constitution actually dictate?

Note that “separation” language is *not* in our Constitution for good reason: It was a *minority view at the document’s crafting*. Even so, “separation” — [notably mentioned](#) by Thomas Jefferson in an 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptist Association — is not what today’s anti-theists suppose.

Jefferson’s “wall” was merely a one-way filtration system: It kept government out of religion (so as to avoid trespasses such as those sparking the [“Investiture Controversy”](#)).

It did not keep religion out of government.

Reflecting this mentality, the men who crafted the Constitution would and did open the first Congress, in 1789, with exclusively Christian prayers. This practice continued for ages, too, with exclusively Christian prayers.

And to this day Congress still opens with prayers — and they’re still mainly Christian.

Unless you believe the Founders wrote the First Amendment and then all suddenly developed Alzheimer’s and forgot its meaning, how can you make the case that its intent is to keep religious expression out of the public sphere?

In truth, the Constitution merely prohibits “establishment”; that is, the creation of an official state church, as existed in Britain. Yet even this proscription merely limits the federal government, with the First Amendment specifically stating that “*Congress shall make no law....*” (States often had official churches at our nation’s founding, in fact.)

This was widely understood, too, until the adventurist Supreme Court violated the Constitution and applied this prohibition to the states via the aforementioned 1947 opinion. How a judge could claim that a provision applied specifically to Congress, and not generally to “government,” should constrain all levels of government is staggering.

Even accepting this (mis)interpretation, however, merely posting or expressing religious sentiments does not constitute “establishment” of religion; saying otherwise is like contending that posting or



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expressing a type of speech on public property (e.g., Lincoln’s or MLK’s words) equates to mandating that speech. It’s silly.

In reality, even Republicans today often fail to uphold the First Amendment’s true intent. Why, many defend the Louisiana law on the basis that the Ten Commandments’ display is allowable because of their “historical significance.” Do you think the Founders opened Congress with prayers merely as a historical exercise?

Lastly, anti-theists will point to [a 1980 SCOTUS decision](#) finding unconstitutional a Kentucky law mandating the Ten Commandments’ display; they’ll say “That’s 40 years of precedent!”

Well, we have the hundreds of years of “precedent” of all levels of governmental entities — from Congress to state and city legislative bodies to schools — expressing religious sentiment. And then, of course, there’s the only precedent that really matters: the Constitution.

The pro-separation anti-theists simply have no argument. They have separated themselves from Truth and law — and they should be separated from power.



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