



Texas Bill Would Prevent Prohibition of Ten Commandments Displays in Classrooms

Texas State Representative Dan Flynn of Van has filed a bill in the state legislature (HB 307) stating: “The board of trustees of an independent school district may not prohibit the posting of a copy of the Ten Commandments in a prominent location in a district classroom.”

If passed by the legislature and signed by the governor, the act would take effect beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

“I think it’s a good idea,” Flynn was quoted by the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*. “If a teacher wants to put it in her classroom, she should be able to do it just as if she wanted to put up Halloween, Thanksgiving, or any other decorations.

“I think it’s a good list of disciplines that young people would find very meaningful to them.”

When Flynn was asked if passage of his bill could initiate a legal battle, he said: “I don’t know why it should. It’s just allowing teachers to put something in their room that is about good values.”

Flynn has unsuccessfully proposed similar measures in past legislative sessions, but he believes 2019 may be the year when his bill finally passes. He told the *Star-Telegram* that he filed the bill again because teachers have told him they want to display — not merely teach — the Ten Commandments in their classrooms.

“They want to put up a list of good, healthy guidelines for a good life,” Flynn said.

Last month, voters in Alabama approved a constitutional amendment to allow the display of the Ten Commandments in public schools and government buildings. The amendment would allow displays in public schools and government buildings in a way that “complies with constitutional requirements” such as being posted along with historical documents.

Randall Marshall of the ACLU of Alabama said that the amendment will not change much since the displays have to follow constitutional restrictions.

It was in Alabama in 2003 where Roy Moore, the chief justice of the state’s supreme court, refused to obey an order from U.S. District Judge Myron Herbert Thompson to remove a monument displaying the Ten Commandments from the rotunda of the Alabama Judicial Building — a stand that led to his suspension from the chief justice position.

There will undoubtedly be legal challenges if HB 307 is passed during the next legislative session, but with a strong level of popular support, those challenges can be overcome.

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