

Tennessee Adds Its Voice to National Push for Ten Commandments in Schools

A Tennessee lawmaker introduced a bill that would permit public schools to display the Ten Commandments.

State Rep. Michael Hale's (R) bill, House Bill 0047, allows "historically significant documents" to be displayed. These documents include the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Consitution of Tennessee, the Ten Commandments and other documents that are considered "historically significant."

The bill would allow public school boards and public charters to choose to display the documents and determine for themselves the "size and placement of the display." Schools that choose to participate can receive printed versions of the documents "free of charge."

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"Local communities and officials know what's best for their students and families," Hale said in a statement to The Tennessean. "House Bill 47 reinforces this by giving local school boards and charter schools the option, not the requirement, to display historically significant documents like the Ten Commandments, the Declaration of Independence, and the state Constitution. The bill empowers communities and elected officials to make decisions for their schools and protect their authority to do so."

"The fact is, if we lived by those Ten Commandments, we could pretty much shut down our jails and we'd all be in a lot better place as a country and as a state," Hale further said,

as per WREG. "The big thing is we're not forcing anybody to do anything."

Hale added that the "roughly 70,000 people that I represent that they would be glad to have this opportunity to be able to place these, but yet we're not trying to cram something, I guess you would say, down somebody's throat."

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Tennessee is one of several states looking to incorporate the Ten Commandments in schools.

Oklahoma state Rep. Jim Olsen (R) refiled a bill that would require the Ten Commandments to be posted in public school classrooms.

"The Ten Commandments is one of our founding documents," Olsen said. "It was integral and central to the life of the founders and to our people in general during the founding of the nation, and for us to give our children an honest history of how things really were, I think that needs to be included."

The Texas Board of Education also recently passed a rule that permits Bible-based curriculum in elementary schools. While the curriculum is optional for schools, those who choose to adopt it will receive additional funding.

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