

Ten Commandments Battle Heads to the Supreme Court

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) asked the Supreme Court to review a federal appeals court ruling that upheld a Texas law requiring the Ten Commandments to be displayed in classrooms.

“The question of whether a state may impose scripture on impressionable, captive-audience children—for nearly every hour of every school day, for up to thirteen years—implicates the most fundamental guarantees of the First Amendment and our Nation’s highest ideals,” the filing reads.

“If left in place, the decisions below could embolden state and local governments not only to enact more Ten Commandments laws, but to attempt other incursions on public-school families’ religious freedom, creating an administrative nightmare and litigation risk for school districts and diminishing, to an alarming extent, parents’ control over key aspects of their children’s religious education,” the filing adds, going on to declare that the Court “should not allow Texas or any other state to betray that trust with impunity, and the Court’s intervention is urgently needed to reaffirm the Religion Clauses’ core protections.”



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In April, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit allowed Texas to display the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms.

The court found that the law “looks nothing like a historical religious establishment,” explaining that it “does not tell churches or synagogues or mosques what to believe or how to

worship or whom to employ as priests, rabbis, or imams. It punishes no one who rejects the Ten Commandments, no matter the reason. It levies no taxes to support any clergy. It does not co-opt churches to perform civic functions.”

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton celebrated the ruling at the time. “This is a major victory for Texas and our moral values,” he said in a statement. “My office was proud to defend SB 10 and successfully ensure that the Ten Commandments will be displayed in classrooms across Texas. The Ten Commandments have had a profound impact on our nation, and it’s important that students learn from them every single day.”

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