



Opposition to SB 10

Regarding mandatory display of the Ten Commandments

March 4, 2025

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** offers the following input in opposition to **SB 10**. SB 10 would require each classroom to display a copy of the Ten Commandments.

SB 10 presents a clear likelihood of conflict with religious freedom protections in current law under Chapter 110 of the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code, which states that “a government agency may not substantially burden a person's free exercise of religion.”

An educator who practices a faith that does not embrace the Judeo-Christian Ten Commandments may reasonably argue that the presence of a religious text that conflicts with their own sincere religious belief represents such a burden.

The exceptions to the religious freedom protections under Chapter 110 are if the burden “is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest” and “is the least restrictive means of furthering that interest.”

It could be argued that the presence of the Ten Commandments furthers a compelling governmental interest by acknowledging the moral and historical significance of the Ten Commandments, but it is difficult to argue that requiring the text in an unwilling individual's classroom is the least restrictive means.

ATPE's Legislative Program states: “ATPE opposes undue restrictions that would limit the ability of educators to express their political views.”

Faith and politics are often interwoven, and educators feel an intimate connection to their individual classroom space. While some educators may appreciate the freedom to place the Ten Commandments in their classroom, most educators would resent being required to do so.

A more balanced approach would be to require only one display per campus in a shared space rather than mandating one per classroom. Additionally, teachers should be authorized to post the Ten Commandments at their discretion in any classroom, ensuring that personal religious expression is a matter of choice rather than compulsion.

Furthermore, SB 10 raises concerns about age-appropriate discussions, particularly regarding the explanations of certain commandments. Concepts such as adultery and coveting a neighbor's spouse may be difficult and inappropriate to discuss with young children in grades

The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators' association in Texas. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for more than 5 million public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public school educators.

1 through 3. The presence of these commandments in classrooms for early elementary students could create significant challenges for educators who must navigate sensitive discussions in an age-appropriate manner.

By imposing on an educator's individual classroom, we believe SB 10 would violate their personal religious freedom and invite litigation. **We therefore respectfully urge members to OPPOSE SB 10.** For additional information, contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or government@atpe.org.