

Heather Szklarski
Grafton, ND - District 19
January 13, 2025

Committee Chair and members of the House Judiciary Committee,
My name is Heather Szklarski and I am writing in opposition of House Bill 1145 which would mandate posting the ten commandments in public educational institutions.

I am a ND native and mother-of-two, who attended public school and was raised in the Catholic Church in Grafton, ND. In high school, I was a member of a Christian youth group and was active in my faith. I never felt pressure from teachers or administrators FOR OR AGAINST our meeting up, praying, or discussing religious topics among students. This was as it should be. The school did not try to influence students into or away from any religious belief.

As a parent, I have chosen to homeschool my own kids for a variety of reasons. We choose to educate our kids in the basic tenets and customs of a variety of religions from around the world as part of our history/geography and cultural studies. This has been an excellent example of how many cultures are more alike than we might realize and, I hope, has instilled a respect for others who may believe differently than our own family. It has been one of our favorite subjects as we relate other religions to the places where they developed, their holidays, special foods and cultures associated with each religion.

HB 1145 shows preference to a particular religious belief and therefore seems unconstitutional at worst and an infringement of parental rights at best. If this bill were re-written in a way that would mandate education on the major world religions as part of Social Studies in public schools it could potentially be worthwhile.

As it is written, I would ask the Committee to suggest a "DO NOT PASS" on House Bill 1145.

Thank you for your consideration.
Heather Szklarski