

Chair Klemin and members of the House Judiciary Committee. For the record, my name is Bobby Costello. I am a North Dakota resident, and Delegate for District 2 of The North Dakota Republican Party. My testimony is in support of HB 1145.

In George Washington's Farewell Address (1796), he emphasized the importance of religion and morality for the success of the American republic. Washington argued that religion and morality were essential supports for political prosperity, as they help cultivate good character, self-restraint, and civic responsibility among citizens. He warned that without these guiding principles, the nation could fall into corruption, weaken its societal bonds, and be vulnerable to foreign influence or domestic strife.

Washington also suggested that religion, particularly Christianity, had a positive influence on public and private life, urging citizens to promote these values for the stability of the republic. He believed that morality, based on religious teachings, was a key element in maintaining public order and ensuring the moral character of the nation's leaders.

Thus, Washington's farewell message encouraged Americans to hold fast to these virtues as a foundation for the nation's future success and unity.

To summarize George Washington's thoughts and views he expressed in his farewell address to our nation; The two pillars that no society can stand without are religion and morality. His forethought and wisdom have now proven themselves out as we see the corruption that governs our land, the societal bonds that have been shredded, and the depth of foreign influence and domestic strife that now exists here in a quantity that is incomprehensible.

From an historical view, The Ten Commandments are a document with which our country was founded upon.

From a religious point of view The Ten Commandments, a set of ethical guidelines, hold significant importance in the three major Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. While each religion holds the Ten Commandments in different ways, they all regard them as essential moral and spiritual principles.

## **1. Judaism:**

- **Source:** The Ten Commandments are found in the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) in the books of Exodus (20:1-17) and Deuteronomy (5:6-21).
- **Role:** In Judaism, the Ten Commandments are considered a covenant between God and the Israelites. They form the foundation of Jewish law, known as the Torah, and guide both personal and communal ethical conduct.
- **Significance:** The commandments focus on the worship of one God, honoring parents, prohibiting murder, theft, adultery, and bearing false witness, among other moral imperatives.

## **2. Christianity:**

- **Source:** The Ten Commandments are included in the Christian Bible, in the same places as in Judaism—Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.
- **Role:** In Christianity, the Ten Commandments are part of the moral law that guides believers in their relationship with God and with others. Jesus affirmed the commandments, emphasizing love for God and for one's neighbor as the greatest commandments (Matthew 22:37-40).
- **Significance:** The Ten Commandments in Christianity are seen as a standard for ethical living, though many Christians believe that faith in Jesus Christ and the grace of God supersede the strict observance of the law.

### 3. Islam:

- **Source:** While the Ten Commandments as a list do not appear directly in the Qur'an, many of the commandments are reflected throughout the Islamic scriptures, including in verses of the Qur'an and the Hadith (sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad).
- **Role:** In Islam, the teachings of the Ten Commandments align with the broader principles of submission to one God (Allah) and ethical behavior as outlined in the Qur'an. Similar themes appear, such as honoring parents, prohibiting murder, theft, adultery, and false testimony.
- **Significance:** The moral and ethical guidance found in the Ten Commandments is part of the broader Islamic law (Sharia), which calls for justice, righteousness, and the worship of Allah alone. Islam emphasizes obedience to God's commands as a key to leading a righteous life.

### Common Themes Across All Three Religions:

- **Monotheism:** Belief in one God.
- **Honoring Parents:** Respect for one's parents is emphasized.
- **Prohibition of Murder:** A clear directive against killing.
- **Prohibition of Theft:** Protection of others' property.
- **Prohibition of Adultery:** Emphasis on marital fidelity.
- **Prohibition of False Witnessing:** Encouraging honesty and integrity.
- **Sabbath Observance:** Resting on the Sabbath is important in Judaism and Christianity, while Islam emphasizes regular prayer and devotion to Allah.

Although the Ten Commandments are not presented in identical form in all three religions, their moral and ethical teachings have shaped the spiritual and legal practices of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam alike.

We were founded as a Christian Nation but with the utmost important distinction of honoring religious freedom. This Bill is not forcing Christianity on anyone, but making the children of our country become aware of the history of our country which has been attempted to be erased so they will never know it. People can not be forced to believe in God or anything, but as Christians it is our duty to make them aware of the choice they have to believe if they so choose to.

From a morality perspective, who could possibly want their children to not know and obey these Ten Commandments we were so gracefully given to us by our Creator?

With the 10's of 1000's of laws that have been written and governed with since, we have now become so far removed from these ten basic rules we were given to live our lives by and teach our children to do the same. We are at a crossroads between the history and the future of our country, but we are not beyond the point of being repaired and restored. Fortunately, our country was built upon such a solid foundation that it has taken 250 years to try to finally knock it down off it. It is now time that we need to make up our minds and pick a side. Say who we are and be able to prosper again for the next 250 years.....and being with God is the only way that will happen. Without God.....we will fall as the nations before us have fell without God.

Thank you for allowing me to testify,

Bobby