

Elizabeth Walch

Regarding House Bill No. 1145

13 January 2025

To the members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I ask you to vote NO on this bill requiring the display of the Ten Commandments in public classrooms in North Dakota. I am a Christian as well as a local Bismarck Pastor and these commandments are important to me personally and in my religious practices and faith. However, there are other residents who practice other faiths and religions or no religious faith at all! To require posting Christian religious texts in the classroom allows the State to infringe on the rights of those who have other faiths and religious texts as well as those who practice no faith.

This bill would then create a privilege of Christian religious texts, and this is wrong.

Additionally, public school teachers are not theologians, they are not trained to teach about the commandments, nor should they be! This is the purview of parents and church leaders, not public instructors. The State would then be infringing on OUR rights to teach and share our beliefs in appropriate ways and places. The State is presuming that is the role of the State, which too is wrong.

I am a person of faith, and I say NO to this bill. I encourage you to do as is evidenced in scripture, (See Daniel chapter 3) that we are called to stand up to the State when it tries to impose a particular religion on us.

I encourage you to say no with me. I ask you to say NO to this overreach of power that violates the rights and free conscience of our North Dakota neighbors. We are better than this in North Dakota.

Again, I urge you to vote NO on House Bill 1145. Please direct your efforts to legislation that really serves and benefits the lives of ALL North Dakotans, regardless of their religious or spiritual beliefs.

Peace in Christ,

Reverend Elizabeth (Beth) Walch

Bismarck