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North Dakota Legislature
69th Assembly
Bismarck, ND

1/13/2025

RE: HB1145

Dear Legislators,

I'm writing in opposition to House Bill 1145 requiring the posting of the 10 Commandments in every classroom in North Dakota for the following reasons:

1. Our founding fathers, many of whom held Judeo-Christian beliefs, provided for freedom of religion in our Constitution. Despite their religious beliefs, they did not mandate Christianity nor establish a national religion. Instead, they believed every United States citizen had the right to freely practice religion however he/she saw fit so long as it did not infringe upon the religious freedom of another citizen. Requiring the posting of the 10 Commandments in every ND classroom directly violates their wishes and intentions in the Constitution and infringes upon the religious freedom of any citizen who does not hold the same beliefs.
2. Educators within public institutions are not equipped nor trained in the teaching of theology nor the doctrines of Judaism nor Christianity. Within Christianity, denominations differ upon which verses of Exodus 20 actually comprise the 10 Commandments. How will a public educator navigate those differences? What arguments will start because Peggy disagrees with Sam on what the 10 Commandments actually are? Posting a doctrinal foundation such as the 10 Commandments will result in questions being asked of the staff and faculty which could result in inaccurate teachings at best and religious quarrels at worst. Do we really need – or want – to add fodder to the fire of bullying within schools?
3. If we post doctrine of one religion, how long will it be until other religions demand we post their doctrine as well? In reality, this would be the only fair application of the Constitution's "freedom of religion" clause: allowing every religion to post its tenets upon the walls of every classroom. But, then we're back to my second point; educators don't have the training to teach religious doctrine in most cases and the persecution that would likely erupt from this would be catastrophic.

As a Bible-believing Christian, I consider the 10 Commandments to be the basic instructions for life; they speak directly to how we relate to God and how we relate to each other. But as a freedom-loving American, I do not want anyone infringing upon my rights to practice my faith nor do I want my children to be taught any religion by anyone other than myself or their father, my husband.

Please vote no on HB 1145. Though its intentions may be honorable, its results will be ruinous.

Sincerely,
Kristy Rose