

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2308

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Good morning Chairman Larson and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. My name is Mark Jorritsma and I am the Executive Director of Family Policy Alliance of North Dakota. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 2308 and respectfully request that you render a "DO PASS" on this bill.

Foundation of our Country

Our nation was founded on Judeo-Christian beliefs. There are those who, in today's "socially enlightened" portion of society, claim otherwise. However, all one has to do is read the foundational documents such as the Declaration of Independence or the Federalist Papers to see the truth of this. The following quotes from some of our founding fathers help lay that argument to rest.

The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.
— John Adams¹

In the chain of human events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Savior. The Declaration of Independence laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity. — John Quincy Adams.²

Had the people, during the Revolution, had a suspicion of any attempt to war against Christianity, that Revolution would have been strangled in its cradle... In this age, there can be no substitute for Christianity... That was the religion of the founders of the republic and they expected it to remain the religion of their descendants. — Congress, U. S. House Judiciary Committee, 1854.³

[O]ur citizens should early understand that the genuine source of correct republican principles is the Bible, particularly the New Testament, or the Christian religion. — Noah Webster.⁴

...and the list could go on almost indefinitely. Clearly this country was founded upon Christian principles and I would assert that these principles are critical to continued functioning, success, and preservation of the United States into the future.

Ten Commandments

It is clear from biblical scholars and even the casual observer, that the Ten Commandments form the “map for living” for a country founded on Christian principles. However, more than that, they provide a blueprint for civil society, which forms the important underpinnings of our country. The family and private sphere that compose civil society are critical to establish moral foundations for our society.

To the extent that our country arose from a Judeo-Christian basis and to the extent the Ten Commandments embody the resulting moral principles for living, they should be first and foremost in the minds of our citizens. To do this, posting them as a reminder is a concrete way of honoring them and the nation that sprang from them.

Perhaps more importantly, this bill would authorize the posting of the Ten Commandments in schools that teach our children – children who will need to protect the principles and be moral compass of our country into the future. They must be made aware of the importance of the Ten Commandments in our country’s formation and, indeed, for its continued survival. This has never been more necessary than today, with the rise of social relativism.

Pledge of Allegiance

I’m sure most if not all of us in this room remember growing up reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of every school day. It meant that we were proud to be Americans, proud to stand in the footsteps of those who fought and died to make our country what it was today, and committed to fight for the freedoms it represented. I’m afraid that in our current culture, that is often lost or even viewed with contempt.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag is a promise or oath of loyalty to the Republic of United States of America. Family Policy Alliance of North Dakota believes that recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance is an important reminder and reinforcement upon the next generation that being committed to the country matters. Are we proud of everything in our country’s history? Certainly not. But we still love her and need to show the respect she deserves. Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance is one important and concrete way of doing that and passing that legacy on to our children and grandchildren.

For these reasons and for the significance of the Ten Commandments and Pledge of Allegiance in the life of our country, I respectfully ask you to vote Senate Bill 2308 out of committee with a “DO PASS” recommendation.

I would now be happy to stand for any questions.

¹ Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington D. C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), Vol. XIII, p. 292-294. In a letter from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson on June 28, 1813.

² John Quincy Adams, *An Oration Delivered Before the Inhabitants of the Town of Newburyport at Their Request on the Sixty-First Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1837* (Newburyport: Charles Whipple, 1837), pp. 5-6.

³ *Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session of the Thirty-Third Congress* (Washington: A. O. P. Nicholson, 1854), pp. 6-9.

⁴ Noah Webster, *History of the United States* (New Haven: Durrie and Peck, 1832), p. 6.