



CHRISTIAN BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

Ohio's Christian Chamber of Commerce

Senate Bill 34 Testimony – Monty Lobb, Christian Business Partnership

Good afternoon, Chairman Brenner, Vice Chairman Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Education Committee. My name is Monty Lobb, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Christian Business Partnership, a division of Center for Christian Virtue. I am here to give proponent testimony on SB34, the Historical Educational Displays Act.

As a college professor in three Ohio universities over the past 18 years and the program director for political science and professor of government at one of those institutions, I am keenly aware that college students, frighteningly, have very little knowledge of America's founding documents and the vital historical documents that support our unique political theory. For the past 13 years in my American Political Institutions course, I gave my students a condensed version of the Citizenship exam (the exam individuals must take and pass to become a US citizen). You only have to score 60% to pass the exam, but tragically, well over half of my students failed it. This past November, only two of 11 passed it. If this isn't a clear picture that something is "rotten in the state of Denmark," then I don't know what is.

My guess is that this Committee and even most of the General Assembly doesn't have an issue with most of the documents cited in SB34 as options for display in every public school classroom. But there is one, and only one, historical document that causes heartburn with a few members: the Ten Commandments. And I have to push back and ask, why?

What's so scary about the Ten Commandments? Is it possibly because people may actually follow their tenants? Is it a bad thing if you honor your mother and father? Is it a bad thing if you don't murder someone or lie about another?

Our Founding Fathers as they wrestled with creating a unique political philosophy, time and time again, read and believed in the ideas of folks like Blackstone, Locke, Burke, and others who, in turn, were guided by biblical teachings that we can clearly see in their writings. President John Adams said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."



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Adams would only say this because at the heart of America is the belief in self-government and that we, as citizens, are quite capable of governing ourselves. It is timeless, transformational, and aspirational governing documents like the Ten Commandments that allow us to govern ourselves and order our society. I wish I had time today to go into all of the societal issues that somehow became rampant once we took the Ten Commandments out of the public schools in the 1960s.

The Ten Commandments are important to our religious and legal systems because they serve as a moral and ethical foundation. Obviously, they guide millions who practice Judaism and Christianity in their relationship with God and others. But let's not lose sight of or downplay the Ten Commandments' significant role in influencing a moral framework that has established fundamental principles of virtue like honesty, respect, and justice that appeal to many cultures.

Let's not lose sight that the Ten Commandments have had a vital influence on our modern legal and criminal law systems with societal prohibitions against theft and murder. As one who has taught criminal law at the undergraduate level and practiced criminal law as a public defender, I am often reminded of this fact through my textbooks and experiences.

Finally, let's not forget that the Ten Commandments promote social order by contending for values like honoring one's parents, respecting property, and telling the truth. I hope that all of us would agree that these basic principles are necessary to create and maintain stable communities.

Is it possible that, just maybe, that's why a frieze of Moses, the lawgiver to whom the Ten Commandments were given, is displayed prominently inside the United States Supreme Court chamber with other historically significant influencers of law? If so, we have nothing to worry about.

Thank you for this opportunity to stand before you and offer this testimony. I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time.