

Chair Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Ingram, and Members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee

My name is Mike Halaiko, and I am a retired Ohio Public School Teacher and Administrator with over 40 years of service.

I am opposed to SB 34's provision that requires every Ohio Public School Classroom to display the Ten Commandments because that provision, or requirement, is a violation of both The US Constitution and The Ohio Constitution.

Requiring the display of The Ten Commandments in every Ohio Public School Classroom is a violation of The First Amendment of The US Constitution which protects Freedom of Religion by prohibiting Congress from making any law respecting an establishment of any religion, ensuring a separation of church and state. The Supreme Court has upheld this, over time, by stating that public schools cannot promote or endorse a particular religion. Requiring all public-school classrooms in Ohio to display the Ten Commandments is an endorsement of a particular religion and a violation of the US Constitution.

The Ohio Constitution, in Article I, Section 7, guarantees freedom of religion, prohibiting coercion in matters of worship, preventing religious tests for office, and ensuring no preference is given to any religious society. Again, requiring that The Ten Commandments to be displayed in all Ohio public school classrooms is a violation of The Ohio Constitution in that it is showing preference to a particular religion, and this particular provision, in SB 34, is not "protecting every religious denomination" as Article I, Section 7 further states.

I urge you, members of The Ohio Senate Education Committee, to uphold your oaths to The US and The Ohio Constitutions and remove this requirement of displaying The Ten Commandments in all Ohio Public School Classrooms from SB 34.

I am more than willing to discuss this matter with any of you further.

Mike Halaiko
285 West Columbus Street
Pickerington, Ohio 43147-1075
Email: mihalaj@icloud.com
Cell Number: 740-605-3860