

Senate Bill 34
Melissa Meyer
Opponent Testimony
Senate Education Committee

November 18, 2025

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Melissa Meyer, and I have been a Middle School Educator in Northeast Ohio for over twenty years.

I am strongly opposed to SB 34, which seeks to mandate the display of the Ten Commandments and other religiously affiliated documents in Ohio public school classrooms.

Under SB 34, all Ohio school districts would be required to select four of nine approved “founding documents” to display in social studies and history classrooms starting in 4th grade. This list includes the Ten Commandments, Ohio’s state motto “With God All Things Are Possible,” and the U.S. national motto “In God We Trust.” School boards must ensure that each display is “reasonably visible and accompanied by a description of its historical importance that serves an educational purpose.”

On the surface, the bill frames this as an educational requirement. In reality, it is a thinly veiled effort to promote religion in public schools. The bill even allows religious organizations to donate funds or displays, ensuring that school districts face pressure to include religious content at no cost to themselves. This blurs the line between education and religious endorsement, raising serious constitutional concerns.

Public schools serve students from diverse religious and non-religious backgrounds. Mandating the display of documents like the Ten Commandments or religious mottos sends a clear message: some beliefs are more valued than others. This undermines the principles of inclusivity, equity, and the separation of church and state that our public schools are meant to uphold.

As an educator, I know that students learn best in environments that are neutral, welcoming, and focused on critical thinking and historical understanding, not in classrooms where the government appears to favor one faith over another. SB 34 would co-opt social studies and

history classrooms to advance a religious agenda, rather than teach students how to analyze, question, and understand history in an objective way.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to vote NO on SB 34. Ohio's public schools should educate students, not promote religion.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

~Melissa Meyer