

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R10910 PRL-F

S.B. 1721
By: Paxton
Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In the United States, there is a lack of priority given to civic and historical literacy in education, as well as knowledge of the significant historical documents of the United States of America that for centuries have shaped and provided a foundation in our nation's heritage for our laws and principles and led to America becoming a strong nation, and the freest in the history of the world.

S.B. 1721 amends Section 1.004 of the Education Code to include, in addition to the national motto "In God We Trust," that a public elementary or secondary school, or a public institution of higher education, is required to display in a conspicuous place in each building of the school or institution a durable poster or framed copy of the historically significant documents, which are the United States Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Ten Commandments. These documents must be in the form of reproduction referenced in *Van Orden v. Perry*. The posters or framed copies may be acquired by one of the following means: via donation for display at the school or institution, or through a purchase from private donations and made available to the school or institution.

As proposed, S.B. 1721 amends current law relating to the display of the national motto and historically significant documents to the founding of the United States in public schools and institutions of higher education.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 1.004, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 1.004. New heading: DISPLAY OF NATIONAL MOTTO AND HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DOCUMENTS. (a) Requires a public elementary or secondary school or an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003 (Definitions) to display in a conspicuous place in each building of the school or institution a durable poster or framed copy of the historically significant documents to the founding of the United States if the poster or framed copy meets the requirements of Subsection (b) and meets certain criteria.

(a-1) Defines "historically significant documents to the founding of the United States."

(b) Provides that a poster or framed copy described by Subsection (a), rather than a poster or framed copy of the national motto described by Subsection (a):

(1) is required to contain:

(A) the national motto, a representation of the United States flag centered under the national motto, and a representation of the state flag;

(B) one or more of the historically significant documents to the founding of the United States; or

(C) both the items described by Paragraph (A) and one or more items described by Paragraph (B); and

(2) is prohibited from depicting any words, images, or other information other than the items listed in Subdivision (1), rather than the representations listed in Subdivision (1).

(c) Makes no changes to this subsection.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.