



LIZ MURRILL
ATTORNEY GENERAL

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
P.O. BOX 94005
BATON ROUGE, LA
70804-9005

January 3, 2025

Re: Guidance Regarding Implementation of H.B. 71, Act 676

To all public school governing authorities:

I write to provide guidance regarding H.B. 71, which addresses the display of the Ten Commandments in public classrooms.¹ H.B. 71 follows a long American tradition of recognizing the foundational documents undergirding our legal system, including the Ten Commandments. To that end, H.B. 71 requires public school governing authorities to display (by January 1, 2025) the Ten Commandments in each public school classroom—subject to certain minimum requirements—with “the nature of the display” to be “determined by each governing authority.”

For the past several months, my office has defended H.B. 71 in federal court against challenges that H.B. 71 violates the First Amendment. Throughout that process, we have tested several potential H.B. 71 displays to determine a constitutionally sound implementation plan for our schools. We have also heard the best counterarguments that potential challengers can offer. And now, we have prepared a straightforward implementation plan: (a) a concrete recommendation school governing authorities should follow in implementing H.B. 71; (b) four specific H.B. 71 displays that authorities should approve; and (c) a draft resolution that authorities may adopt to implement this guidance.

Louisiana schools should implement H.B. 71 pursuant to the following parameters:

1. A school should select, and display at its discretion, the four displays attached to this guidance letter—provided that the displays themselves or funding for the displays are donated—such that any given display may appear in any given classroom.
2. To ensure readability, each display should be between the statutory minimum size, 11 inches by 14 inches, and 18 inches by 24 inches.
3. To avoid any possibility of confusion regarding whether displays are attributable to individual teachers, a school should place its displays on any classroom wall other than behind a teacher’s desk, podium, or location from which a teacher ordinarily delivers instruction.

¹ In an ongoing lawsuit, five parish school boards—St. Tammany, Livingston, East Baton Rouge, Orleans, and Vernon—are enjoined from implementing H.B. 71. *See Roake v. Brumley*, No. 24-30706 (5th Cir.). My office has appealed that ruling to the Fifth Circuit, which will hear oral argument on January 23. While that injunction remains in effect, therefore, those five parishes may not implement H.B. 71. But that injunction does not govern the remainder of our parish school boards, as well as all other public schools, all of which remain obligated to comply with H.B. 71.



LIZ MURRILL
ATTORNEY GENERAL

STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
P.O. BOX 94005
BATON ROUGE, LA
70804-9005

4. A school should seek to place its displays among others reflecting educational content, such as those displaying the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, and the Northwest Ordinance, *see* La. R.S. 25:1282.

In accordance with this guidance, my office has prepared the four H.B. 71 displays referenced above. My office also has prepared a draft resolution that governing authorities may adopt to implement this guidance in an expeditious manner. If a school implements H.B. 71 in accordance with this guidance—and is later sued over its implementation—my office will represent that school in addition to defending statewide officials and H.B. 71 as permitted by law. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact my Solicitor General, Ben Aguiñaga (AguinagaB@ag.louisiana.gov), and Principal Deputy Solicitor General, Zack Faircloth (FairclothZ@ag.louisiana.gov).

Respectfully,

Elizabeth B. Murrill
Attorney General of Louisiana