

26100171D

HOUSE BILL NO. 1146

Offered January 14, 2026

Prefiled January 14, 2026

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding sections numbered 22.1-202.2 and 23.1-401.4, relating to public elementary and secondary schools and public institutions of higher education; display of Ten Commandments in each classroom required.

 Patron—Griffin

 Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding sections numbered 22.1-202.2 and 23.1-401.4 as follows:

§ 22.1-202.2. *Display of Ten Commandments in each classroom required.*

A. Each school board shall display in each classroom in each public elementary and secondary school in the local school division the Ten Commandments on a poster or framed document that is at least 11 inches by 14 inches and that includes:

1. As the central focus the following text printed in a large, easily readable font:

"The Ten Commandments

I AM the LORD thy God.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven images.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."; and

2. The following context statement:

"The History of the Ten Commandments in American Public Education

The Ten Commandments were a prominent part of American public education for almost three centuries. Around the year 1688, The New England Primer became the first published American textbook and was the equivalent of a first grade reader. The New England Primer was used in public schools throughout the United States for more than 150 years to teach Americans to read and contained more than 40 questions about the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were also included in public school textbooks published by educator William McGuffey, a noted university president and professor. A version of his famous McGuffey Readers was written in the early 1800s and became one of the most popular textbooks in the history of American education, selling more than 100 million copies. Copies of the McGuffey Readers are still available today. The Ten Commandments also appeared in textbooks published by Noah Webster that were widely used in American public schools along with America's first comprehensive dictionary that Webster also published. His textbook, The American Spelling Book, contained the Ten Commandments and sold more than 100 million copies for use by public school children all across the nation and was still available for use in American public schools in the year 1975."

B. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any school board to spend funds to purchase the displays required pursuant to subsection A, and in order to provide such displays, each school board shall either accept donated funds to purchase such displays or accept donations of such displays.

§ 23.1-401.4. *Display of Ten Commandments in each classroom required.*

A. Each public institution of higher education shall display in each classroom on campus the Ten Commandments on a poster or framed document that is at least 11 inches by 14 inches and that includes as the central focus the following text printed in a large, easily readable font:

"The Ten Commandments

I AM the LORD thy God.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

59 *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven images.*
60 *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.*
61 *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*
62 *Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth*
63 *thee.*
64 *Thou shalt not kill.*
65 *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*
66 *Thou shalt not steal.*
67 *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*
68 *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.*
69 *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, nor*
70 *anything that is thy neighbor's."*
71 *B. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any public institution of higher education to spend*
72 *funds to purchase the displays required pursuant to subsection A, and in order to provide such displays, each*
73 *public institution of higher education shall either accept donated funds to purchase such displays or accept*
74 *donations of such displays.*