

Resolution on Publicly Displaying the Ten Commandments in Georgia

Submitted by Tom Rush, Messenger from Bethlehem Baptist Church, Fairburn, GA

WHEREAS, the Ten Commandments have been foundational to the development of the moral and legal code of western civilization; and

WHEREAS, the Ten Commandments have made a critical contribution to the development of the principles upon which the American society, and our legal and judicial institutions in particular, were established; and

WHEREAS, the Ten Commandments, which is the foundational moral code for our nation states:

- I. I am the LORD thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
- II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
- III. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.
- IV. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- V. Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
- VI. Thou shalt not kill.
- VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- VIII. Thou shalt not steal.
- IX. Thou shalt not commit false witness against thy neighbor.
- X. Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's; and

WHEREAS, the Ten Commandments have been publicly displayed in our American halls of justice and other public places for generations; and

WHEREAS, the Ten Commandments are part of the nine documents of the Foundations of American law and Government Display, that was passed by the Georgia General Assembly in 2006, and;

WHEREAS, HB 941, passed in 2006, states: "The Ten Commandments have profoundly influenced the formation of Western legal thought and the formation of our country. That influence is clearly seen in the Declaration of Independence, which declared that 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness'." and;

WHEREAS, in 2022 the United States Supreme Court overturned the 1971 decision *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, and therefore a return to an historical approach to the Establishment Clause is necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment requires only that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," and does not prohibit public acknowledgments of God; and

WHEREAS, there is current litigation concerning the lawfulness of the passage of a bill in 2024 in Louisiana that requires for the first time a copy of the Ten Commandments to be displayed in every public school classroom; and

WHEREAS, prohibiting the display of documents of historical significance which are religious in nature or which contain expressions of a religious nature, solely based on their religious content, is clearly discrimination against religious expression; and

WHEREAS, every state constitution, including Georgia's, acknowledges God; and

WHEREAS, Romans 13:1 says: "Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God" (NASB); and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the messengers to the Georgia Baptist Convention, meeting in Statesboro, Georgia, November 11-12, 2024, declare that the public display, including public schools, government offices and courthouses, of the Ten Commandments should be permitted; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be forwarded to Georgia's Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House and the sitting state senators and representatives who represent the people of Georgia.