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H.B. 486
136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Click and Dovilla

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SUMMARY

- Declares the General Assembly’s findings that the “teaching of the historical, positive impact of religion on American history is consistent with the First Amendment” and “imperative to reducing ignorance of American history, hate, and violence within our society.”
- Permits teachers in public schools and instructors at state institutions of higher education, when providing instruction on American history, to also provide instruction on the positive impacts of religion on American history.
- Entitles the bill the “Charlie Kirk American Heritage Act.”

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Declaration of the positive impact of religion on America history

Under the bill, the General Assembly finds and declares that:

1. “The teaching of the historical, positive impact of religion on American history is consistent with the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. An accurate and historical account of the influence of Christianity on the freedom and liberties ingrained in our culture is imperative to reducing ignorance of American history, hate, and violence within our society.”
2. “Accurate historical instruction regarding verifiable, historical impacts of religion on American history is factual and is not proselytization or a violation of the First Amendment.”¹

¹ R.C. 3320.09(C).

American history instruction

The bill permits teachers in public schools² and instructors at state institutions of higher education, when providing instruction on the topic of American history, to also provide instruction on the positive impacts of religion on American history. Such instruction may include the following historical accounts:

- The authentic history of the pilgrims, including:
 - The organization of the pilgrims as a church;
 - The history of the portrait of the pilgrims displayed in the United States capitol rotunda, which depicts prayer, an open bible, and the inscription “God with Us” on the sail;
 - The religious implications of the Mayflower Compact, which was modeled on a church covenant;
 - The treaty with the Native Americans signed and upheld by the pilgrims; and
 - The first Thanksgiving that was observed as an act of gratitude towards God.
- The appeals to divine power and protection embedded in the Declaration of Independence.
- The appeal made to the biblical exodus in the fight for independence.
- The religious background of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.
- The influence of religious leaders like Reverend John Witherspoon who signed the Declaration of Independence.
- The impact of the first and second Great Awakenings on public policy.
- George Washington’s direction regarding chaplains in the army.
- George Washington’s farewell address calling religion and morality “indispensable supports” that lead to political prosperity and their tributes to patriotism “great pillars of human happiness” and the “firmest props of the duties of men and citizens.”
- Benjamin Franklin’s appeal for prayer at the constitutional convention and the hiring of chaplains that followed.
- The influence of religion on the U.S. Constitution, as evidenced by the exclusion of Sunday from the allotted time for the president to sign or veto a bill and the dating of the Constitution according to the birth of Christ.

² “Public school” includes school districts, community schools, STEM schools, and college-preparatory boarding schools. See R.C. 3320.09(B), 3314.03(A)(11)(d), 3326.11, and 3328.24.

- Reverend John Leland’s influence that led James Madison to advocate for a Bill of Rights including the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- The history of the concept of the separation of church and state dating back to its religious origins with Roger Williams.
- The influence and debates of Reverend John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg and his brother Reverend Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, the first speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.
- The historic role of the Black Robe Regiment.
- The nation’s response to Thomas Paine’s, *The Age of Reason*, including Benjamin Franklin’s suggestion that he burn it, the national rejection of it, and multiple responses to it including Elias Boudinot’s, *The Age of Revelation*.
- The role of the Ten Commandments in shaping American law and their presence in art and sculpture embedded in the U.S. Supreme Court.
- How religious influence shaped civil rights and the civil rights movement through men like Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglass, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and others.
- The impact of religious leaders such as evangelist minister Billy Graham on the culture of this nation.
- The history of the national motto “In God We Trust,” dating back to the national anthem and traced through its appearance on currency and the inclusion of “under God,” in this nation’s pledge of allegiance.
- That “religion, morality, and knowledge” are essential to good government, as expressed in Article 3 of the Northwest Ordinance and Article I, Section 7 of the Ohio Constitution.³

Bill designation

The bill is entitled the “Charlie Kirk American Heritage Act.”⁴

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	09-29-25

ANHB0486IN-136/sb

³ R.C. 3320.10 and 3320.11.

⁴ R.C. 3320.09(A).