

By: Sanford

H.B. No. 735

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to school districts, school district's employees, and  
3 students recognition of Texas' historical celebrations.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Subchapter z, Chapter 29, Education Code, is  
6 amended by adding Section 29.920 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 29.920. CELEBRATIONS. (a) A school district,  
8 employees of a school district, and students may educate students  
9 about the history of traditional celebrations. School districts,  
10 employees of a school district, and students are allowed to display  
11 references or quote versus from religious texts which are  
12 celebrated during time of historic and/or optional holidays  
13 recognized by the Texas government in Government Code, Title 6.,  
14 Chapter 662.

15 (b) School districts, district staff, and students are  
16 allowed to display references or quotes from texts which celebrate  
17 winter holidays recognized by the Texas government in Chapter 662,  
18 Government Code and may offer traditional greetings regarding the  
19 celebrations, including:

- 20 (1) "Merry Christmas";  
21 (2) "Happy Hanukkah"; and  
22 (3) "happy holidays."

23 (c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), a school district  
24 may display on school property scenes or symbols associated with

1 traditional winter celebrations, including a menorah or a Christmas  
2 image such as a nativity scene or Christmas tree, if the display  
3 includes a scene or symbol of:

- 4           (1) more than one religion; or  
5           (2) one religion and at least one secular scene or  
6 symbol.

7           (d) A display relating to a traditional winter celebration  
8 may not include a message that encourages adherence to a particular  
9 religious belief.

10           SECTION 2. This Act applies beginning with the 2017-2018  
11 school year.

12           SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
13 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
14 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
15 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
16 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.