

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HJR 72

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

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Hearing Date: March 25, 2021 8:00 AM

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TERRY TODD, MS.

SELF- PRECINCT CHAIR 109.

OVILLA, TX

NO RESTRICTIONS SHOULD BE MADE TO RELIGIOUS SERVICES .

Jayne Burkhart

Self

Katy, TX

I support this 110%! Complete 1st amendment infringement to prohibit or limit religious worship by the state!

Frank Pomeroy

myself as a concerned citizen

Seguin, TX

As a pastor and concerned citizen I am here today in support of this bill that has been presented by Senator Paxton SB26.

Martin Luther the father of Protestantism wrote a pamphlet during the Plague of 1527 of the duties of a church and what his role was during the Plague. He ended up loosing his own daughter to the plague but yet stood true to what he knew his people needed in leadership. He knew that he was needed to help bring peace to a horrible situation. One of his quotes resonates with truth and stands true still today.

He said, ““We die at our posts. Christian doctors cannot abandon their hospitals, Christian governors cannot flee their districts, Christian pastors cannot abandon their congregations. The plague does not dissolve our duties: It turns them to crosses, on which we must be prepared to die.” ~Martin Luther, 1527

During times of trials and crisis the number one place that needs to be open is the place where people can find peace and solace. The place where their friends and family can gather in prayer and strengthen one another, and I believe that Spiritual strength that is needed to battle the adversity is found in their places of worship.

We saw in the last pandemic that liquor stores and casinos were considered essential while churches were being closed down and police were called to block doors and drive around drive through services to arrest those that did not fulfill the governments mandates on worship.

Though our constitution protects the rights of Americans to gather and worship we saw those rights swept away across the country. We need to pass this bill so that the citizens of Texas can have legal backing to stand and fight with when the government tries again to overreach and close down the one place that truly needs to stay open in times of calamity, the Church.

Michael McCloskey

Self, Sales

CEDAR PARK, TX

Religious Activity is essential and it would violate U.S. Constitution First Amendment rights to assembly and worship to prohibit

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it. We should let the voters decide this issue.

Robert M Santini  
Republican Party of TX  
San Antonio, TX

I support this bill. Please bring it up for a vote in committee and ask committee members to vote to pass it out of committee.

Mark McCaig  
Texas Republican Initiative  
Houston, TX

Texas Republican Initiative strongly supports HJR 72. Churches and other religious institutions are most needed during times of crisis and distress. This bill ensures that government officials cannot close down houses of worship during times when they are needed most in our communities. We thank Chairman Leach for his leadership on this important issue.

Beverly Roberts, Mrs.  
Self- Retired Teacher  
Houston, TX

I am asking the members of this committee vote YES on HJR 72 by Rep. Leach. Our first, and most important freedom in the U.S. Constitution, is freedom of religion. In accordance with that right and enshrined in our national motto, "In God We Trust", is the firm foundation upon which our nation was founded. If we cannot live by our sincerely held religious beliefs, all other rights can then be rescinded as we sink into totalitarianism.

Partial text from this Resolution: BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Article I, Texas Constitution, is amended by adding Section 6-a to read as follows:

Sec. 6-a. This state or a political subdivision of this state may not enact, adopt, or issue a statute, order, proclamation, decision, or rule that prohibits or limits religious services, including those conducted in churches, congregations, and places of worship in this state by a religious organization established to support and serve the propagation of a sincerely held religious belief.

Michael Sweeney  
Self - Business Owner  
Georgetown, TX

I support HJR - 72 and ask the committee to pass this legitimization to stop government overreach infringing on our Constitutional Rights as provided under the 1st Amendment to gather freely in the exercise of our religious freedoms without interference or control.

Julia Dahlberg  
Self  
LA VERNIA, TX

IN SUPPORT OF  
TEXAS HOUSE BILLS: HB525, HB1239, HB1487, HB1691, HJR72  
PROTECTING RELIGIOUS LIBERTY  
87th LEGISLATURE OF TEXAS

As a member of our church's safety response ministry, I would like to bring the committee's

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attention to the importance of protecting our religious liberty from a different vantage point.

Our safety response ministry upholds a mission of ensuring an environment of comfort, refuge, learning and worship to all members and visitors who come through our doors. We take that mission very seriously and have a zero-tolerance policy on interruption of services, in order to maintain that safe and secure environment for our church family. If ever there has been the need for comfort and refuge for people who are hurting in these uncertain times of trials and fear, this last year has been it.

Due to the Governor's unchecked mandates regarding which businesses and activities are essential or not; the confusing and unclear expectations in enforcement of pandemic-related mandates against gatherings; and an inconsistent understanding by state and local authorities, our First Amendment protections have been threatened.

When we all saw instances across the state and nation where law enforcement officers were locking church doors and threatening church family and church leadership with citations and arrest for simply attempting to exercise their right to worship, church protectors like me are forced to envision a scenario where we could potentially have to become the last barrier between law enforcement officers – who have sworn an oath to protect our Constitutional right to freely worship – and our church family trying to exercise that right. And, forced to decide between our great respect for our law enforcement officers and protecting the right of our church family to worship without interruption. A scenario like that should never be imaginable in a free America and certainly not in the great State of Texas.

This overreach has placed church leadership at odds with law enforcement and local leaders – relationships that generally would be one of strength and collaboration in support and protection of the church family's free expression of their faith.

Even though I find it unbelievable that we even need to be having this conversation, the pandemic response has clearly shown that without this additional protection in our state law, the constitutional guarantees for Texas citizens are open to interpretation by those in authority who may not respect those protections. We cannot allow this to continue, unchecked. Passing HB525, HB1239, HB1487, HB1691, HJR72. would ensure in Texas law, that the appropriate 'hands off' language is made perfectly clear as it applies to religious liberty.

I urge each of you to publicly support and vote for HB525, HB1239, HB1487, HB1691, HJR72 to protect religious liberty in Texas. Thank you for your time and your service.

Samantha Chang  
8202 Forest Heights Ln  
Austin, TX

I oppose HJR 72. Worship and religious activity can be done safely without large public gatherings. People can worship while respecting public health and safety.

Darren Meyer  
Association of American Physicians and Surgeons  
McKinney, TX

I wish to express my support for this amendment. I wish this amendment were not necessary, as the right to assembly and to worship is already guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. But since our state government exercised its power to place an indefinite emergency order in contravention to the United States Constitution, it seems an amendment such as this is necessary, right, and just; therefore I support the passage of HJR 72.

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Isabel Ray  
self (communications)  
Austin, TX

I oppose HJR 72. While this bill is couched in language about “religious protection,” what it’s actually trying to do is gain special treatment for churches--treatment that, in the event of a pandemic such as COVID, puts all of Texas at risk. It is not “discrimination” for members of a church to follow the same public health guidelines as everyone else. When gathering in person is unsafe, churches have the same moral responsibility as everyone else to practice safer methods of communion, such as virtual meetings. Please do not endanger Texans’ health by exempting religious organizations from doing the right thing during a pandemic. Thank you.

Frank Holman, Citizen  
Self  
Austin, TX

James Madison said “We have staked the whole future of our new nation, not upon the power of government; far from it. We have staked the future of all our political constitutions upon the capacity of each of ourselves to govern ourselves according to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments of God.”

Abraham Lincoln said “In regards to this great Book (the Bible), I have but to say it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this Book. But for it we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man’s welfare, here and hereafter, are found portrayed in it.”

Fear is the absence of Faith. Faith is God given right and guaranteed by the Constitution. Let no man take it away from us.