

By: Leach

H.B. No. 717

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the right of a public school employee to engage in religious speech or prayer while on duty.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 22, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 22.012 to read as follows:

Sec. 22.012. RELIGIOUS SPEECH OR PRAYER. The right of an employee of a school district or open-enrollment charter school to engage in religious speech or prayer while on duty may not be infringed on by the district or school or another state governmental entity, unless the infringement is:

(1) necessary to further a compelling state interest;

and

(2) narrowly tailored using the least restrictive means to achieve that compelling state interest.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2025.