

By: Oliverson

H.B. No. 1805

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of the Religious Freedom Commission.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle D, Title 4, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 452 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 452. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM COMMISSION

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 452.001. DEFINITION. In this chapter, "commission" means the Religious Freedom Commission.

Sec. 452.002. ESTABLISHMENT. (a) The commission is established within the office of the governor.

(b) Chapter 2110 does not apply to the commission.

SUBCHAPTER B. COMPOSITION AND MEETINGS

Sec. 452.051. COMPOSITION OF COMMISSION. (a) The governor shall appoint seven members to the commission.

(b) A member of the commission must be a resident of this state.

(c) The commission must include members who:

(1) have demonstrated a significant interest in and are knowledgeable about issues related to religious liberty; or

(2) have served prominently as leaders of or spokespersons for organizations that serve members of religious communities, including the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim communities.

1 Sec. 452.052. TERMS. (a) Commission members serve
2 staggered six-year terms with the terms of approximately one-third
3 of the members expiring February 1 of each odd-numbered year.

4 (b) Commission members are eligible for reappointment to
5 another term or part of a term.

6 (c) The governor shall fill any vacancy in a position on the
7 commission for the unexpired portion of the term.

8 Sec. 452.053. PRESIDING OFFICER. The governor shall
9 designate a member of the commission as presiding officer of the
10 commission to serve in that capacity at the pleasure of the
11 governor.

12 Sec. 452.054. COMPENSATION; EXPENSES. A member of the
13 commission is not entitled to compensation but is entitled to
14 reimbursement for the travel expenses incurred by the member while
15 transacting commission business, as provided by the General
16 Appropriations Act.

17 Sec. 452.055. MEETINGS; QUORUM. (a) The commission shall
18 meet at least quarterly at the times and places in this state the
19 commission designates.

20 (b) Four members of the commission constitute a quorum for
21 transacting commission business.

22 SUBCHAPTER C. DUTIES

23 Sec. 452.101. DUTIES OF COMMISSION. The commission shall:

24 (1) advance the right to freedom of religion within
25 this state, denounce violations of that right, and recommend
26 appropriate responses by the legislature to the violations;

27 (2) identify system-level challenges and solutions

1 relating to religious liberty for all faith communities;

2 (3) serve as a principal advisor to the governor
3 regarding matters affecting religious freedom within this state;

4 (4) make recommendations regarding:

5 (A) local and state policies that violate freedom
6 of religion or that fail to ensure the individual's right to
7 religious belief and practice;

8 (B) policies that advance the right to freedom of
9 religion in this state; and

10 (C) strategies to address and prevent
11 faith-related bias incidents; and

12 (5) engage in education, advocacy, and outreach
13 efforts to promote understanding and awareness of the importance of
14 religious liberty.

15 SUBCHAPTER D. SUPPORT AND FUNDING

16 Sec. 452.151. SUPPORT. The office of the governor shall
17 provide administrative support, including staff, to the
18 commission.

19 Sec. 452.152. FUNDING. (a) The commission may accept gifts
20 and grants from a public or private source on behalf of the
21 commission for the commission to use in performing the duties
22 assigned to the commission under this chapter.

23 (b) All legislative appropriations to support the functions
24 and activities of the commission shall be made as part of the office
25 of the governor's legislative appropriations request process and
26 disbursed to the commission.

27 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date

1 of this Act, the governor shall appoint members to the Religious
2 Freedom Commission as provided by Chapter 452, Government Code, as
3 added by this Act. To implement the staggering of terms of members
4 of the commission provided by Section 452.052, Government Code, as
5 added by this Act, in making the first appointments to the
6 commission, the governor shall provide for two of the members to
7 serve terms expiring February 1, 2027, two of the members to serve
8 terms expiring February 1, 2029, and three of the members to serve
9 terms expiring February 1, 2031. Subsequent appointments shall be
10 for six-year terms, as provided by Section 452.052, Government
11 Code, as added by this Act.

12 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.