

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on State Affairs
For Hearing Date: Wednesday, April 2, 2025 8:00 AM
Compiled on: April 2, 2025 2:40 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

COMMENTS FOR HB 1805 by Oliverson | et al.

Chris Donofrio
Self
The Woodlands, TX

I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB 1805.

First, I want to place HB 1805 into its correct legislative expectations context.

The issue addressed in HB 1805 doesn't even register as a blip on what Texas adults 18 years and older indicated what they want you to accomplish. Using a February 2025 survey, The Texas Polling Project (University of Texas), reported the following. I have indicated, using US Census estimates, how many of us these percents represent.

Extremely and Very Important for the Legislature to:

- Reduce Property Taxes: 86% (19.8 Million Texans)
- Improve the Reliability of the State's Energy Grid: 84% (19.3 M Texans)
- Lower the Cost of Everyday Goods and Services: 81% (18.6 M Texans)
- Increase Access to Health Care: 81% (18.6 M Texans)
- Lower the Cost of Housing: 72% (16.6 M Texans)
- Increase Access to Mental Health Services: 71% (16.3 M Texans)
- Increase Funding for the Public Education System: 68% (15.6 M Texans)
- Direct State Agencies to Cooperate with Fed Govt on Immigration: 60% (13.8 M Texans)
- Expand Legal Access to Abortion Services: 44% (10.1 M Texans)
- Establish an ESA, Voucher, Other "School Choice" Program: 39% (9.0 M Texans)

This is the State Affairs Committee.

You currently have 399 bills/resolutions assigned to you. You've only managed to clear 4 of them and the clock is ticking. Currently before you are 32 bills/resolutions about the energy grid (2 cleared), and 6 bills/resolutions about legal access to abortion (0 cleared).

As for HB 1805:

It's political organization, aka the "commission," selected by the Governor. There are 7 members.

Specifies members should represent Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim communities.

This is far out of alignment with the actual religious diversity of the state. PEW Research (2025) reports the religious make-up of Texas, in rank order:

- Evangelical Protestants: 27%
- Religiously Unaffiliated: 26%
- Catholics: 22%
- Mainline, and Historically Black Protestants: 15%
- Muslims: 2%
- Buddhists: 1%
- Hindus: 1%
- Jews: <1%

More than 7 members will be needed.

As the second largest group, the text should also specify representation of the "Religiously Unaffiliated." While included, this doesn't mean atheists. Should such individuals meet the criteria set out on p1, L19-20, they should be represented.

This also begs the question: Which kind of Christian is the correct kind of Christian for this commission? Don't want to be in that room when the fight starts.

And what about the Buddhists?

I recommend you focus on what Texans have clearly told you to accomplish.

You've already got 38 bills/resolutions awaiting you. Don't waste your time and our money.

Do your job and kill HB 1805 in Committee.

Respectfully, Chris J Donofrio

Wanda Ulrey
self
Victoria, TX

Vote against HB 1805.

JoAnn Georgostathis
Self/Retired
Arlington, TX

Vote NO. There is no need for such a commission.

Daniel Lammers
Self
Weatherford, TX

This Bill is inappropriate, and in no way guarantees religious freedom in Texas. It actually allows religions that don't believe in the American way, or the Texas way, to have greater influence over our government and our laws. Instead of wasting time on this type of law, I feel our legislators time would be better spent on laws of protect us from law, which would very definitively begin to inhibit our religious and constitutional freedoms and rights. I urge that this bill be killed immediately

Marilyn Muscanere
Self
Midlothian, TX

This is an unnecessary and dangerous bill that threatens our religious liberty. Please remove it from consideration!!!

Nancy Jackson, Mrs. & Dr.
Self
Southlake, TX

Against his bill.

Lynnette Wilkinson
Self
Arlington, TX

No, don't do!!

Michael Belsick
Fredericksburg Tea Party
Fredericksburg, TX

I am FOR HB 1805

Jamie Haynes
Texans Wake Up
Canyon, TX

My name is Jamie Haynes with Texans Wake Up and I am submitting comments AGAINST HB 1805. This bill grows government, increases spending and is not needed.

Evelyn Montalvo
self
Richmond, TX

I think there is an issue with the portion of the bill that allows money from public or private sources to flow to this body. This could serve as a corrupting influence. Also the segment stating "strategies to address and prevent faith-related bias incidents" could also be the camel's nose under the tent to enforce Sharia Blasphemy laws like has been done in Europe. We already have laws protecting religious freedom--what is the point of this bill? I am AGAINST!

Rebecca Clark
Self
Richmond, TX

This legislation sets a dangerous precedence for overreach under the guise of "religious freedom." We already have the freedom to practice our faiths, whatever persuasion they may be, therefore this bill could only serve to create a pathway for further removal of the already existing rights as afforded by the US Constitution. If, in fact, the author is well-meaning that does not preclude it being weaponized against those very freedoms in the future. We have all seen this type of behavior, first hand, being done in this nation over the last few decades and increasingly so particularly in the last few years. It would behoove our legislators to, rather, enforce the existing laws to the fullest extent and not erode even further the trust we the people have in our lawmakers.

Please STOP PLAYING GAMES with our lives for dishonest gain and self-exaltation. It is repulsive and very transparent to anyone with eyes to see. I adamantly oppose this deceptive and potentially dangerous legislation. I am actually appalled it is being proffered at all.

Veronica Guerriero, Mrs.
Self
Southlake, TX

There is no need for this commission and I urge you all not to pass it. Thank you!

Karole Fedrick
Self, Researcher
AUSTIN, TX

The intentions of HB1805 may be good, but the reality of how it would play out in the reality of today if problematic.

Religious rights are First Amendment rights and protected by both the US and Texas Constitutions. There are already legal remedies in place to address violation of them. We do not need to create another appointed commission with governor-appointed members with no transparency or voter accountability paid for with tax-payer dollars to get involved with these critical rights.

The duties of the commission lay the legal groundwork to violate existing Texas law under the guise of religious practice; i.e., female circumcision is a practice that is prohibited under Health and Safety Code Chapter 167.001. Islamic calls to prayer can violate municipal sound ordinances. Texas is already in conflict with the Muslim take over in the Dallas area that is violating our Fair Housing laws and customer protections, all of which are allowed under the practice of Sharia.

Islam is a religion that has no "separation of church and state." You cannot have Islam without practicing Sharia. Government Code Section 22.0041 prohibits "foreign laws and judgments in certain family law actions." Sharia discriminates against women in many areas like whom they will marry, their divorce options, child custody, dress, etc.

The history of Islam in America in places like Dearborn show Muslims are still committed to expansion and submission. Mosque Maryam in Chicago is the headquarters for the "Nation of Islam." Recent years of Islamic expansion has changed the societies of Europe.

The Masjid Yaseen mosque in Garland is the headquarters of Tablighi Jamaat, a Global Islamic missionary group flagged by U.S. and European intelligence as a recruitment pipeline for Al-Qaeda. It is banned in several countries including Saudi Arabia who classified it as a "gateway to terrorism."

One of the most prominent leaders/spokesperson for Islam is Yasir Qadhi, dean of The Islamic Seminary of America and resident scholar of the East Plano Islamic Center in Plano, Texas. Like all good Muslims, Mr. Qadhi has long been committed to converting people to Islam. Will extravagant grants and gifts from wealthy Muslims be used to gain his favor with the governor to become the presiding officer?

Our respect for the religion of Muslims has no reciprocity for those outside their faith. HB1805 sets the stage for Islamic expansion and will cause practices and freedoms of other religious groups to be subjugated to Islam. That's been the goal of Islam since Mohammed. It's what they do to carry out the requirements of their religion. Please do not allow this well-intended but severely flawed bill out of committee.

I respectfully ask for it to be withdrawn completely.

Thank you.

Liz Case
Texas Eagle Forum and self
Tuscola, TX

We are against this bill creating special religious rights for certain groups when we all currently have equal access to representation. This bill would give the members of this commission a staff when our State Board of Education members don't even have a staff. These are two of the many reasons we are opposed to this bill and urge the members to vote No.

Eugene Martin
self - retired
Willow Park, TX

Please do not confuse opposition to HB 1805 as opposition to religious freedom. The very best commission on religious freedom met in 1789 and their work was ratified by the States in 1791. The U.S. Constitution Amendment I declares that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

I do not believe that any State government has a right to make any “law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...”

How then is it that you are contemplating creating an unelected body with the authority to identify what might be infringement on religious freedom and then “recommend appropriate responses by the legislature”. The Texas Hate Crimes Act, also known as the James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Act, was enacted in 2001. Do we really need a state commission to oversee how that legislation might be relevant?

Is there an existing list of “local and state policies that violate freedom of religion or that fail to ensure the individual ’s right to religious belief and practice”?

Can you guarantee that the proposed commission will be staffed by completely unbiased individuals with no preconceived attitudes about another community’s religious views?

Line 23 on page 1 specifies four (4) religious communities. Consider that some Texas residents may consider their religious freedom has been violated by failing to recognize their community. Consider the vagueness of what comprises the Christian community.

HB 1805 may have been written with some altruistic good intent. Please carefully consider whether this proposed commission will add to the Constitution or existing Texas law.

Please vote against HB 1805.

Kathy Turner
SELF
McGregor, TX

support
