

Bill as Introduced

HB 69 - AS INTRODUCED

2021 SESSION

21-0028
06/10

HOUSE BILL

69

AN ACT

relative to the display of the national motto in schools.

SPONSORS:

Rep. True, Rock. 4; Rep. Abramson, Rock. 37; Rep. Greene, Hills. 37; Rep. Piemonte, Rock. 4; Rep. Torosian, Rock. 14; Rep. Hobson, Rock. 35; Rep. Folsom, Graf. 11

COMMITTEE:

Education

ANALYSIS

This bill permits school boards to provide copies of the national motto of the United States for display in each school building in the district.

Explanation:

Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.

Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struck through~~].

Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty One

AN ACT relative to the display of the national motto in schools.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 New Section; State Motto. Amend RSA 189 by inserting after section 17-a the following new
2 section:

3 189:17-b State Motto.

4 I. To the extent funds are available, a school board may provide a durable poster or framed
5 copy of the national motto of the United States, "In God We Trust" for display in each school building
6 in the district. A school board may accept nonpublic funds or in-kind contributions to implement
7 this section.

8 II. In the event the display of the national motto is challenged in court, the office of the
9 attorney general shall defend the display. The school and the school board shall be held harmless for
10 complying with this section.

11 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

HB 69 - AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

05/13/2021 1465s

2021 SESSION

21-0028

06/10

HOUSE BILL **69**

AN ACT relative to the authority of schools to display the national and state mottos.

SPONSORS: Rep. True, Rock. 4; Rep. Abramson, Rock. 37; Rep. Greene, Hills. 37; Rep. Piemonte, Rock. 4; Rep. Torosian, Rock. 14; Rep. Hobson, Rock. 35; Rep. Folsom, Graf. 11

COMMITTEE: Education

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill prohibits the state of New Hampshire or any political subdivision from restricting a school from displaying the national or state motto.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struckthrough.~~]
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty One

AN ACT relative to the authority of schools to display the national and state mottos.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 New Section; State and National Mottos. Amend RSA 189 by inserting after section 17-a the
2 following new section:

3 189:17-b Authority of Schools to Display the National and State Mottos. Notwithstanding any
4 other provision of law to the contrary, no power or authority of the state of New Hampshire, or any
5 political subdivision thereof, shall in any way restrict, or be construed to restrict, the authority of
6 any school or school district to display the national motto, "In God We Trust," or the state motto,
7 "Live Free or Die," in any school building.

8 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

CHAPTER 161
HB 69 - FINAL VERSION

05/13/2021 1465s

2021 SESSION

21-0028
06/10

HOUSE BILL

69

AN ACT

relative to the authority of schools to display the national and state mottos.

SPONSORS:

Rep. True, Rock. 4; Rep. Abramson, Rock. 37; Rep. Greene, Hills. 37; Rep. Piemonte, Rock. 4; Rep. Torosian, Rock. 14; Rep. Hobson, Rock. 35; Rep. Folsom, Graf. 11

COMMITTEE:

Education

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill prohibits the state of New Hampshire or any political subdivision from restricting a school from displaying the national or state motto.

Explanation:

Matter added to current law appears in *bold italics*.

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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

CHAPTER 161
HB 69 - FINAL VERSION

05/13/2021 1465s

21-0028
06/10

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty One

AN ACT relative to the authority of schools to display the national and state mottos.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 161:1 New Section; State and National Mottos. Amend RSA 189 by inserting after section 17-a
2 the following new section:

3 189:17-b Authority of Schools to Display the National and State Mottos. Notwithstanding any
4 other provision of law to the contrary, no power or authority of the state of New Hampshire, or any
5 political subdivision thereof, shall in any way restrict, or be construed to restrict, the authority of
6 any school or school district to display the national motto, "In God We Trust," or the state motto,
7 "Live Free or Die," in any school building.

161:2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

Approved: July 30, 2021

Effective Date: September 28, 2021

Amendments

Sen. Giuda, Dist 2
Sen. Ward, Dist 8
Sen. Ricciardi, Dist 9
Sen. Hennessey, Dist 1
May 13, 2021
2021-1465s
06/05

Floor Amendment to HB 69

1 Amend the title of the bill by replacing it with the following:

2

3 AN ACT relative to the authority of schools to display the national and state mottos.

4

5 Amend the bill by replacing all after the enacting clause with the following:

6

7 1 New Section; State and National Mottos. Amend RSA 189 by inserting after section 17-a the
8 following new section:

9 189:17-b Authority of Schools to Display the National and State Mottos. Notwithstanding any
10 other provision of law to the contrary, no power or authority of the state of New Hampshire, or any
11 political subdivision thereof, shall in any way restrict, or be construed to restrict, the authority of
12 any school or school district to display the national motto, "In God We Trust," or the state motto,
13 "Live Free or Die," in any school building.

14 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

Floor Amendment to HB 69

- Page 2 -

2021-1465s

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill prohibits the state of New Hampshire or any political subdivision from restricting a school from displaying the national or state motto.

Committee Minutes

SENATE CALENDAR NOTICE
Education

Sen Ruth Ward, Chair
Sen Erin Hennessey, Vice Chair
Sen Denise Ricciardi, Member
Sen Jay Kahn, Member
Sen Suzanne Prentiss, Member

Date: April 14, 2021

HEARINGS

Tuesday	04/20/2021	
(Day)	(Date)	
Education	REMOTE 000	9:00 a.m.
(Name of Committee)	(Place)	(Time)
9:00 a.m.	HB 69	relative to the display of the national motto in schools.
9:15 a.m.	HB 71	relative to school district emergency special meetings.
9:30 a.m.	HB 140	relative to private rights of action regarding pupil safety.
9:45 a.m.	HB 182	relative to approval of coursework completed at other approved schools
10:00 a.m.	HB 278	relative to the use of unused district facilities by chartered public schools.

Committee members will receive secure Zoom invitations via email.

Members of the public may attend using the following links:

1. Link to Zoom Webinar: <https://www.zoom.us/j/93782614838>
2. To listen via telephone: Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location): 1-301-715-8592, or 1-312-626-6799 or 1-929-205-6099, or 1-253-215-8782, or 1-346-248-7799, or 1-669-900-6833
3. Or iPhone one-tap: +13126266799,,93782614838# or +19292056099,,93782614838#
4. Webinar ID: [937 8261 4838](https://www.zoom.us/j/93782614838)
5. To view/listen to this hearing on YouTube, use this link:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiBZdtrjRnQdmg-2MPMiWrA>
6. To sign in to speak, register your position on a bill and/or submit testimony, use this link:
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/remotecommittee/senate.aspx>

The following email will be monitored throughout the meeting by someone who can assist with and alert the committee to any technical issues: remotesenate@leg.state.nh.us or call (603) 271-6931.

EXECUTIVE SESSION MAY FOLLOW

Sponsors:

HB 69

Rep. True
Rep. Torosian

Rep. Abramson
Rep. Hobson

Rep. Greene
Rep. Folsom

Rep. Piemonte

HB 71

Rep. Boehm

Rep. T. Lekas

Rep. McLean

HB 140

Rep. Cordelli
Rep. Shaw
Sen. Ward

Rep. Ladd
Rep. A. Lekas

Rep. Boehm
Rep. Osborne

Rep. Verville
Rep. Layon

HB 182

Rep. Ladd
Rep. Boehm

Rep. A. Lekas
Rep. Moffett

Rep. Allard

Rep. Cordelli

HB 278

Rep. Hill
Rep. Rice

Rep. Ladd
Rep. Rouillard

Rep. Turcotte
Rep. Weyler

Rep. Silber

Ava Hawkes 271-4151

Ruth Ward
Chairman

Senate Education Committee

Ava Hawkes 271-4151

HB 69, relative to the display of the national motto in schools.

Hearing Date: April 20, 2021

Time Opened: 9:03 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:15 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Ward, Hennessey, Ricciardi and Prentiss

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Kahn

Bill Analysis: This bill permits school boards to provide copies of the national motto of the United States for display in each school building in the district.

Sponsors:

Rep. True
Rep. Piemonte
Rep. Folsom

Rep. Abramson
Rep. Torosian

Rep. Greene
Rep. Hobson

Who supports the bill: Representative Chris True, Representative Deborah Hobson, Representative Rick Ladd, Representative Judy Aron, Eric Pauer, Elaine Thomas

Who opposes the bill: 107 people signed up in opposition to this bill. Full sign-in sheet available upon request.

Who is neutral on the bill: None.

Summary of testimony presented:

Representative Chris True – Rockingham, District 4

- Representative True introduced HB 69.
- This bill is enabling legislation.
- This bill makes an important statement to school boards by protecting schools if displaying the motto is taken to court. The NH Attorney General's Office will protect them.
- Schools are often bullied when this idea arises.
- Certain groups have sued in federal court to have the national motto removed from currency.
- The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected these suits and they continue to be refiled.

- This bill also allows schools to accept non-public funds to cover cost of displaying the national motto.
- The national motto is not a divisive phrase.
- A reasonable observer would not perceive it as a religious endorsement.
- Senator Prentiss asked Representative True if displaying the national motto is currently prohibited.
 - Representative True said there are no RSAs preventing folks from displaying it, the stipulation is that if someone threatens with a lawsuit, there would be protection via this bill.
- Senator Prentiss asked Representative True if this bill solely provides protection. Representative True said that's how he understands it.
- Senator Prentiss asked if Representative True has a statement or opinion from the Attorney General's Office on this bill.
 - Representative True said he does not.
- Senator Prentiss asked if we should have their input as they have not been consulted or is this precedent. Representative True said he has not spoken with anyone in the Attorney General's Office.
- Senator Prentiss asked Representative True if by accepting non-public funds, where folks are donating money to schools, will we be setting up a competitive precedent in school districts. Additionally, how would competing offers be handled.
 - Representative True said he put that stipulation in the bill to prevent the issue of school districts saying there is not enough money to fulfill this request. He said he has no problem with multiple organizations pooling their funds to assist in funding these kinds of projects.
- Senator Prentiss asked why now the need, for this bill, if not currently prohibited.
 - Representative True said displaying our national motto would be educational for students.
 - This bill does not say it needs to be posted, it is all voluntary.
 - It reduces fear of additional costs associated with lawsuits when displaying the motto as an educational tool.
- Senator Ricciardi asked Representative True if adding the state's motto, Live Free or Die, would make this bill more centric.
 - Representative True said the bill is in the Senate's possession now, he'd have no objection in adding that through an amendment.
- Senator Prentiss asked for clarity on the use of the terms, sometimes used interchangeably, state motto and national motto throughout the language of the bill. On page two, it is referred to as the state motto as opposed to the national motto.
 - Representative True did not have the bill in front of him, he believes that is a typo.

- The state's motto was not initially part of the bill.
- Senator Hennessey noted for Senator Prentiss that if she is looking at page two, line 1 and line 3, she believes that is the umbrella RSA for mottos.

BJ Wahl

- Opposed to this bill.
- Sullivan, NH resident.
- NH and VT are the least religious states.
- She finds this bill offensive.
- It would indoctrinate innocent children with something potentially against their own religion.
- Schools should be inclusive places, not divisive.
- So many folks being angry with this bill means it is divisive.
- Church and home are places for religion, not state funded buildings.
- All beliefs matter.

amh
Date Hearing Report completed: April 21, 2021

Speakers

Senate Remote Testify

Education Committee Testify List for Bill HB69 on 2021-04-20

Support: 7 Oppose: 107 Neutral: 0 Total to Testify: 2

<u>Name</u>	<u>Email Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Testifying</u>
Weston, Joyce	jweston14@roadrunner.com	Not Given	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No
Casino, Joanne	joannecasino@comcast.net	603.746.3491	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Edelson, Rachel	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Chait, George	george.chait@gmail.com	603.848.3236	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Lynch, Chrisinda	cmmelynch@comcast.net	16032255614	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Dewey, Karen	pkdewey@comcast.net	603.504.2813	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Townsend, Jean	jeanclarktownsend@gmail.com	603.632.7493	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Richman, Susan	susan7richman@gmail.com	603.343.6314	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Grassie, Chuck	chuck.grassie@leg.state.nh.us	16039787417	An Elected Official	Strafford 11	Oppose	No
McNamee, Brigid	brigidmcnamee@yahoo.com	603.223.0139	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Berkal, Brenda	brendabdmd@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Currier, Dorothy	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Bouchard, Donald	donalddbouchard@gmail.com	603.622.0388	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No
Osborne, Stephanie	Not Given	(603) 238-31	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Hatcher, Phil	phil.hatcher@gmail.com	603.988.8034	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Feole, Danielle	feole.danielle@gmail.com	978.778.6269	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Hackmann, Kent	hackmann@uidaho.edu	16039343225	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Bourassa, Cheryl	cbourassa59@gmail.com	603.848.2651	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Moses, Gena Cohen	genacohenm@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
saunderson, george	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Feder, Marsha	marshafeder@gmail.com	603.860.8743	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Long, Julian	Julianleelong@yahoo.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Larson, Ruth	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Perencevich, Ruth	rperence@comcast.net	603 225-7641	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Moran, Karen	karenmoran@tds.net	603.746.2017	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Snyder, Kristina	khsnyder22@yahoo.com	603.887.0339	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Chouinard, Victor	vchouinard@gsinet.net	603.887.0339	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Snyder, Patricia	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Snyder, John	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Jachim, Nancy	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Spielman, Kathy	jspielman@comcast.net	603.397.7879	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Almy, Susan	susan.almy@comcast.net	603.448.4769	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No
Hunnewell, Richard	hunnewell.richard@gmail.com	603.536.4015	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Hunnewell, Anne	ahunne@roadrunner.com	603.536.4015	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Petrucelli, Maxine	maxinepet@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Petrucelli, Charles	chasmxpet@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Lucas, Janet	janluca1953@gmail.com	16037267614	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Torpey, Jeanne	jtorp51@comcast.net	Concord	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Reed, Barbara D.	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Liberman, Sheryl	saml54@comcast.net	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Phillips, Margery	margeryphillips@gmail.com	603.277.2991	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Hobson, Deb	deborahlhobson@gmail.com	603-968-5417	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No
Goggans, Ron	rongoggans@gmail.com	614.378.1995	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No
Hobson, Deborah	deborahlhobson@gmail.com	603-968-5417	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No
Zimmer, Julie	Not Given	319-560-9964	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Spencer, Erin	erinaspencer@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No
Wild, Gail	gailwild@gmail.com	603.863.3121	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No

Wiggins, Frank	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Gordon, Laurie	Lmgord23@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Gordon, Margaret	Megordon98@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Hinebauch, Mel	melhinebauch@gmail.com	603.224.4866	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Covert, Susan	scovert@comcast.net	603.746.4486	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Jones, Andrew	arj11718@yahoo.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Devore, Gary	torin_asheron@yahoo.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Reardon, Donna	Bugs42953@aol.com	603.224.8151	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Straiton, Marie	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Ballentine, John M	mikeb@btline.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Schapiro, Joe	joe.schapiro@leg.state.nh.us	603.852.5039	An Elected Official	Cheshire 16, Keene	Oppose	No	'
Nartowicz, Nikolas	nartowicz@au.org	603.996.1286	A Lobbyist	Americans United for Separation of Church and State	Oppose	No	'
Ladd, Rick	rick.ladd@leg.state.nh.us	603 989 3268	An Elected Official	Rep Grafton 4, Haverhill	Support	No	'
Rettew, Annie	abrettew@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Falk, Cheri	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Clark, Denise	denise.m.clark03055@gmail.com	603.213.1692	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Bothmer, Sandy	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Brennan, Nancy	burningnan14@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Rich, Cecilia	cecilia.rich@leg.state.nh.us	603.380.8679	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Koch, Helmut	helmut.koch.2001@gmail.com	603.491.3306	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Anderson, Robert	rgand43@gmail.com	914.261.4304	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Ellermann, Maureen	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Fellows, Sallie	sallie.fellows@leg.state.nh.us	Not Given	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Taylor, Sue	sueetaylor158@gmail.com	603.675.6566	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Koch, Laurie	kochlj@aol.com	603.491.2000	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Crook, Mary	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Laker-Phelps, Gail	lpsart@tds.net	603.798.5394	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Wilke, Mary	wilke.mary@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Rayton, Linden	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Defuria, Claudia	gregs999@aol.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Schapira, Carol	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Dontonville, Roger	rdontonville@gmail.com	603.632.7719	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No	'
st.martin, tom (from NH)	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Damon, Claudia	cordsdamon@gmail.com	603.226.4561	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Hamblet, Joan	joan.hamblet@leg.state.nh.us	603.205.4925	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Spencer, Louise	lpskentstreet@gmail.com	603.491.1795	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
King, Walter	genedocwk@comcast.net	603.978.9775	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Billingham, Carla	billingham2@comcast.net	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Sinclair-Pappas, Barbara	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Platt, Elizabeth-Anne	lizanneplatt09@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Tucker, Kathy	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Elissa, Rasmussen	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Bates, Marion	the.bates@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
McPeek, Gail	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Murray, Megan	Not Given	Not Given	An Elected Official	Hillsborough District 22	Oppose	No	'
Parker, Sharon	parker20@juno.com	603.863.7348	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Lemoi, Claude	Not Given	603-523-2224	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Thomas, Elaine	Not Given	Not Given	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	'
Robbins, Annie	anniemrobbins@gmail.com	603.473.2000	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Hennessey, Martha	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Pidgeon, Dawna	Not Given	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Lewandowski, Jean	jlewando@hotmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Bushueff, Catherine	agawamdesigns@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Dutzy, Sherry	sherry.dutzy@leg.state.nh.us	603.557.5599	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No	'

Levesque, Cassandra	cassandralevesque@leg.state.nh.us	Not Given	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Istel, Claudia	claudia@sover.net	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Koburger, Penny	Pennykob@gmail.com	603.667.0951	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Ford, Debra	dford@mvrds.org	603.632.5563	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Anastasia, Patricia	patti@pattianastasia.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Pauer, Eric	secretary@BrooklineGOP.org	603.732.8489	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	'
Heirtzler, Jan	jan.andrea@gmail.com	603.781.7881	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Aron, Judy	judy.aron@leg.state.nh.us	603.843.5908	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	'
Switzer, Bob	macswitz@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Hurley, Margaret	mdaishurley@gmail.com	603.287.8913	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
Dionne, Linda	lindld@comcast.net	16038952440	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	'
true, chris	chris.true@leg.state.nh.us	16037708403	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	Yes	'
Wahl, BJ	bjwahl@gmail.com	Not Given	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	Yes	'

Testimony

Statement from 43 National Organizations United in Opposition to Project Blitz and Similar Legislative Efforts

Religious freedom is a fundamental American value. It is a shield that protects everyone—the religious and nonreligious alike. Yet, an alarming effort is underway to harness the power of the government to impose the faith of some onto everyone else, including our public school students. This effort seeks to transform religious freedom into a sword that can be used to harm others, undermining important civil rights protections and healthcare access, especially for women, LGBTQ people, those of minority faiths, and the nonreligious.

We are united against these efforts.

In particular, we oppose “Project Blitz,” a new and coordinated national effort to enshrine Christian nationalism in state laws across the country. Project Blitz promotes a three-tiered framework of state bills meant to incrementally redefine religious freedom and tear down the separation of church and state, with each tier laying the groundwork for the next. This framework starts by pushing what its authors believe will be less controversial measures, such as requiring “In God We Trust” to be posted in public schools. Using those bills as a foothold, it then seeks to pass more dangerous legislation, like bills that allow taxpayer-funded agencies to turn away couples seeking to foster or adopt children in need of stable and loving homes because they are same-sex or the “wrong” religion.

The separation of church and state, however, is the linchpin of religious freedom and a hallmark of our democracy. It ensures that each person has the right to choose whether to practice a religion or be nonreligious without pressure from the government. It safeguards houses of worship from intrusion by the government and, at the same time, prevents religious institutions from harnessing the power of government to impose their religion on others. It protects parents who want to send their children to public schools without fear that they will be proselytized or forced to pray according to someone else’s faith tradition. And, it prohibits the government from allowing the use of religion to evade laws that protect civil rights and access to healthcare, including reproductive healthcare.

Therefore, we urge legislators across the country to oppose Project Blitz and similar legislative efforts. America—and religious freedom—are stronger when the government gives no religion or set of beliefs more power or preference than any other and when everyone is welcome and treated equally under the law.

African American Ministers in Action
Alliance of Baptists
American Atheists
American Civil Liberties Union
Americans United for Separation of Church
and State
Anti-Defamation League
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
Bend the Arc Jewish Action

Catholics for Choice
Center for Inquiry
Center for Reproductive Rights
Disciples Center for Public Witness
Disciples Justice Action Network
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative
The Episcopal Church
Equal Partners in Faith
Equality Federation

Family Equality Council
Freedom for All Americans
Freedom From Religion Foundation
Hindu American Foundation
Human Rights Campaign
Interfaith Alliance
Lambda Legal
Muslim Advocates
NARAL Pro-Choice America
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender
Equality
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National LGBTQ Task Force Action
Fund
National Partnership for Women &
Families

People For the American Way
Political Research Associates
Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington
Office of Public Witness
Religious Coalition for Reproductive
Choice
Religious Institute
Secular Coalition for America
T'Ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human
Rights
The United Methodist Church - General
Board of Church & Society
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association
United Church of Christ, Justice and
Witness Ministries

Ava Hawkes

From: Rachel Edelson <redelson@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 17, 2021 3:04 PM
To: Ruth Ward; Erin Hennessey; Jay Kahn; Denise Ricciardi; Suzanne Prentiss; Ava Hawkes
Subject: Vote ITL on HB69

Dear House Committee on Education,

As an involved Nashua resident, I am writing to urge you to vote ITL, or Against HB69.

HB69 would allow a school board to "provide a durable poster or framed copy of the national motto of the United States, 'In God We Trust' for display in each school building in the district."

- All students—those of any faith or those of none—should feel safe and welcome in our public schools. This bill sends a thinly veiled message that only students who believe in God are welcome. No student should feel pressured in public school to adopt certain religious beliefs. Parents, not school officials, are responsible for shaping their children's religious education.
- HB69 would not improve our schools or enhance educational outcomes. Instead, it risks impeding the learning environment by seemingly endorsing some religions over others. Students should feel welcome in our schools regardless of their faith or their absence of faith.

Sincerely,

Rachel Edelson
Bay Ridge
Nashua 03062



Nikołas Nartowicz
State Policy Counsel

(202) 466-3234
(202) 898-0955 (fax)
americansunited@au.org

1310 L Street NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005

April 19, 2021

The Honorable Ruth Ward
Chair
Education Committee
New Hampshire Senate
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

The Honorable Erin Hennessey
Vice Chair
Education Committee
New Hampshire Senate
107 North Main Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: Oppose HB 69 – “In God We Trust” Displays Are Constitutionally Suspect

Dear Chair Ward and Vice Chair Hennessey:

On behalf of the New Hampshire members and supporters of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, I write to express our opposition to HB 69, which would allow the posting of “In God We Trust” in all New Hampshire public schools. The real goal of bills like this is not to display the national motto but to use the public schools to promote a belief in God. That these bills are a priority of Project Blitz, a coordinated national effort by the Religious Right to enshrine Christian nationalism in state laws, makes the religious intent even clearer. This bill, therefore, should be rejected.

The Bill Is Constitutionally Suspect

The First Amendment of the Constitution requires that legislation have a “secular legislative purpose”¹ and prohibits the government from communicating a message that it endorses or disapproves of religion.² Courts are “particularly vigilant in monitoring compliance with the Establishment Clause in elementary and secondary schools”³ because students are “impressionable, and their attendance is involuntary.”⁴ The motto, however, asserts that Americans believe in God, and the placement of the motto on public school walls sends a message to students that their public school wants them to hold that belief as well.

The real goal of bills like HB 69 is to use our public schools to promote a belief in God. That is clear because this bill is a part of Project Blitz, a nationwide campaign to impose far-right evangelical Christian views on everyone, including our public school students.⁵ The Project

¹ *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602, 612 (1971). See also *Stone v. Graham*, 449 U.S. 39 (1980) (holding that an “avowed” secular purpose is not sufficient to avoid conflict with the First Amendment).

² *Cnty. of Allegheny v. ACLU Greater Pittsburgh Chapter*, 492 U.S. 573, 592–94 (1989).

³ *Edwards v. Aguillard*, 482 U.S. 578, 583–84 (1987).

⁴ *Id.* at 584.

⁵ Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation, Report and Analysis on Religious Freedom Measures Impacting Prayer and Faith in America (2018-19 Version), 4-7, last accessed February 28, 2021.

Blitz playbook initially focuses on public school students with “In God We Trust” and Bible class bills and then escalates to promote bills that would misuse religious freedom to allow discrimination. This includes bills that allow taxpayer-funded agencies to turn away couples seeking to foster or adopt children in need of stable and loving homes because they are same-sex or the “wrong” religion.⁶ Ultimately, Project Blitz aims to transform religious freedom from a shield that protects to a sword that harms others. I have enclosed with this letter a statement from 43 national organizations, including 24 religious and denominational organizations, that oppose the Project Blitz playbook.

Public Schools Are Diverse and All Students and Parents Should Be Welcome

Families and students in New Hampshire practice a variety of religions and faiths, including many who are nonreligious. Encouraging an “In God We Trust” display in public schools, however, promotes a specific religious perspective and necessarily excludes members of the community whose religious views do not align with the majority. Freedom of religion means that parents—not school officials or state legislatures—have the right to direct their children’s religious education and should be able to entrust that their children will not have a particular religious perspective forced on them while attending our public schools. It also means that all students should feel welcome, not just those who follow a particular religion.

The Sponsors Should Instead Support a Bill on E Pluribus Unum Displays

Although supporters of bills like this claim that the words “In God We Trust” are deeply rooted in our country’s religious history, a look at the motto’s history reveals that the Founding Fathers never intended these words—or any other religious reference—to become our country’s motto. In fact, when originally commissioned to create a Great Seal for the country, our Founders, including Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams, devised the motto as: E Pluribus Unum, meaning “from many, one.”⁷ Congress did not authorize the use of “In God We Trust” as the national motto until 1956.⁸ Displaying our original motto—E Pluribus Unum—would bring students together, not divide people by lifting up some faiths above others.

For all of the above reasons, we urge you to vote HB 69 inexpedient to legislate and instead to consider a more neutral and inclusive motto to display, such as E Pluribus Unum.

Sincerely,



Nikolas Nartowicz
State Policy Counsel

cc: Members of the Senate Education Committee

⁶ *Id.* at 88.

⁷ Paula A. Franzese, *E Pluribus Unum – From Many, One: In Unity There Is Strength*, 25 Seton Hall L. Rev. 1460, 1460 (1995).

⁸ 36 U.S.C. §186 (1956); *See Gaylor v. United States*, 74 F.3d 214, 216 (10th Cir. 1996).

Ava Hawkes

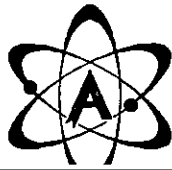
From: Bob Switzer <macswitz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2021 11:58 AM
To: Ruth Ward; Erin Hennessey; Jay Kahn; Denise Ricciardi; Suzanne Prentiss; Ava Hawkes
Subject: Please oppose HB69

Please vote No on HB69, which seeks to put "In God we Trust" in school classrooms. NH and VT are the two least religious states in the union and so many of us would find this bill offensive. It is also trying to indoctrinate innocent children into believing in something that may be against their own religion or lack thereof. Schools should be inclusive places, not divisive places.

The church and the home are the places for religion, not government funded buildings. We all pay taxes and we all don't believe in the same things.

Thank you for your consideration,

BJ Wahl and Bob Switzer
Sullivan NH



AMERICAN ATHEISTS

April 19, 2021

The Honorable Sen. Ruth Ward
Chair, Senate Education Committee
The New Hampshire General Court
107 North Main Street, SH Rm 103
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Re: OPPOSE HB 69, Testimony from American Atheists in opposition to legislation requiring schools to display the National Motto

Dear Chairperson Ward and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

American Atheists, on behalf of its constituents in New Hampshire, writes in opposition to HB 69, a controversial bill to requiring New Hampshire school districts to display the national motto "In God We Trust" in each school building. This bill is divisive, and it undermines religious freedom for students and teachers in New Hampshire. Moreover, it is unnecessary, as educators in New Hampshire are already free to post the national motto if there is an educational reason for doing so. Therefore we strongly urge you to oppose HB 69.

American Atheists is a national civil rights organization that works to achieve religious equality for all Americans by protecting what Thomas Jefferson called the "wall of separation" between government and religion created by the First Amendment. We strive to create an environment where atheism and atheists are accepted as members of our nation's communities and where casual bigotry against our community is seen as abhorrent and unacceptable. We promote understanding of atheists through education, outreach, and community-building and work to end the stigma associated with being an atheist in America. As advocates for religious liberty, American Atheists believes that no young person should be coercively subjected to religious speech by the government.

HB 69 represents a complete abandonment of the principle of local control, as it requires the state to intrude into local schools and mandate what materials must be on the walls. Efforts to impose a political agenda onto public schools through this type of legislation is part of a multistate campaign by Christian nationalists to promote the false narrative that America was founded as a Christian nation.¹ This bill undermines the spirit of the First Amendment and the separation of religion and government, which is the bedrock of our religious liberty.

¹ Clarkson, Frederick. "'Project Blitz' Seeks to Do for Christian Nationalism What ALEC Does for Big Business." *Religion Dispatches*, Apr. 27, 2018. Available at: <http://religiondispatches.org/project-blitz-seeks-to-do-for-christian-nationalism-what-alec-does-for-big-business/>.

Mandating “In God We Trust” displays in each school building violates students’ freedom of religion by inserting one particular religious view into the classroom. Students and teachers have a variety of beliefs -- Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and atheist, to name just a few, which means that public schools must remain free from religious coercion. However, this measure would stigmatize students who are religious minorities and atheists by forcing them to view daily the religious message the state is promoting through these displays. Sadly, these displays may result in increased bullying and harassment against such students.²

Currently, about 23% of adults in the US are religiously unaffiliated, and atheists and agnostics make up about 7% of the total population.³ Among young people, studies show that approximately 13% of youth ages 13-18 identify as atheists and more than a third are non-religious.⁴ In New Hampshire, 36% of the population has no religious affiliation.⁵ New Hampshire lawmakers should not marginalize this sizeable and growing population by purposefully inserting exclusionary messages such as “In God We Trust” into public schools.

Finally, HB 69 would create potential liability for school districts and risk New Hampshire taxpayer dollars to defend a law that is unnecessary and divisive. New Hampshire’s education dollars should go to educating students, and the Attorney General’s time and resources should be used to make New Hampshire safer for everyone, not to promote religious viewpoints or political messages by special interests.

² In a national survey of more than 3,400 nonreligious people ages 18-24, one third (33.6%) reported that they encountered discrimination in education because of their nonreligious beliefs. In very religious communities, this number was significantly higher, with near half (48.9%) of participants reporting that they encountered discrimination because of their nonreligious beliefs. Frazer, S., El-Shafei, A., Gill, A.M. (2020). *The Tipping Point Generation: America’s Nonreligious Youth*. American Atheists and Secular Student Alliance. Available at www.secularsurvey.org.

³ Pew Research Center. A Closer Look at America’s Rapidly Growing Religious ‘Nones’ by Michael Lipka, 2015. Available at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/13/a-closer-look-at-americas-rapidly-growing-religious-nones/>.

⁴ Barna Group. Atheism Doubles Among Generation Z, 2018. Available at: <https://www.barna.com/research/atheism-doubles-among-generation-z/>.

⁵ Pew Research Center. Religious Composition of Adults in Missouri. Available at: <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/MNew-Hampshire/>.

We urge you to vote against this unnecessary and controversial legislation. If you should have any questions regarding American Atheists' opposition to HB 69, please contact me at 908.276.7300 x309 or by email at agill@atheists.org.

Sincerely,



Alison Gill, Esq.

Vice President, Legal and Policy
American Atheists

Ava Hawkes

From: Jean Townsend <jeanclarktownsend@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2021 5:16 PM
To: Ruth Ward; Erin Hennessey; Jay Kahn; Denise Ricciardi; Suzanne Prentiss; Ava Hawkes
Subject: About HB 69: Schools may post the 1956-altered motto: "In God we trust."

To the Honorable Members of the New Hampshire Senate Education Committee:

What is the purpose of this bill? Hopefully, not to recommend substituting prayer for study!

If a school were going to post a national motto, the original: proposed by John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin in 1776 and approved in 1782, "*E pluribus unum*" would speak for everyone and not just for believers, who are rarely 100% of the school community. I oppose any motto that makes any child feel unwelcome and like an outsider. It's a New Hampshire tradition not to push others around or to allow ourselves to be pushed around. This bill, which appears to give license for discrimination, is not in keeping with New Hampshire values. "In God we trust," like the 1954 addition of "under God" to the pledge, were politically motivated and inspired by antipathy to America's enemy, an atheist communist Russia. They were a cheap way, in fraught times, for politicians to score political points. Is that what's happening here? Most school districts would probably see this as an intrusion of religion that would open them up to lawsuits and would not allow it. At best HB 69 is a waste of time; at worst it is a rejection of non-believing children, a sad thing indeed.

We are neither a religious nor an atheistic country. We are a secular one. America needs to unify. This is no time to be promoting divisiveness.

Please vote against HB 69.

Respectfully,
Jean Clark Townsend
Canaan, NH

Ava Hawkes

From: george saunderson <george.saunderson@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 10:46 AM
To: Ava Hawkes
Subject: Hb69

I am opposed to HB69. This bill makes people who believe in a christian god somehow better than people who are either of another religion or atheists. Please vote no on HB69.

Thank you,
George Saunderson
Loudon, N.H.

Ava Hawkes

From: Yorks <yorksnh@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 8:11 PM
To: Ruth Ward; Erin Hennessey; Jay Kahn; Denise Ricciardi; Suzanne Prentiss; Ava Hawkes
Subject: HB69

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee:

In a state tied for dead last (with MA), only 33% of adult NH residents consider themselves "highly religious" (Pew Research), yet the NH House has recently passed **HB69**, which would allow placement of a "durable poster or framed copy" of the phrase "In God we Trust" in all district school buildings, funded by private individuals/entities. This directly conflicts with the Establishment Clause of our Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."

Also from Pew: "...the religiously unaffiliated share of the population, consisting of people who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular," now (2018/19) stands at 26%, up from 17% in 2009."

HB69 cannot be allowed to pass. **Thank you for voting "NO" on HB69, which would continue supporting separation of church and state.** Thank you.

Gary York
357 Dolly Rd
Hopkinton, NH 03229

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

P.O. BOX 750 • MADISON, WI 53701 • (608) 256-8900 • WWW.FFRF.ORG

April 16 , 2021 .

The Honorable Ruth Ward, Chair
The Honorable Erin Hennessey, Vice Chair
New Hampshire Senate Education Committee
SH Rm. 103

Re: Testimony in opposition to H.B. 69

Dear Chair Ward, Vice Chair Hennessey, and Members of the Education Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) to testify in strong opposition to H.B. 69. FFRF is a national nonprofit organization with more than 35,000 members across the country, including many members in New Hampshire. FFRF protects the constitutional separation between state and church, and educates about nontheism.

H.B. 69 is an attempt to encourage public schools to unconstitutionally foist God upon students, and the bill is modeled after pre-written legislation contained in the playbook of Project Blitz, a Christian nationalist organization.

House Bill 69 encourages schools to violate the First Amendment.

First and foremost, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides students with the right to a secular public school system. Placing a McCarthy-era religious motto in public schools violates this principle by telling students, on behalf of their school and their state, that they ought to trust in a monotheistic god.

Given the Christian nationalism behind this model legislation, and the common rhetoric in support of placing "In God We Trust" in public schools, students will also reasonably understand that the motto is meant to refer specifically to the Christian god. Knowing this fact, it would be improper for schools to erect such a display and it is reckless for the legislature to encourage schools to do so.

House Bill 69 is the first part of a “playbook” of pre-written Christian nationalist model legislation.

H.B. 69 is not an isolated bill. Rather, it is the first step of a coordinated nationwide Christian nationalist effort known as Project Blitz¹ that has the end goal of making Christians a favored class of Americans, while making everyone else second-class citizens.

The project is an unvarnished attack on American secularism and civil liberties—built on the lie that America is a Christian nation. It begins with ceremonial, seemingly benign laws, such as posting religious signs in public schools. Next, the Blitz uses that religious foundation to redefine “religious liberty” to allow certain Christians with “sincerely held religious beliefs” to legally discriminate against-LGBTQ people and interfere with reproductive health care. This plan is spelled out clearly in Project Blitz’s literal playbook.² After passing “national motto” laws, like the one the New Hampshire House just unwisely passed, the next step is “Prime Focus #2: Public Policy Resolution Favoring Sexual Intercourse Only Between a Married Man and Woman.” That is followed by 12 pre-written pieces of legislation that the playbook calls “Category #3,” aimed at promoting conversion therapy, allowing businesses to refuse service to same-sex couples, and more, using provisions like H.B. 69 as justification.

The playbook explains the plan: Normalize a Christian nationalist fantasy of “religious heritage,” especially among schoolchildren, and then point to that “heritage” to justify codified discrimination based on religion.

The New Hampshire legislature should not allow an interstate Christian nationalist organization to write its laws. Rejecting H.B. 69 sends a clear message that Christian nationalism—the same ideology that fueled the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol³—is not welcome in the chambers of the New Hampshire Senate.

¹ See www.blitzwatch.org/.

² Available at

static1.squarespace.com/static/5bd8728e7eb88c68a5c8509f/t/5d365d78339e9100019cfa70/1563843966208/Project+Blitz+Playbook+2018-19.pdf.

³ See www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0eVo5xNSII.

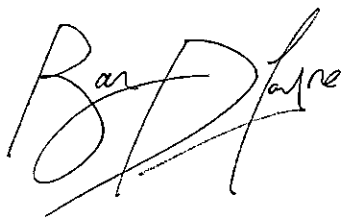
House Bill 69 includes an ineffective immunity provision that will give schools a false sense of security.

Finally, H.B. 69 includes a provision that could lure schools into legal and financial trouble. The bill states that schools “shall be held harmless for complying with this section.” A school might understand this to mean that there is no risk in putting up an “In God We Trust” display, but this is a protection that the state legislature cannot give. As you are certainly aware, a state law cannot give public schools permission to violate the U.S. Constitution. This provision would embolden schools to waste taxpayer dollars on avoidable lawsuits under a false promise of immunity.

Non-religious Americans are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population by religious identification — 35 percent of Americans are non-Christians, and this includes the more than one in four Americans who now identify as religiously unaffiliated.⁴ Younger Americans are not just religiously unaffiliated, they are largely atheist or agnostic. A recent survey found that 21 percent of Americans born after 1999 are atheist or agnostic.⁵ New Hampshire is home to one of the highest percentages of “nones” — with the religiously unaffiliated at 36 percent.⁶

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to H.B. 69. Please stand up for the U.S. Constitution by rejecting Christian nationalism and rejecting this bad bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan D. Jayne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R" and "J".

Ryan D. Jayne
Staff Attorney

⁴ Pew Research Center, “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace,” (Oct. 17, 2019) at [pewrsr.ch/2VPiFS7](https://www.pewresearch.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/).

⁵ *Atheism Doubles Among Generation Z*, The Barna Group (Jan. 24, 2018), www.barna.com/research/atheism-doubles-among-generation-z/.

⁶ See www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/new-hampshire/.

April 16, 2021

To: Education Committee
New Hampshire Senate

From: Charles Townsend
49 Hall Road
Canaan, NH 03741-7408

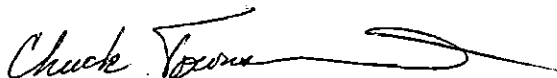
Re: Opposing HB 69, relative to the display of the national motto in schools.

Please vote no on HB 69, which needlessly permits public schools to display the phrase "In God We Trust" in every building.

Displayed in isolation the motto "In God We Trust" suggests the importance of God, rather than reminding us of our beloved nation. That motto reads explicitly about us and God, rather than about our country. It suggests that we all need to trust in the god in the motto, and that it is good that we trust in that god. This is exclusionary to any person who does not believe there is a need to actively trust in their god or who believes that there is no god to trust. It suggests that there is something wrong with a person who does not buy into the belief expressed in the phrase.

It is not only morally wrong but Constitutionally wrong for a public school to advocate for belief in God. Displaying signage that asserts this belief is likely to raise Constitutional objections and bring a lawsuit against the state. Our legislature should not pass a bill that will lead to the expense and exposure of a constitutional lawsuit.

Your vote opposing HB 69 in committee will demonstrate that the House Education Committee is concerned with enhancing education, not with directing students minds to a particular religious belief. The bill is wrong and potentially costly to the state.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chuck Townsend", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Ava Hawkes

From: Mary Wilke <wilke.mary@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2021 8:37 AM
To: Ruth Ward; Erin Hennessey; Jay Kahn; Denise Ricciardi; Suzanne Prentiss; Ava Hawkes
Subject: Please vote against HB69 (posting "In God We Trust" in schools)

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,
If you visit a school early in the year, you'll find teachers working hard to develop an inclusive, supportive learning community within their classrooms and schools. That's because children are most able to learn when they feel a sense of belonging. Posting "In God We Trust" in our schools would undermine this work.

Over my years of teaching, I taught more than a thousand students. Some of them called their deity "Allah", rather than "God"; some believed in more than one deity; and some were atheists. The motto "In God We Trust", posted in their school, would send the message to these children that they do not belong, because they are not included in that "we".

If it's useful to post a national motto in our schools for educational and not religious reasons, as the sponsor of this bill said at the public hearing, how about using "E Pluribus Unum" ("out of many, one") instead? Unlike "In God We Trust", which was adopted in the 1950s, "E Pluribus Unum" was adopted by our Founders back in the 1780s as the 13 colonies were joining together as a nation. Discussing it would help students understand the founding principles of our country - and introduce a little Latin along the way!

Moreover, "E Pluribus Unum" carries a unifying patriotic message, which seems particularly constructive at a time like this, when we have so much divisiveness in our country. By contrast, the motto "In God We Trust" is so likely to generate conflict that the bill's sponsor felt compelled to include a provision requiring the Attorney General to defend it against the inevitable lawsuits.

Please vote ITL on HB69. The last thing we need right now is another, totally unnecessary cause for heated arguments within our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Mary Wilke
Concord, NH

Voting Sheets

Senate Education Committee
EXECUTIVE SESSION RECORD
2020-2021 Session

Bill # HB 69

Hearing date: 4/20/21

Executive Session date: 5/4/21

Motion of: ITL Vote: 5-0

Committee Member	Present	Made by	Second	Yes	No
Sen. Ward, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Hennessey, VC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Ricciardi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Kahn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Prentiss	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Motion of: Consent Vote: 5-0

Committee Member	Present	Made by	Second	Yes	No
Sen. Ward, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Hennessey, VC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Ricciardi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Kahn	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Prentiss	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Motion of: _____ Vote: _____

Committee Member	Present	Made by	Second	Yes	No
Sen. Ward, Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Hennessey, VC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Ricciardi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Kahn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Prentiss	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reported out by: Sen. Prentiss

Notes: _____

Committee Report

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

SENATE

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE CONSENT CALENDAR

Thursday, May 6, 2021

THE COMMITTEE ON Education

to which was referred **HB 69**

AN ACT

relative to the display of the national motto in
schools.

Having considered the same, the committee recommends that the Bill

IS INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE

BY A VOTE OF: 5-0

Senator Suzanne Prentiss
For the Committee

This bill would enable school boards to display the national motto of the United States in school buildings. This bill would also require the NH Attorney General's Office to provide legal protection against any lawsuits as a result of such display. As the display of the national motto in NH schools is not currently prohibited and the input of the Attorney General's Office on this new requirement was not solicited, the Committee recommends that this bill be inexpedient to legislate.

Ava Hawkes 271-4151

FOR THE CONSENT CALENDAR

EDUCATION

HB 69, relative to the display of the national motto in schools.

Inexpedient to Legislate, Vote 5-0.

Senator Suzanne Prentiss for the committee.

This bill would enable school boards to display the national motto of the United States in school buildings. This bill would also require the NH Attorney General's Office to provide legal protection against any lawsuits as a result of such display. As the display of the national motto in NH schools is not currently prohibited and the input of the Attorney General's Office on this new requirement was not solicited, the Committee recommends that this bill be inexpedient to legislate.

General Court of New Hampshire - Bill Status System

Docket of HB69

Docket Abbreviations

Bill Title: (New Title) relative to the authority of schools to display the national and state mottos.**Official Docket of HB69.:**

Date	Body	Description
1/4/2021	H	Introduced (in recess of) 01/06/2021 and referred to Education HJ 2 P. 34
3/2/2021	H	Public Hearing: 03/02/2021 02:00 pm Members of the public may attend using the following link: To join the webinar: https://www.zoom.us/j/97910276071 / Executive session on pending legislation may be held throughout the day (time permitting) from the time the committee is initially convened.
3/11/2021	H	Executive Session: 03/11/2021 09:00 am Members of the public may attend using the following link: To join the webinar: https://www.zoom.us/j/95090800832
3/25/2021	H	Committee Report: Without Recommendation (Vote ; RC) HC 18 P. 37
4/8/2021	H	Ought to Pass: MA RC 204-169 04/08/2021 HJ 6 P. 9
4/13/2021	S	Introduced 04/08/2021 and Referred to Education; SJ 12
4/14/2021	S	Remote Hearing: 04/20/2021, 09:00 am; Links to join the hearing can be found in the Senate Calendar; SC 20
5/6/2021	S	Committee Report: Inexpedient to Legislate; Vote 5-0; CC; 05/13/2021; SC 23
5/13/2021	S	Sen. Giuda Moved to Remove HB 69 from the Consent Calendar; 05/13/2021; SJ 15
5/13/2021	S	Inexpedient to Legislate, MF, VV; 05/13/2021; SJ 15
5/13/2021	S	Sen. Giuda Moved Ought to Pass; 05/13/2021; SJ 15
5/13/2021	S	Sen. Giuda Floor Amendment #2021-1465s , AA, VV; 05/13/2021; SJ 15
5/13/2021	S	Ought to Pass with Amendment 2021-1465s, MA, VV; OT3rdg; 05/13/2021; SJ 15
6/10/2021	H	House Concurs with Senate Amendment 2021-1465s (Rep. Ladd): MA RC 211-150 06/10/2021 HJ 10 P. 4
7/15/2021	S	Enrolled Adopted, VV, (In recess 06/24/2021); SJ 20
7/15/2021	H	Enrolled (in recess of) 06/24/2021
8/3/2021	H	Signed by Governor Sununu 07/30/2021; Chapter 161; Eff: 09/28/2021

NH House

NH Senate

Other Referrals

Senate Inventory Checklist for Archives

Bill Number: HB 609

Senate Committee: Education

Please include all documents in the order listed below and indicate the documents which have been included with an "X" beside

Final docket found on Bill Status

Bill Hearing Documents: {Legislative Aides}

Bill version as it came to the committee

All Calendar Notices

Hearing Sign-up sheet(s)

Prepared testimony, presentations, & other submissions handed in at the public hearing

Hearing Report

N/A Revised/Amended Fiscal Notes provided by the Senate Clerk's Office

Committee Action Documents: {Legislative Aides}

All amendments considered in committee (including those not adopted):

___ - amendment # ___ ___ - amendment # ___

___ - amendment # ___ ___ - amendment # ___

Executive Session Sheet

Committee Report

Floor Action Documents: {Clerk's Office}

All floor amendments considered by the body during session (only if they are offered to the senate):

- amendment # 1465s ___ - amendment # ___

___ - amendment # ___ ___ - amendment # ___

Post Floor Action: (if applicable) {Clerk's Office}

___ Committee of Conference Report (if signed off by all members. Include any new language proposed by the committee of conference):

___ Enrolled Bill Amendment(s)

___ Governor's Veto Message

All available versions of the bill: {Clerk's Office}

as amended by the senate ___ as amended by the house

final version

Completed Committee Report File Delivered to the Senate Clerk's Office By:

Committee Aide

Date

Senate Clerk's Office AK