

Texas moves to impose Christian nationalist curriculum in public schools

Andy Hartmann, Jacob Crosse
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On June 26, the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) voted 9-5 to approve a new statewide reading list that incorporates Bible stories and passages into public school instruction from kindergarten through high school. The measure, set to begin with elementary students in 2030, is a major escalation in the attack on secular public education and the separation of church and state.

Under the plan, children will be compelled to “learn” stories of Noah’s Ark, David and Goliath, Daniel in the Lion’s Den and the creation of Adam and Eve in publicly funded classrooms. These are not historical or scientific accounts, but religious myths, including claims that directly contradict the most basic findings of modern science, now being inserted into public education under the fraudulent banner of “classical” learning.

The Bible reading list was approved as part of a broader overhaul of Texas social studies standards aimed at narrowing students’ understanding of history and the wider world. The new framework eliminates the currently required sixth-grade world cultures course, expands instruction in Texas and US history, and reduces the study of world history and geography. Donald Frazier, one of the board-appointed content advisers, has defended the emphasis on Christianity and the “collective West,” declaring, “Christianity is part of the marinade that everybody’s soaking in.”

The vote underscores the increasing centralization of curriculum control in the hands of the state. The 15-member SBOE sets education policy and curriculum standards, while the Texas Education Agency, headed by a commissioner appointed by the governor, oversees testing, accreditation, funding and teacher certification. Together, these bodies are being used to impose a state-directed ideological curriculum on districts, teachers and students.

The Bible curriculum and social studies overhaul are part of a wider censorship campaign in Texas schools. Since 2021, books in Texas school libraries have been subject to more than 22,000 challenges, with laws and regulations facilitating the removal of works dealing with race, gender, sexuality and LGBTQ themes. In some districts, the campaign has gone so far as to shut down entire school libraries.

This follows the passage of Texas Senate Bill 10, which took effect on September 1, 2025, requiring public schools to display the Ten Commandments “in a conspicuous place” in every classroom.

The law was partially blocked by US District Judge Fred Biery in 11 school districts, but in April 2026 the US Court of Appeals

for the Fifth Circuit reversed the lower court’s decision. Dissenting judges warned that the ruling trampled on the First Amendment and decades of Supreme Court precedent:

The Framers intended disestablishment of religion, above all to prevent large religious sects from using political power to impose their religion on others. Yet Texas, like Louisiana, seeks to do just that, legislating that specific, politically chosen scripture be installed in every public-school classroom. Our court accommodates their unconstitutional request, supplanting decades of Supreme Court precedent merely because of a single decision the majority deems outdated. In doing so, the majority defies foundational First Amendment concepts, ignores the harms students will face, and usurps parents’ rights to determine the religious beliefs they wish to instill in their own children.

The ultimate purpose of the promotion of religion in schools is not religious education, but political control. The Texas ruling class is seeking to divide workers and youth along religious, racial and national lines, while cultivating the backwardness, chauvinism and obedience required by the capitalist state. The narrowing of students’ understanding of world history and culture is bound up with the needs of American imperialism, which requires military recruits willing to carry out violence against workers and oppressed people in other countries.

Texas is not an isolated case, but a spearhead of a national campaign to destroy the separation of church and state. Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, who presided over the Texas Senate during the passage of the Ten Commandments law, is also the chairman of Trump’s Religious Liberty Commission. Speaking at the White House alongside Trump this past Friday, Patrick declared that the phrase “separation of church and state” has “no constitutional basis” and should no longer be used by public officials.

The commission’s draft report makes explicit the aims of this campaign. Under the fraudulent banner of “religious liberty,” the Trump administration is seeking to overturn one of the democratic gains associated with the American Revolution and the Enlightenment: the principle that the state must not establish or enforce religion. This campaign is bound up with the broader

attempt to falsify history, block workers and youth from understanding the revolutionary and secular traditions that animated the founding period, and subordinate public institutions to Christian nationalist politics.

The Christian nationalist offensive is inseparable from anti-Muslim agitation. In Texas, Governor Greg Abbott has sought to designate the Council on American-Islamic Relations as a “foreign terrorist organization,” despite having no authority to make such a designation. State Attorney General Ken Paxton has targeted Muslim organizations and institutions through lawsuits, including efforts against the East Plano Islamic Center and its planned Muslim-centered development outside Dallas. A draft of new social studies standards approved by the SBOE in April requires that references to Islamic contributions to algebra and astronomy be removed. State Senator Bob Hall declared, “Let me be very clear: Islam is not a religion. It is a totalitarian theocracy, not unlike totalitarian systems of communism, Nazism and globalism.” Elizabeth Jensen, a trustee with the Spring ISD School Board, told the state school board that “slavery was and still is fundamental to Sharia.”

The anti-Muslim campaign was on open display at the Texas Republican convention in Houston earlier this month. Under the slogan “Don’t Sharia Our Texas,” speakers denounced Islam while party members sought to expel two longtime Republican delegates who are Muslim. Abbott declared in his convention address, “This next session, we need to leave no doubt, by totally banning Sharia law.” Bo French, the party’s far-right candidate for Railroad Commissioner, defended the effort to remove Muslim delegates, writing, “Members of a terrorist group have no place in our party, or in America for that matter.”

The invocation of “Texas values” by Abbott, Patrick and the Republican Party is a fraud. The 1836 Constitution of the Republic of Texas, adopted when Texas was established as an independent slaveholders’ republic, nevertheless barred any “minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination whatever” from holding public office. The contemporary Texas Republican Party has moved far to the right of even this limited separation of church and state, seeking to subordinate public education and state policy to Christian nationalist doctrine.

The same campaign is underway in Florida, where Governor Ron DeSantis signed a law in April allowing the state to designate groups as “domestic terrorist organizations,” after an executive order that declared the Muslim Brotherhood and CAIR terrorist organizations was blocked by a federal judge.

The Democrats, for their part, offer no way forward in the fight against Christian nationalism. Their opposition is not based on a defense of secularism, science, historical truth or the democratic rights of the working class, but on their own adaptation to religion and nationalism. James Talarico, the Democratic nominee for US Senate in Texas and a graduate of the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, has defended the separation of church and state as a means of preserving both religion and the capitalist state, warning that when religion becomes “too cozy with power,” it loses its “prophetic voice.” But Talarico’s own campaign program invokes religion and morality in the service of American imperialism, declaring support for the US-NATO war against

Russia in Ukraine, defending Israel’s supposed “right to defend its people,” and endorsing continued support for “defensive systems like the Iron Dome.”

This is the familiar two-step of the Democratic Party and its “progressive” representatives. They criticize the excesses of the Republican right while accepting the basic framework of American militarism and Zionism. Talarico calls for limiting “offensive” weapons to Israel while supporting the continued arming of the Zionist state, which is carrying out genocide in Gaza, ethnic cleansing in the West Bank and military attacks throughout the region. No such “defensive” weapons are proposed for the besieged Palestinians. His appeals to defend the Uyghurs and other persecuted peoples likewise echo the language of US “human rights” imperialism, used for decades to justify interventions, sanctions and wars from Iraq and Yugoslavia to Libya, Yemen and beyond.

The drive to impose Christian nationalism in Texas schools is not a sign of confidence, but of crisis. The ruling class is terrified of the growth of a powerful, diverse and internationally connected working class in Texas, one that has nothing in common with the backward “traditional values” invoked by Abbott, Patrick and the Republican right. The promotion of religious obscurantism, nationalism and anti-Muslim chauvinism is aimed at dividing this working class and subordinating it to the needs of American capitalism and imperialism.

The defense of secular public education, historical truth and democratic rights cannot be entrusted to the Democrats, the courts or any faction of the capitalist political establishment. It requires the independent mobilization of workers and youth against the entire framework of Christian nationalism, censorship, war and dictatorship, on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program.



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