

House Bill 3710

Sponsored by Representative RESCHKE

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: This Act tells the State Parks and Recreation Department to put a monument to the Ten Commandments in the State Capitol State Park. (Flesch Readability Score: 62.1).

Directs the State Parks and Recreation Department to place a monument within the State Capitol State Park commemorating the Ten Commandments.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1 Relating to the Ten Commandments.

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3 Whereas the Ten Commandments, found in the Bible at Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21,
4 are an important component of the moral foundation of the laws and legal system of the United
5 States of America and the State of Oregon; and

6 Whereas the courts of the United States of America and of the various states cite the Ten
7 Commandments in published decisions; and

8 Whereas in 2005, the United States Supreme Court recognized that it is permissible to display
9 the Ten Commandments on government property in Van Orden v. Perry, 545 U.S. 677 (2005); and

10 Whereas in 2019, the United States Supreme Court further recognized, in American Legion v.
11 American Humanist Association, 588 U.S. 29 (2019), that the Ten Commandments “have historical
12 significance as one of the foundations of our legal system,” and the display of the Ten
13 Commandments on public property may have “multiple purposes” such as “historical significance”
14 and represent a “common cultural heritage”; and

15 Whereas recognizing the historical role of the Ten Commandments accords with our nation's
16 history and faithfully reflects the understanding of the founders of our nation with respect to the
17 necessity of civic morality to a functioning self-government; and

18 Whereas the placing of the Ten Commandments on the grounds of the Oregon State Capitol
19 would help the people of the United States and the State of Oregon to know the Ten Commandments
20 as the moral foundation of the law; and

21 Whereas it is the intent of the Legislative Assembly to apply the decision set forth in Van Orden
22 v. Perry to continue this rich tradition and ensure that the people of the State of Oregon may un-
23 derstand and appreciate the foundational documents of our state and national government; and

24 Whereas the placing of a monument to the Ten Commandments on the grounds of the State
25 Capitol State Park would help the people of the United States and the State of Oregon to recognize
26 the Ten Commandments as the moral foundation of the law; now, therefore,

27 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

28 **SECTION 1. (1) The State Parks and Recreation Department shall permit and arrange for**
29 **the placement within the State Capitol State Park a suitable monument commemorating the**
30 **Ten Commandments that contains the following text:**

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted.
New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

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The Ten Commandments

I AM the LORD thy God.

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven images.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

**Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon
the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.**

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Though shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

**Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant,
nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, or anything that is
thy neighbors.**

(2) The department shall coordinate with a nonprofit organization to ensure that the monument is designed, constructed and placed in the State Capitol State Park at no cost to the State of Oregon.

(3)(a) The department, in consultation with the Capitol Planning Commission, shall:

(A) Approve the design and site selection for the monument; and

(B) Arrange a suitable time for its placement.

(b) The monument must be sited in a location within the State Capitol State Park where there are other monuments.

(4) In the event that placement of the monument in the State Capitol State Park is subject to a legal challenge, the Attorney General may:

(a) Prepare and present a legal defense of the placement of the monument; or

(b) Request the assistance of a nonprofit legal organization that specializes in First Amendment cases to prepare and present a legal defense of the placement of the monument.

(5) The placement of the monument under this section is not intended to convey that the State of Oregon favors any particular religion or denomination over others.
