

**##A Bill to Allow the Practice of Religious Freedom Within the Public Education System of the United States**

**\*\*BE IT ENACTED\*\*** by the House of Representatives and the Senate assembled of the United States of America that:

**\*\*Section I: Short Name\*\***

(a) This piece of legislation shall be referred to as the “Religious Equality Among Students Over Nine Act”.

(b) This piece of legislation shall also be referred to as the “REASON Act.”

**\*\*Section II: Definitions\*\***

(a) Taken from (20 U.S. Code § 4072)[<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/4071>], let the following resolutions follow through this piece of legislation:

>(i) The term “secondary school” means a public school which provides secondary education as determined by State law.

(b) The term “nonviolent religious accessory” means an item held or used in adherence of a particular faith that poses no threat to the safety of the people around them.

(c) The term “violent religious accessory” means an item held or used in adherence of a particular faith that poses some threat to the safety of the people around them.

(d) The term “religious text” means writing that is considered sacred by a particular faith.

(e) The term “religious wear” means clothing worn in adherence to a particular faith.

### **\*\*Section III: Findings\*\***

(a) The Congress finds numerous instances where the clarity of law did not suffice in order to allow the presence of religious artifacts on school campuses by its students. A summary of such instances are as follows:

>(i) In 2019, (the American Center for Law and Justice defended the right of a fourth grade student to carry a Bible on school grounds.)[<https://aclj.org/religious-liberty/school-confiscates-young-childs-bible-aclj-stepped-in-and-students-religious-liberty-upheld>]

>(ii) In 2014, [a second grade student attending the Houston Elementary School had her Bible confiscated by her teacher during her school's "reading time."](<https://abc7amarillo.com/news/local/2nd-graders-bible-confiscated-by-teacher-during-personal-reading-time>)

>(iii) In 2011, (a student was suspended for talking about Christianity for students and banned from bringing the Bible to school in the future in San Diego, Sierra.)[<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-student-suspended-bible-seized-was-christian-disru-2011mar31-story.html>]

>(iv) In 2014, (a school barred students in Michigan's Canton township from carrying a *kirpan*, a religious dagger/knife of importance through the Sikh faith.)[<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/US-school-bans-kirpan-Sikh-community-concerned/articleshow/7228642.cms>]

>(v) In the provinces of Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Nebraska, (laws exist that prevent teachers from wearing religious clothing in public schools.)[[http://www.nbcnews.com/id/32661080/ns/us\\_news-faith/t/states-still-ban-teachers-religious-clothing/#.XsiMRxNKhQI](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/32661080/ns/us_news-faith/t/states-still-ban-teachers-religious-clothing/#.XsiMRxNKhQI)]

>(vi) In the state of the Commonwealth of the Chesapeake, (in the case of Parkash Singh v. Pythagoras Innovation Academies, Parkash Singh was expelled due to an accidental mishap involving his *kirpan* during his physical education class.)[[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PGHm\\_85\\_uVqY5eroumggPRJRilAqXdEApPHaJAfcN-E/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PGHm_85_uVqY5eroumggPRJRilAqXdEApPHaJAfcN-E/edit?usp=sharing)]

(b) The Congress finds that the First Amendment of the Constitution reads that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, thus finds responsibility to maintain religious equality within the United States in public institutions.

(c) The Congress finds that minority religions are often persecuted within schools at a higher rate than the Christian religion.

#### **\*\*Section IV: Further Enforcement of Religious Protections\*\***

(a) (20 U.S. Code § 4071(e))[<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/4071>] is hereby amended to read:

>(f)

##### **Federal financial assistance to schools**

Notwithstanding the availability of any other remedy under the Constitution or the laws of the United States, the Secretary of Education may withhold federal funding from states that are

found in violation of (20 U.S. Code

§ 4071-4074)[<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/chapter-52/subchapter-VIII>] to a

quantity up to twenty percent of total funding into the state if state legislatures do not adhere to federal guidelines.

>>(b) The Secretary of Education may craft conditions as to the guidelines of the punitive measure, including a possible strike system as well as the severity of the punishment for each form of infraction.

**\*\*Section V: Extension of Personal Religious Protections Within Secondary Schools For Effects\*\***

(a) (20 U.S. Code § 4071)[<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/4071>] is hereby amended to add subsection b and renumber accordingly the following:

>(b)

**Restriction of Nonviolent Religious Accessories, Texts, and Wear in Secondary Schools Prohibited**

It shall be unlawful for any public secondary school which receives Federal financial assistance to deny equal access or a fair opportunity for students to carry religious texts, nonviolent religious accessories, or adorn religious wear within campus. This extends to, but not limited to the following items:

>>(i) Jewelry

>>(ii) Headwear

>>(iii) The Bible, Torah, Bhagvad Gita, The Vedas, The Quran, or any other religious text

>>(iv) Undergarments

>>(v) Religious accessories that do not have the potential to do harm

>>(vi) Tattoos

(b) (20 U.S. Code § 4071)[<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/4071>] is hereby amended to add subsection c and renumber accordingly the following:

>(c)

**Restriction of Violent Religious Accessories in Secondary Schools Conditionally Prohibited**

It shall be unlawful for any public secondary school which receives Federal financial assistance to deny equal access or a fair opportunity for students to carry violent religious accessories, provided that they adhere to the following:

>>(i) The accessory must be declared to school officials prior to the student's attendance.

>>(ii) The accessory must remain in a protective covering that minimizes the chance of injury.

>>(iii) The accessory must be kept underneath clothing and may not be visible to the naked eye at any given point of time on school campus.

>>(iv) Any injury borne by such an accessory will result in, at minimum, confiscation of the religious item at hand.

>>(v) The accessory may not be a firearm.

>>(vi) Further rules may be added by secondary schools in order to maintain the safety of students on school campus.

(c) (20 U.S. Code § 4071)[<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/4071>] is hereby amended to add subsection d and renumber accordingly the following:

>(d)

### **Examples of Nonviolent Religious Accessories, Texts, and Religious Wear**

Examples of nonviolent religious accessories, texts, and religious wear extends to, but is not limited to the following items:

>>(i) Jewelry

>>(ii) Headwear

>>(iii) The Bible, Torah, Bhagvad Gita, The Vedas, The Quran, or any other religious text

>>(iv) Undergarments

>>(v) Religious accessories that do not have the potential to do harm

>>(vi) Tattoos

(d) (20 U.S. Code § 4071)[<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/4071>] is hereby amended

to add subsection e and renumber accordingly the following:

>(e)

### **Examples of Violent Religious Accessories**

Examples of violent religious accessories extends to, but is not limited to the following items:

>>(i) Any item with a blade longer than two inches

>>(ii) Staffs

>>(iii) Any other accessory that may cause harm upon people around them

### **\*\*Section VI: Enactment and Severability\*\***

(a) This piece of legislation shall be effective immediately upon passage.

(b) In the case of parts of this piece of legislation being ruled unconstitutional, the remaining sections shall remain effective under law.

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