

HB0067_RichardKaplowitz_UNF
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Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0067- POSITION: UNFAVORABLE

State Government - State House Trust - Ten Commandments Monument Display Act

TO: Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony opposing HB#/0067, **State Government - State House Trust - Ten Commandments Monument Display Act**

This bill violates the first clause of the first amendment of the United States Constitution which also binds the state of Maryland. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...”

The Ten Commandments ([Aseret Hadibrot](#)) appear in two distinct locations in the Torah:

1. [Exodus 20:1–14](#): The initial giving of the commandments at Mount Sinai (Yitro).
2. [Deuteronomy 5:6–18](#): Moses' recounting of the commandments forty years later to the new generation before entering the Promised Land (Va'etchanan).

The Decalogue is specific to two Abrahamic religions, Judaism and Christianity. And each branch and sect of those large religious faiths has their own specific interpretations of the laws. Which one would this bill choose to have displayed? And how is that choice not the government making an affirmative choice to endorse that specific religious translation of the ten commandments? How does that effect all other religions which do not have this declaration within their faith?

The Secular Web, a non-partisan non-sectarian website studied [Is American Law Based on the Ten Commandments?](#)¹ The argument for this based on history is false and misleading.

This bill would requiring a certain Ten Commandments Monument to be placed on the grounds of the Maryland State House; requiring the Commission on Artistic Property to oversee the care and maintenance of the monument; and establishing the Commission on the Ten Commandments Monument.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an unfavorable report on HB#/0067.

¹ <https://infidels.org/kiosk/article/is-american-law-based-on-the-ten-commandments/>