

2025 South Dakota Legislature

Senate Bill 51**AMENDMENT 51E
FOR THE INTRODUCED BILL**

1 **An Act to require the display and curricular inclusion of the Ten Commandments or**
2 **Woope Sakowin and other documents.**

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA:

4 **Section 1. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 13-24:**

5 ~~The-Except as otherwise provided in section 2 of this act, the~~ board of a school
6 district shall display the Ten Commandments in each classroom in each school located
7 within the district. The display must be a poster or document that is at least eight inches
8 by fourteen inches. The text of the Ten Commandments must be the focus of the poster
9 or document and must be printed in large, easily readable font.

10 The text of the Ten Commandments must be printed with the following or
11 substantially similar language:

12 (1) I AM the LORD your God, thou shalt have no other gods before me;

13 (2) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image;

14 (3) Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;

15 (4) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy;

16 (5) Honor thy father and mother;

17 (6) Thou shalt not murder;

18 (7) Thou shalt not commit adultery;

19 (8) Thou shalt not steal;

20 (9) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor; and

21 (10) Thou shalt not covet.

22 **Section 2. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 13-24:**

23 ~~The board of a school district may, by resolution, substitute the text of the Woope~~
24 ~~Sakowin for the Ten Commandments required in section 1 of this Act. The display must~~
25 ~~be a poster or document that is at least eight inches by fourteen inches. The text of the~~

Woope Sakowin must be the focus of the poster or document and must be printed in large, easily readable font.

The text of the Woope Sakowin must be printed with the following or substantially similar language:

(1) Wacante Oganake: to help, to share, to give, to be generous;

(2) Wowaunsila: pity, compassion;

(3) Wowauonihan: to respect, to honor;

(4) Wowacintanka: patience and tolerance;

(5) Wowahwala: to be humble, to seek humility;

(6) Woohitike: to be guided by your principles, discipline, bravery and courage; and

(7) Woksape: understanding and wisdom.

Section 3. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 13-24:

The following statements must be displayed near any poster or document listing the Ten Commandments pursuant to section 1 of this Act:

(1) The Ten Commandments were a prominent part of American public education for almost three centuries. Around the year 1688, The New England Primer became the first published American textbook and was the equivalent of a first-grade reader. The New England Primer was used in public schools throughout the United States for more than two hundred years to teach Americans to read and contained more than forty questions about the Ten Commandments;

(2) The Ten Commandments were also included in public school textbooks published by educator William McGuffey, a noted university president and professor. A version of his famous McGuffey Readers was written in the early 1800s and became one of the most popular textbooks in the history of American education, selling more than one hundred million copies. Copies of the McGuffey Readers are still available today; and

(3) The Ten Commandments also appeared in textbooks published by Noah Webster, which were widely used in American public schools along with America's first comprehensive dictionary that Webster also published. His work, "Letters to a Young Gentleman Commencing His Education: To Which is Subjoined a Brief History of the United States," was among works that together sold more than one hundred million copies for use by public school children all across the nation and was still available for use in American public schools in the year 1975.

1 The size of the statements must be smaller than the text of the Ten
2 Commandments but must be large enough to be easily read.

3 **Section 4. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 13-24:**

4 If the board of a school district substitutes the text of the Woope Sakowin for the
5 Ten Commandments, the following statements must be displayed near any poster or
6 document listing the Woope Sakowin, pursuant to section 2 of this Act:

7 (1) The Woope Sakowin are a set of values that have been a part of Oceti Sakowin
8 teachings since a time predating statehood;

9 (2) The Woope Sakowin, which means seven laws, have long served as a moral and
10 ethical framework within the Oceti Sakowin community, emphasizing personal
11 responsibility, integrity, and strong family and community values;

12 (3) Rooted in traditions that have guided generations, the Woope Sakowin teach
13 principles of wisdom, respect, generosity, and perseverance, aligning with ideals
14 of character, self-discipline, and civic responsibility; and

15 (4) The Woope Sakowin are recognized within this state's educational system through
16 the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings.

17 **Section 5. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 13-24:**

18 The board of a school district may display the Mayflower Compact, the Magna
19 Carta, the Declaration of Independence, ~~Doctrine of Discovery, Tribal Treaties, the 1868~~
20 Fort Laramie Treaty, and other documents foundational to the legal and governmental
21 systems of the United States and this state along with the Ten Commandments, as
22 provided for in sections 1 and ~~2 3~~ of this Act or the Woope Sakowin, as provided for in
23 sections 2 and 4 of this Act.

24 The South Dakota Board of Education Standards shall publish on the website of the
25 Department of Education, a list of other documents that are foundational to the legal and
26 governmental systems of the United States and this state and which may be displayed
27 along with the Ten Commandments or Woope Sakowin.

28 **Section 6. That a NEW SECTION be added to chapter 13-24:**

29 The board of a school district may accept donated displays that meet the
30 requirements of sections 1, ~~2~~, and 3 of this Act or sections 2 and 4 of this Act, or may

1 accept donations to purchase displays that meet the requirements of sections ~~1, 2,~~ and 3
 2 of this Act ~~or sections 2 and 4.~~

3 **Section 7. That § 13-33-4 be AMENDED:**

4 ~~**13-33-4.** In all public and nonpublic schools located within the state there shall be~~
 5 ~~given regular courses of instruction in the Constitutions of the United States and the State~~
 6 ~~of South Dakota. Such instruction shall begin not later than the opening of the eighth~~
 7 ~~grade and shall continue in the high school to an extent to be determined by the South~~
 8 ~~Dakota Board of Education Standards~~

9 Each public school in this state must include, as a part of the school's history and
 10 civics curriculum, instruction on the governments of the United States and this state and
 11 the philosophical principles articulated by these governmental systems. The instruction
 12 must cover:

13 (1) The Constitution of the United States;

14 (2) The constitution of this state;

15 (3) The Declaration of Independence;

16 (4) The Bill of Rights;

17 (5) The Oceti Sakowin Tribal Constitutions;

18 ~~(5)(6)~~ The Ten Commandments, presented as a historical legal document, including the
 19 influence of the Ten Commandments on the legal, ethical, and other cultural
 20 traditions of Western civilization; and

21 ~~(6)(7)~~ Other documents foundational to the legal and governmental systems of the United
 22 States and this state, as determined by the South Dakota Board of Education
 23 Standards.

24 Each student enrolled in a school district must receive instruction provided
 25 pursuant to this section at least once between first and fourth grade, once between fifth
 26 and eighth grade, and once between ninth and twelfth grade.

27 The Department of Education shall develop and provide materials to support the
 28 instruction required by this section and shall make the material available to a school
 29 district upon request.

30 **Section 8. That § 13-24-17.1 be REPEALED.**

31 ~~An object or document containing the words of the Ten Commandments may be~~
 32 ~~displayed in any public school classroom, public school building, or at any public school~~
 33 ~~event, along with other objects and documents of cultural, legal, or historical significance~~

1 ~~that have formed and influenced the legal and governmental systems of the United States~~
2 ~~and the State of South Dakota. Such display of an object or document containing the~~
3 ~~words of the Ten Commandments:~~

4 ~~(1) Shall be in the same manner and appearance generally as other objects and~~
5 ~~documents displayed; and~~

6 ~~(2) May not be presented or displayed in any fashion that results in calling attention~~
7 ~~to it apart from the other displayed objects and documents.~~

AMENDMENT