



2026 South Dakota Legislature

House Bill 1243

Introduced by: **Representative Jensen (Phil)**

1 **An Act to require the display of the state motto in public schools and provide for**
2 **associated legal representation.**

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 motto of the State of South Dakota, "Under God the People Rule," must be
6 displayed in each public school. The display must be placed in a prominent location within
7 each public school. The display may take the form of a mounted plaque, student artwork,
8 or any other appropriate form, as determined by the school principal.

9 For purposes of this section, "prominent location," means a school entryway,
10 cafeteria, or other common area where students are most likely to see the state motto
11 display.

12 **Section 2. That § 13-24-24 be AMENDED:**

13 **13-24-24.** For any lawsuit brought or any complaint filed against a school district,
14 an employee of a school district, the board of a school district, or a member thereof as a
15 result of a school district displaying the national motto of the United States in accordance
16 with § 13-24-23 or the motto of this state in accordance with section 1 of this Act, the
17 attorney general shall provide legal representation at no cost to the school district,
18 employee, school board, or member of the school board.

19 In addition to the expenses of representation, the state shall assume financial
20 responsibility for any other related expense incurred by the school district, an employee,
21 the board, or member thereof, including any award for monetary damages, attorney's
22 fees, and costs for which the school district, an employee, the board, or a member thereof
23 would be otherwise responsible.