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Gov. Perry signs schoolchildren's religious liberty bill

Austin- Governor Rick Perry today signed the Religious Viewpoints Anti-Discrimination Act, a law that provides guidelines to prevent violations of religious freedom and suppression of individual expression in Texas public schools. The bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support by a vote of 107-28 in the Texas House of Representatives, and 28 to 2 in the Senate, despite several maneuvers designed to sink the bill.

"This law is a victory for freedom and non-discrimination for every young Texan," said Rep. Charlie Howard. "It is win-win for students, school administrators and teachers. No longer will a cloud of confusion obscure the rights to individual expression students enjoy under the U.S. Constitution. School officials need no longer fear the threat of lawsuits simply for allowing students to exercise their constitutional rights."

Rep. Howard introduced the bill in the House in order to make clear that continued violations of established Supreme Court decisions protecting students' religious expression would no longer be tolerated. The law protects all 4.5 million Texas students from unlawful censorship and provides school officials with unambiguous and easy-to-follow guidelines.

"This bill does not require or suggest that any child express a religious viewpoint, it just protects them if they do. Religious children do not receive special rights, preferential treatment or extra protection, just equal rights, equal treatment and equal protection," said Houston constitutional attorney and legal architect of the legislation, Kelly Coghlan. "This law clears the air of the unnecessary chaos imposed in recent decades by anti-faith organizations regarding what is and is not permissible with regard to religious expression in public schools."

[Link to the text of the law.](#)

