

**An Open Letter from Texas Clergy  
on Religious Freedom and Public Education**

June 15, 2026

To the members of the Texas State Board of Education,

As clergy serving congregations and organizations across Texas, and who hold religious texts—and religious freedom—with the utmost reverence, we write with deep concern about the proposed literary works list before the State Board of Education.

The proposed reading list is incompatible with the vibrant, multicultural, and multifaith communities that attend Texas public schools. It includes Bible stories for young students—using only Protestant Christian translations (except for one outdated Jewish translation). Elementary students will be assigned age-inappropriate adaptations of Bible stories and theologically complex Bible passages without any context or teacher training. High school students will be assigned Bible passages with inaccurate and misleading translations. And students who practice different faith traditions, or no faith at all, will be left out, their beliefs unrepresented.

Texas public schools are where children from all backgrounds sit side by side—Christian children, Muslim children, Hindu children, Jewish children, children from secular homes—and learn together from texts that privilege no one religion, but rather, the pursuit of knowledge. That is religious freedom in its most honest form.

Sacred texts belong to the faith communities that cherish them, and public schools serve ALL families—of all faiths and practices. When the government inserts itself into that sacred responsibility, both faith and freedom are put at risk. The state does religion no favor by becoming its sponsor.

For these reasons, we urge the State Board of Education to reject the proposed reading list in its current form. Instead, we ask that you take the time and seek the community input necessary to ensure such a list reflects the fullness of Texas communities, religions, and cultures. We ask that you protect religious freedom by respecting Texas families—and the right of every student to learn and every family to choose what is taught in matters of faith. Let sacred texts be taught in homes and houses of worship—not mandated by the state in public school classrooms.

Respectfully,

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