

Examples of liberties protected by SB158: The Religious Freedom Amendment

- A Catholic hospital could not be forced to distribute contraceptives or abortifacient drugs.
- The public schools or government could not prevent members of the Jewish Community from taking a day off to observe Yom Kippur. (Christian Holy Days such as Easter and Christmas are generally automatically observed.)
- A high school valedictorian could thank God in a speech. (Commonly denied in Kentucky)
- A high school team could no longer be prevented from praying before a game. (ex: Fall 2011 in Bell County, KY)
- A nurse could not be forced to participate in an abortion against her religious convictions. (ex: Louisiana, May 2009 – still in court)
- Religious symbols and crosses would be protected at memorial sites. (ex: Utah Highway Patrol and Transportation Department sued by American Atheists to remove crosses from memorials placed to honor fallen patrol officers.)
- A college religious group could not be disbanded for not allowing people hostile to their religious beliefs to join and lead the group. (ex: Vanderbilt University in 2011)
- A Mennonite, Muslim, or Jewish student could not be forced to remove a recognized religious head-covering that does not interfere with their identification or scholastic performance.
- Parents and religious schools could continue to educate their children according to their moral values.
- Pastor/counselor confidentiality would be better protected.
- If jewelry is allowed in a school, students could not be denied the right to wear crosses or Stars of David.
- Family and friends visiting loved ones in hospitals could no longer be denied bringing religious material to their loved one. (ex: Recently, Walter Reed Hospital banned Bibles and other religious material from being brought in by family and friends for patients. Because of the protection of religious freedom in federal institutions granted by the federal “compelling interest test,” Walter Reed backed down and rewrote the policy to allow religious materials for patient use.)
- College students could no longer be disciplined for presenting a religious view on a subject being discussed.
- Religious universities could not be denied accreditation for not teaching or performing abortions.
- Pregnancy care centers could not be forced to refer for abortions or offer abortifacients.
- Students could not be accused of discrimination and threatened with expulsion for holding a pro-life rally and not including abortion information. (ex: Spokane Falls Community College)
- A state could no longer require the name of God to be eliminated from a religious memorial or burial service (ex: In 2011 at the Houston National Cemetery, the Veteran’s Administration: 1) banned the mention of God’s name at veteran’s funerals; 2) required families of deceased veterans to submit prayers in advance for approval; 3) banned the names “God and Jesus” and the words “God Bless” from being used on condolence cards sent out by volunteers from the National Memorial Ladies; 4) prohibited a private funeral home from mentioning to veterans’ families that they could request prayer for a veteran’s funeral service; and 5) closed the chapel once used for religious services, removed the cross and Bible and converted it to a storage facility. (The VFW and National Memorial Ladies filed suit citing the federal religious freedom statute.)
- Public employees could no longer be fired for praying together after work on public property. (ex: 2006 University of Texas fired three employees for praying after work for an employee who was absent that day. University officials said their prayer was deemed “harassment” and that they damaged university property by praying. Case is going to trial.)

“It is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor.”

– George Washington