



Greetings Friends, Constituents & Supporters,

Earlier this year, it came to my attention that demands on the part of a state agency regarding the religious and personal liberties of an East Texas resident were reaching excess. Mrs. Jeanette Golden, of Hemphill, had placed a large sign displaying the 10 Commandments on her personal property just off of State Highway 21. According to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDot), Mrs. Golden was in violation of the Federal Highway Beautification Act, which prohibits signs and billboards within certain distances of interstate or primary highways unless they are in areas defined as commercial or industrial. However, the act exempts political signage and signage that advertises activities taking place on said property, but make no mention of non-commercial, non-political signage on someone's personal property. It appears the Federal Government and the Texas Department of Transportation enacted mandates that suppress free speech in the name of commercial speech, and gives the government power to approve some forms of free speech, but not others. I find this very disturbing.



The 10 Commandments were one of the many Judeo-Christian founded documents used to help guide our Founding Fathers in structuring our country and its systems of checks and balances in a way that would help incentivize those elected to lead to be moral, principled and guided by virtue and integrity. The historical significance of those 10 commandments is a necessary lesson to be learned for anyone interested in understanding our great Nation and the steps that were necessary to get us here today. I am sure you are aware the Supreme Court approved the 10 Commandment monument prominently displayed on our Texas State Capitol grounds.

Upon hearing of further instances of harassment by the agency towards Mrs. Golden I contacted TxDot Commissioner Joe Weber, and in [my letter](#) I reiterated my concerns and discontent. For me, there was no doubt that the harassment Mrs. Golden was experiencing was orchestrated by those who fear freedom of religion and religious expression. The 'solutions' offered were no more than a bureaucratic agency's efforts to hide their true intent, which was to further suppress private property owners ability to freely exercise their freedom of speech and religious expression.

In the 83rd Session of the Texas Legislature I filed a bill that would have allowed public school teachers the opportunity to display the 10 Commandments in their classroom if they so choose. I believe this document is a critical piece of our heritage and, aside from religious affiliation, offers our children not only an understanding of our Nation's history, but instills in us all a sense of morality and respectability to inspire them to one day participate in its procedure and serve as a representative of the people. I intend to re-file this legislation for the upcoming 84th session and see it pass into law.

Mrs. Golden' s Highway 21 sign is an example of modern day religious persecution, except this time the persecution is through the suppression of speech and exercise in the name of government mandate. I do not want to see my freedoms be infringed on for the sake of another frivolous piece of bureaucratic regulation. I commend the [Liberty Institute](#) for taking this case on and defending Mrs. Golden and the freedom of speech, as well as our religious liberties.

Should the recommended changes to the Administrative Code that are currently being proposed by the Texas Transportation Commission (with a public comment invited until July 14th), it seems that Mrs. Golden and all other private property owners wishing to display signage on their property will have the ability to without further interference.

It remains my pleasure and honor to represent all the people of House District 2. My staff and I continue to welcome your input and your questions. You can contact our office in many ways: Mail: P. O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78768. Toll Free: 1-800-734-9515. Email: District2.Flynn@house.state.tx.us.

Read other Flynn Reports on my WEBSITE, daflynn.com.

**May God continue to bless you and the Great State of Texas!
Dan Flynn, State Representative, District 2**