

By: Representative Ford (73rd)

To: Public Property

HOUSE BILL NO. 1282

1 AN ACT TO PROHIBIT DISPLAYS, SYMBOLS, OR THE PRACTICE OF
2 SATANIC WORSHIP ON PUBLIC PROPERTY, IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ON PROPERTY
3 OWNED BY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, OR ON ANY PROPERTY OWNED BY THE STATE OR
4 ITS POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

6 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as the
7 "Reject Escalating Satanism by Preserving Essential Core
8 Traditions (RESPECT) Act."

9 **SECTION 2.** (1) The Legislature finds that the Constitution
10 of the State of Mississippi acknowledges the supreme being to whom
11 we owe gratitude for blessings received and upon whom we depend
12 for future blessings.

13 (2) The Legislature finds that there is a wide range of
14 differing views among its citizens regarding which establishment
15 of religion or religions represent the one supreme being upon
16 which we depend. Though a long line of historical evidence exists
17 showing that the values found in the Judeo-Christian faith are
18 fundamental to the foundations and freedoms of the United States
19 of America, the State of Mississippi, in accordance with the



20 long-established history, heritage, and tradition of the United
21 States, does not grant favored status to any establishment of
22 religion as the official religion of the State of Mississippi.

23 (3) The Legislature finds that good and evil exist. The
24 supreme being, upon whom we depend for continued blessings,
25 personifies that which is good. Evil is personified in the
26 creature known as Satan. It is the duty of the government to play
27 an appropriate role in protecting the inhabitant residents of
28 Mississippi from evil while encouraging and facilitating good. It
29 is legally and constitutionally inconsistent to afford Satan, who
30 is universally understood to be an enemy of God, religious
31 expression on public property by a state government that depends
32 upon God for continued blessings. Such a legal view violates our
33 state constitution and offends the God upon whom we depend and
34 undermines our well-being.

35 (4) The Legislature finds that all people have freedom of
36 conscience. The State of Mississippi does not recommend Satanic
37 practice in any form; however, the State of Mississippi
38 acknowledges that individuals are free under the Constitution of
39 the State of Mississippi to practice Satanic worship in their
40 private thoughts and on their private property in ways that do not
41 violate any Mississippi law or harm or infringe on others.

42 **SECTION 3.** (1) Satanic memorials, statues, altars,
43 displays, symbols, any other method of representing or honoring
44 Satan or the practice of Satanic worship shall not be allowed on



45 public property, in public schools, on property owned by public
46 schools, or on any property owned by the state or its political
47 subdivisions.

48 (2) For the purpose of this section, "political subdivision"
49 means any body politic or body corporate other than the state
50 responsible for governmental activities only in geographic areas
51 smaller than that of the state, including, but not limited to, any
52 county, municipality, school district, charter school, volunteer
53 fire department that is a chartered nonprofit corporation
54 providing emergency services under contract with a county or
55 municipality, community hospital as defined in Section 41-13-10,
56 airport authority, or other instrumentality of the state, whether
57 or not the body or instrumentality has the authority to levy taxes
58 or to sue or be sued in its own name.

59 (3) A violation of this section is a misdemeanor criminal
60 offense subject to prosecution under the laws of the state in
61 accordance with Section 21-13-19.

62 **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
63 and after July 1, 2024.

