

2017 -- H 5385

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL DISPLAY - TRADITIONAL WINTER
CELEBRATIONS

Introduced By: Representatives Morgan, Lancia, Roberts, Giarrusso, and Nardolillo

Date Introduced: February 03, 2017

Referred To: House Health, Education & Welfare

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended
2 by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 20.1

4 SCHOOL DISPLAYS

5 **16-20.1-1. Winter celebration.**

6 (a) Any school district may educate students about the history of traditional winter
7 celebrations and may allow students and school personnel to offer traditional seasonal greetings
8 concerning the celebrations, including Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy Holidays.

9 (b) Except as provided in subsection (c) herein, any school district may display on school
10 property scenes or symbols associated with traditional winter celebrations, including a Menorah
11 or a Christmas image such as an nativity scene or Christmas tree, as long as the display includes a
12 scenery symbol of more than one religion or one religion and at least one secular scenery or
13 symbol.

14 (c) No school traditional winter celebration display shall include a message that
15 encourages adherence to a particular religious belief.

16 **16-20.1-2. Severability.**

17 If any provision of this chapter or the application thereof to any person or circumstances
18 is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the chapter.

1 [which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the](#)
2 [provisions of this chapter are declared to be severable.](#)

3 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION - SCHOOL DISPLAY - TRADITIONAL WINTER
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1 This act would permit school districts to allow students and school personnel to offer
2 traditional winter celebration greetings. It would also allow school displays, with limitations,
3 which exhibit scenes and symbols of traditional winter celebrations.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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