

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 358 (HB 371)

2025 Regular Session

Amedee

New law provides that the government shall provide protections of the highest order to every place of worship.

New law provides that the government shall not discriminate against a place of worship by requiring restrictions that are greater than the least severe restrictions that are imposed upon or enforced against any secular business, service, or assembly.

New law provides that in 2023, the legislature adopted Article XII, Section 17 of the Constitution of La.

New law (R.S. 13:5233.1) provides that if a church or other place of worship has met the requirements for zoning, building code, and fire safety regulation, and has received an occupancy license, the government shall not restrict or deny the use of the building in any of the following manners:

- (1) Based upon the day of the week the building is being used.
- (2) Based upon the content or types of religious instruction, education, or activities conducted in the building.
- (3) For a mother's day out program.
- (4) For a meeting of two or more parents or children participating in a home study program.
- (5) For a Vacation Bible School or Bible Camp.

New law provides that nothing in new law shall prevent enforcement of Title 14 of the La. Revised Statutes of 1950 or any other applicable provisions of criminal law.

New law expands the definition of "compelling state interest" and "exercise of religion".

Prior law provided that a violation of the preservation of religious freedom act was asserted as a claim or defense in a judicial proceeding.

New law provides that a person whose religious exercise has been burdened may assert that violation as a claim or defense in a judicial, administrative, or other proceeding to obtain relief.

New law expands the remedies to include court approved expert witness fees.

New law provides that a person shall bring an action to assert a claim for damages not later than one year after the date that an action was dismissed by an administrative law judge or a court or there was a finding in favor of the person on the merits which resulted in a claim authorized pursuant to the Preservation of Religious Freedom Act.

New law provides that an action can be asserted no later than one year from the 75th day after the date on which the notice is mailed pursuant to R.S. 13:5238.

New law defines "mother's day out program".

New law expands the definition of "camp" to include a Vacation Bible School or Bible Camp.

Effective upon signature of governor (June 20, 2025).

(Amends R.S. 13:5232(1), 5233, 5234 (3), (5), and (6)(intro. para.), 5237, 5239, and 5240(A) and (B) and R.S. 17:407.33(1); Adds R.S. 13:5232(7) and 5233.1 and R.S. 17:407.33(9))

