

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS
FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

LS 6538
BILL NUMBER: SB 138

NOTE PREPARED: Dec 9, 2025
BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: School Chaplains.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Donato
FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: As Introduced

FUNDS AFFECTED: **GENERAL**
 DEDICATED
 FEDERAL

IMPACT: Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill allows a principal or superintendent of a public school, including a charter school, to employ, or approve as a volunteer, a school chaplain if certain requirements are met. The bill allows a school chaplain to provide:

- (1) Secular advice, guidance, and support services; and
- (2) Nonsecular advice, guidance, and support services if certain conditions are met.

It provides that, with exceptions, communications made by a student to a school chaplain are privileged and confidential.

Effective Date: July 1, 2026.

Explanation of State Expenditures:

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: This bill could increase expenditures for public schools who choose to employ a chaplain by approximately \$86,000 per chaplain. This cost may be offset if the school chooses to hire a chaplain instead of other types of student support services personnel. [In FY 2027, the average annual salary and fringe benefit cost for a school psychologist, counselor, or school social worker in the state of Indiana will be an estimated \$115,000, \$93,000, and \$88,000, respectively.]

Public schools who accept volunteer chaplains may also experience a minor workload increase related to overseeing the volunteer staff. These requirements are within public schools' routine administrative functions and should be able to be implemented with no additional appropriations, assuming near customary agency staffing and resource levels.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected:

Local Agencies Affected: Public schools.

Information Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (May 2024).

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