

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

SENATE BILL NO. 323

101ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR MAY.

1585S.01H

ADRIANE D. CROUSE, Secretary

AN ACT

To amend chapter 170, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to elective social studies courses on the Bible.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 170, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be known as section 170.341, to read as follows:

170.341. 1. Any school district may offer students:

(1) An elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament of the Bible;

(2) An elective social studies course on the New Testament of the Bible; or

(3) An elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible.

2. The purpose of a course under this section is to:

(1) Teach students knowledge of biblical content, characters, poetry, and narratives that are prerequisites to understanding contemporary society and culture, including literature, art, music, mores, oratory, and public policy; and

(2) Familiarize students with, as applicable:

(a) The contents of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament;

(b) The history of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament;

19 (c) The literary style and structure of the Hebrew
20 Scriptures or New Testament; and

21 (d) The influence of the Hebrew Scriptures or New
22 Testament on law, history, government, literature, art,
23 music, customs, morals, values, and culture.

24 3. A student shall not be required to use a specific
25 translation as the sole text of the Hebrew Scriptures or New
26 Testament and may use as the basic textbook a different
27 translation of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament from
28 that chosen by the school district.

29 4. A course offered under this section shall follow
30 applicable law and all federal and state guidelines in
31 maintaining religious neutrality and accommodating the
32 diverse religious views, traditions, and perspectives of
33 students in the school. A course offered under this section
34 shall not endorse, favor, or promote, or disfavor or show
35 hostility toward, any particular religion or nonreligious
36 faith or religious perspective.

37 5. School districts, in complying with this section,
38 shall not violate any provision of the Constitution of the
39 United States or federal law, the Constitution of Missouri
40 or any state law, or any administrative regulations of the
41 department of elementary and secondary education or the
42 United States Department of Education.

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