

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

[TRULY AGREED TO AND FINALLY PASSED]

SENATE BILL NO. 34

102ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
2023

0388S.02T

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
2 one new section, to be known as section 170.341, to read as
3 follows:

170.341. 1. Any school district or public charter
2 school may offer students elective social studies courses
3 relating, but not limited to, the following:

4 (1) The Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament of the
5 Bible;

6 (2) The New Testament of the Bible; or

7 (3) The Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the
8 Bible.

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

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

15 (2) Familiarize students with, as applicable:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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