

HJR 11 -- RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN PUBLIC PLACES

SPONSOR: McGhee

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on General Laws by a vote of 8 to 4.

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment guarantees a citizen's First Amendment right to pray and worship in all public areas including schools as long as the activities are voluntary and subject to the same rules and regulations that apply to all other types of speech.

The bill reaffirms a citizen's right to choose any religion or no religion at all by prohibiting both the establishment of an official state religion and any state coercion or endorsement of religion through practices as composing official state prayers.

Public schools receiving state funds are required to display the text of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States in a conspicuous and legible manner.

The bill also reaffirms the right of employees and elected officials of the State of Missouri to pray on government premises and public property. The bill ensures the General Assembly and other political subdivisions the right to have ministers and clergymen offer prayers or invocations at meetings or sessions of the General Assembly or other governing bodies.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of Unknown - Expected to exceed \$100,000 in FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will clarify the constitutional right to pray and help ensure that public officials and employees do not discourage prayer.

Testifying for the bill were Representative McGhee; and Missouri Family Network.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.