

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 267

100TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE BAKER.

0740H.011

DANA RADEMAN MILLER, Chief Clerk

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;

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

and

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

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

18 **3. A student shall not be required to use a specific translation as the sole text of the**
19 **Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament and may use as the basic textbook a different**
20 **translation of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament from that chosen by the school**
21 **district.**

22 **4. A course offered under this section shall follow applicable law and all federal and**
23 **state guidelines in maintaining religious neutrality and accommodating the diverse**
24 **religious views, traditions, and perspectives of students in the school. A course offered**
25 **under this section shall not endorse, favor, or promote, or disfavor or show hostility**
26 **toward, any particular religion or nonreligious faith or religious perspective.**

27 **5. (1) The department of elementary and secondary education shall convene a work**
28 **group to develop and recommend academic performance standards relating to courses**
29 **offered under this section. The work group shall present its recommendations to the state**
30 **board of education before January 1, 2020. The work group shall include, but not be**
31 **limited to, educators providing instruction in a grade or grades not lower than the sixth**
32 **nor higher than the twelfth grade and representatives from the department of elementary**
33 **and secondary education. Before July 1, 2020, the department of elementary and**
34 **secondary education shall develop written curriculum frameworks relating to the courses**
35 **that may be used by school districts. The requirements of section 160.514 shall not apply**
36 **to this section.**

37 **(2) The state board of education shall adopt and implement academic performance**
38 **standards relating to the courses offered under this section beginning in the 2020-21 school**
39 **year.**

40 **6. The department of elementary and secondary education and school districts, in**
41 **complying with this section, shall not violate any provision of the Constitution of the United**
42 **States or federal law, the Constitution of Missouri or any state law, or any administrative**
43 **regulations of the department of elementary and secondary education or the United States**
44 **Department of Education.**

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