

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 68

BY REPRESENTATIVE HODGES

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

CURRICULA: Authorizes public high schools to offer a course of instruction in the history and literature of the Bible

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:282 and 3996(B)(75), relative to curricula; to authorize public school
3 governing authorities to offer an elective high school course in the history and
4 literature of the Bible; to provide for course purposes and parameters; to require the
5 State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to adopt rules for
6 implementation; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "History and Literature
9 of the Bible Act".

10 Section 2. R.S. 17:282 and 3996(B)(75) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 §282. History and literature of the Bible; high schools

12 A. Each public school governing authority may offer an elective high school
13 course in the history and literature of the Bible for the purposes of:

14 (1) Providing students with knowledge of biblical content, characters, poetry,
15 and narratives that are prerequisites to understanding contemporary society and
16 culture, including literature, art, music, mores, oratory, and public policy.

17 (2) Familiarizing students with the content, history, and structure of the Bible
18 and the influence of the Bible on law, history, government, literature, art, music,
19 customs, morals, values, and culture.

1 B. If such a course is offered:

2 (1) No student shall be required to use a particular translation of the Bible
3 as the textbook for the course.

4 (2) The course shall maintain religious neutrality and accommodate diverse
5 religious views, traditions, and perspectives.

6 (3) The course shall not endorse, promote, favor, disfavor, or show hostility
7 toward any particular religion or any nonreligious perspective.

8 C. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall adopt rules
9 in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act for the implementation of this
10 Section.

11 D. In carrying out the provisions of this Section, neither the State Board of
12 Elementary and Secondary Education nor any public school governing authority
13 shall violate any provision of the United States Constitution or any federal law, the
14 Constitution of Louisiana or any state law, or any regulation of the United States
15 Department of Education.

16 * * *

17 §3996. Charter schools; exemptions; requirements

18 * * *

19 B. Notwithstanding any state law, rule, or regulation to the contrary and
20 except as may be otherwise specifically provided for in an approved charter, a
21 charter school established and operated in accordance with the provisions of this
22 Chapter and its approved charter and the school's officers and employees shall be
23 exempt from all statutory mandates or other statutory requirements that are
24 applicable to public schools and to public school officers and employees except for
25 the following laws otherwise applicable to public schools with the same grades:

26 * * *

27 (75) Elective course on the history and literature of the Bible, R.S. 17:282.

28 * * *

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 68 Engrossed

2023 Regular Session

Hodges

Abstract: Authorizes an elective course on the history and literature of the Bible to be offered in public high schools.

Proposed law authorizes each public school governing authority to offer an elective high school course in the history and literature of the Bible. If offered:

- (1) No student shall be required to use a particular translation of the Bible.
- (2) The course shall maintain religious neutrality and accommodate diverse views.
- (3) The course shall not show favor or disfavor toward any particular religion or any nonreligious perspective.

Proposed law requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopt rules for proposed law implementation.

(Adds R.S. 17:282 and 3996(B)(75))