



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on February 9, 2011

KY Senate Considers Biblical Studies for Public Schools

The Kentucky state legislature is currently considering legislation that would add religion classes to the public school curriculum. On Tuesday, the state Senate Education Committee approved Senate Bill 56, which allows public schools to teach Bible courses as electives. It currently awaits approval in the House.



[Senate Bill 56](#) reads:

AN ACT relating to Bible literacy courses in the public schools.

Create a new section of KRS Chapter 156 to require the Kentucky Board of Education to promulgate administrative regulations to establish an elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament of the Bible, the New Testament, or a combination of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible; require that the course provide 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; permit students to use various translations of the Bible for the course; amend KRS 158.197 to permit a school council to offer an elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament of the Bible, the New Testament, or a combination of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible.

A similar measure passed in Kentucky's state Senate last year, but the bill died in the State House of Representatives.

Local residents have mixed feelings on the legislation.

Kentucky resident Debbie Enoch indicates,



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I think it would be great if it did [pass]. There's just so many things that are lost in our morals today and I think it's going to give us, give the students hope and maybe change the world. There's a lot of parents that aren't religious and the kids that don't have any way of finding out about religion unless they do have it in school.

Others foresee potential issues that may arise from the implementation of the biblical courses.

Leigh Murphee notes, "I think that it might open up doors that we might not expect. Where do we stop teaching different religions?"

Others, such as Kentucky resident Laura McGrew, are adamantly against the measure:

I don't think it's good in any manner and I think it's against the Constitution. The Supreme Court will knock it down just like they did putting 10 Commandments in all school rooms.

It's a tight, tight issue; it really is, and I don't think public money ought to be spent to support teaching any religion.

Of course, McGrew fails to consider the types of public school programs that taxpayer money already funds, most of which are far more offensive than a voluntary biblical program, including a [radical La Raza studies program](#) that was eventually eliminated from the Tucson Unified School District in Arizona for igniting "racial hostility."

Nevertheless, Kentucky's consideration of Senate Bill 56 highlights the debate over the role that the school should play in the religious instruction of students.

For example, states such as Louisiana and Kansas considered adding [creationism](#) and intelligent design to the same curriculum that teaches evolution, a still contentious issue that dates back to 1925, when John T. Scopes was convicted for teaching evolution in Dayton, Tennessee, an act that stood in violation of the 1925 Butler Act that criminalized teaching any theory that refuted the existence of a Supreme Being. In both states, however, the school district ultimately removed or rejected the presence of spiritual references from the curriculum.

Public education continually rejects religious and biblical references, as school districts have banned the celebration of religious holidays and prayer in the classroom. Some school districts have allowed political correctness to get so out of hand that they have removed American flags from their classroom and eliminated the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Yet, schools have comfortably accepted the role of instructing students in other areas that one should consider private or personal, such as sex education.

Likewise, in the state of [California](#), teachers' unions fought to allow registered Communists to receive teaching certifications, and to permit the promotion of Communist philosophies in the classroom. Fortunately the legislation was rejected by then-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Whether Kentucky's state legislature will be successful in adding the biblical elective course to its public school curriculum remains to be seen. But given the current climate in which public education is found, the effort alone will be considered commendable by many.



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