

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.  
Act 1440 of the Regular Session

State of Arkansas  
89th General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2013

As Engrossed: H1/30/13 S4/16/13

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1017

By: Representatives D. Altes, *Ballinger, Harris, Payton*

By: *Senator G. Stubblefield*

## For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADOPT CURRICULUM STANDARDS AS DIRECTED BY THIS ACT FOR AN ACADEMIC STUDY OF THE BIBLE COURSE THAT MAY BE OFFERED AS AN ELECTIVE COURSE IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT; TO SET REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHING AN ACADEMIC STUDY OF THE BIBLE COURSE IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL AS DIRECTED BY THIS ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

## Subtitle

TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADOPT CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR AN ACADEMIC STUDY OF THE BIBLE COURSE AS DIRECTED BY THIS ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 16, Subchapter 1 is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-16-142. Academic study of the Bible course.

(a)(1) The State Board of Education shall allow for an elective academic study of the Bible course or courses that consist of a nonsectarian, nonreligious academic study of the Bible and its influence on literature, art, music, culture, and politics to be offered to students in public school districts, if the academic study of the Bible course meets the standards listed in this section.

(2) The curriculum standards submitted by a public school



district for approval of an academic study of the Bible course shall meet the:

(A) Academic rigor and curriculum standards of other elective courses approved by the state board; and

(B) Requirements of the Arkansas Constitution and the United States Constitution.

(b)(1) A public school district that elects to offer an academic study of the Bible course shall implement the course in accordance with the Arkansas Constitution and the United States Constitution, including the manner in which the course is taught in the classroom and the assignment of school district personnel teaching the course.

(2) Personnel assigned to teach the course shall be licensed to teach in the State of Arkansas.

(3) Personnel shall not be assigned to teach the course based on any:

(A) Religious test;

(B) Profession of faith or lack of faith;

(C) Prior or present religious affiliation or lack of affiliation; or

(D) Criteria involving particular beliefs or lack of beliefs about the Bible.

(c) An academic study of the Bible course offered by a public school district shall:

(1) Be taught in an objective and nondevotional manner with no attempt made to indoctrinate students as to either the truth or falsity of the biblical materials or texts from other religious or cultural traditions;

(2) Not include teaching of religious doctrine or sectarian interpretation of the Bible or of texts from other religious or cultural traditions; and

(3) Not disparage or encourage a commitment to a set of religious beliefs.

(d) A public school district that elects to offer an academic study of the Bible course shall use only the standards in this section to:

(1) Evaluate textbooks for an academic study of the Bible course; and

(2) Teach an academic study of the Bible course.

*SECTION 2. DO NOT CODIFY.*

*(a) The State Board of Education shall apply the existing adopted rules governing elective course offerings and permitting a school district to adopt and teach elective courses to a school district that chooses to adopt and teach an academic study of the Bible course as an elective course.*

*(b) This act does not require the state board to adopt new rules, standards, or curriculum frameworks.*

*/s/D. Altes*

**APPROVED: 04/22/2013**