

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 55

94TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES McGHEE (Sponsor), DAY, BROWN (30), DETHROW, GRISAMORE, RUESTMAN, LEMBKE, PORTWOOD, THOMSON, WILSON (119), MOORE, JONES (89), DEEKEN, FISHER, NIEVES, SANDER, PRATT, FUNDERBURK, HARRIS (110) AND BROWN (50) (Co-sponsors).

Read 1st time January 10, 2008 and copies ordered printed.

D. ADAM CRUMBLISS, Chief Clerk

4074L.01I

JOINT RESOLUTION

Submitting to the qualified voters of Missouri an amendment repealing section 5 of article I of the Constitution of Missouri, and adopting one new section in lieu thereof relating to the right to pray.

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring therein:

That at the next general election to be held in the state of Missouri, on Tuesday next following the first Monday in November, 2008, or at a special election to be called by the governor for that purpose, there is hereby submitted to the qualified voters of this state, for adoption or rejection, the following amendment to article I of the Constitution of the state of Missouri:

Section A. Section 5, article I, Constitution of Missouri, is repealed and one new section adopted in lieu thereof, to be known as section 5, to read as follows:

Section 5. That all men **and women** have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences; that no human authority can control or interfere with the rights of conscience; that no person shall, on account of his **or her** religious persuasion or belief, be rendered ineligible to any public office or trust or profit in this state, be disqualified from testifying or serving as a juror, or be molested in his **or her** person or estate; **that to secure a citizen's right to acknowledge Almighty God according to the dictates of personal convictions, neither the state nor any of its political subdivisions shall**

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.

8 establish any official religion, but a citizen's right to pray or to express his or her religious
9 beliefs shall not be infringed; that the state shall not compose prayers nor coerce any
10 person to participate in any prayer or other religious activity, but shall ensure public
11 school students their right to free exercise of religious expression without interference, as
12 long as such prayer or other expression is private and voluntary, whether individually or
13 corporately, and in a manner that is not disruptive nor in violation of other policies, rules,
14 or standards, and as long as such prayers or expressions abide within the same parameters
15 placed upon any other free speech under similar circumstances; and, to emphasize the
16 right to free exercise of religious expression, that all free public schools receiving state
17 appropriations shall display, in a conspicuous and legible manner, the text of the Bill of
18 Rights of the Constitution of the United States; but this section shall not be construed to
19 excuse acts of licentiousness, nor to justify practices inconsistent with the good order, peace or
20 safety of the state, or with the rights of others.

Section B. Pursuant to Chapter 116, RSMo, and other applicable constitutional
2 provisions and laws of this state allowing the General Assembly to adopt ballot language for the
3 submission of a joint resolution to the voters of this state, the official ballot title of the
4 amendment proposed in Section A shall be as follows:

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6 "A 'yes' vote will amend the Constitution of the State of Missouri to ensure that
7 schoolchildren have the right to pray and exercise other free religious expression in a
8 nondisruptive manner in their school, and that public schools shall display the First Amendment
9 text.

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11 A 'no' vote would not amend the Constitution of the State of Missouri."

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