

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 2554

94TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE COOPER (155).

Read 1st time April 1, 2008 and copies ordered printed.

D. ADAM CRUMBLISS, Chief Clerk

5620L.01I

AN ACT

To amend chapter 170, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to teacher academic freedom to teach scientific evidence regarding evolution.

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
2 known as section 170.335, to read as follows:

170.335. 1. The state board of education, public elementary and secondary school
2 governing authorities, superintendents of schools, school system administrators, and public
3 elementary and secondary school principals and administrators shall endeavor to create
4 an environment within public elementary and secondary schools that encourages students
5 to explore scientific questions, learn about scientific evidence, develop critical thinking
6 skills, and respond appropriately and respectfully to differences of opinion about
7 controversial issues, including such subjects as the teaching of biological and chemical
8 evolution. Such educational authorities in this state shall also endeavor to assist teachers
9 to find more effective ways to present the science curriculum where it addresses scientific
10 controversies. Toward this end, teachers shall be permitted to help students understand,
11 analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific
12 weaknesses of theories of biological and chemical evolution.

13 2. Neither the state board of education, nor any public elementary or secondary
14 school governing authority, superintendent of schools, or school system administrator, nor
15 any public elementary or secondary school principal or administrator shall prohibit any

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.

16 teacher in a public school system of this state from helping students understand, analyze,
17 critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific
18 weaknesses of theories of biological or chemical evolution.

19 3. This section only protects the teaching of scientific information and this section
20 shall not be construed to promote any religious or nonreligious doctrine, promote
21 discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs or nonbeliefs, or promote
22 discrimination for or against religion or nonreligion.

23 4. No later than the start of the 2008-2009 school year, the department of
24 elementary and secondary education shall notify all public school superintendents of the
25 provisions of this section. Each superintendent shall then disseminate to all employees
26 within his or her school system a copy of this section.

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