

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 656

95TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES COOPER (Sponsor), SUTHERLAND, EMERY, SANDER,
NIEVES AND COX (Co-sponsors).

0779L.01I

D. ADAM CRUMBLISS, Chief Clerk

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 biological and chemical evolution. Such educational
8 authorities in this state shall also endeavor to assist teachers to find more effective ways to
9 present the science curriculum where it addresses scientific controversies. Toward this
10 end, teachers shall be permitted to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review
11 in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of the theory of
12 biological and hypotheses of 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
16 teacher in a public school system of this state from helping students understand, analyze,

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.

17 critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and scientific
18 weaknesses of biological or chemical evolution whenever these subjects are taught within
19 the course curriculum schedule.

20 3. This section only protects the teaching of scientific information and this section
21 shall not be construed to promote philosophical naturalism or biblical theology, promote
22 natural cause or intelligent cause, promote undirected change or purposeful design,
23 promote atheistic or theistic belief, promote discrimination for or against a particular set
24 of religious beliefs or ideas, or promote discrimination for or against religion or
25 nonreligion. Scientific information includes physical evidence and logical inferences based
26 upon evidence.

27 4. No later than the start of the 2009-2010 school year, the department of
28 elementary and secondary education shall notify all public school superintendents of the
29 provisions of this section. Each superintendent shall then disseminate to all employees
30 within his or her school system a copy of this section.

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