SCR 13 -- ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS TO OFFER RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

SPONSOR: Emery (Trent)

Voted "Do Pass" by the Special Committee on Student Accountability by a vote of 9 to 1. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 6 to 3.

This concurrent resolution encourages public high schools to offer an elective course to students regarding the Bible and require all world literature courses to include information on wisdom literature from the Bible.

The resolution declares that the purpose of such courses is to teach students the Biblical content, characters, and narratives of the Bible that are prerequisites to understanding contemporary society and culture. The resolution urges the offering of such courses if the courses do not endorse or favor any particular religion, are taught by teachers selected without inquiry into religious beliefs or lack thereof, allow students to choose their preferred translation of the Bible, and award commensurate course credits.

The resolution urges the offering of such courses only if school districts make teacher training available regarding best practices for teaching the Bible in a public school setting. Finally, the resolution declares that no state entity, school district, or local educational agency should prevent the teaching of the Bible if the courses meet guidelines consistent with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

This resolution is the same as HCR 13 (2019).

PROPONENTS: Those in support of this resolution say that it is important to encourage schools to promote Bible literacy which studies indicate improves student learning. The lack of responsiveness of schools to promote Biblical literacy is due to a misunderstanding of supreme court decisions and this resolution will give school districts protections and motivation to offer courses.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose this resolution say that it would force districts to choose winners or losers for what the definition of a Bible would be, and could strip texts that religious groups hold sacred and present it for a secular purposes.