

HCS HB 108 -- ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

SPONSOR: Bangert

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 11 to 6. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 108.

The bill allows registered voters to file a petition with the school board to add agenda items to any monthly school board meeting. Requirements for the petition language is outlined in the bill, and no request may be submitted more than once every six months. Any agenda item added in this manner, shall be taken up by the board following the board procedure for such items. (Section 162.052, RSMo).

This bill requires school districts to provide instruction in cursive writing by the end of the fifth grade, including a proficiency test of competency in reading and writing cursive (Section 170.025).

This bill allows a school district to offer an elective social studies unit on the Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament of the Bible, or the New Testament of the Bible. The course will include the contents, history, literary style and structure, and influences on American history. No requirement shall be made by the district on the text translation students must use. This bill requires that any course offered shall follow applicable laws maintaining religious neutrality, and shall not endorse, favor, promote, or show hostility to any particular religion, nonreligious faith or religious perspective (Section 170.341).

This bill requires that schools, beginning in the 2022-23 school year and continuing thereafter, display the national motto of the United States, "In God We Trust" in a prominent location, as defined in the bill (Section 171.025).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that there are numerous benefits to cursive writing, and that it helps to improve memory retention.

Cursive writing is often used to help teach students with dysgraphia and students with special needs.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Bangert; Jaclyn Riebold; and Kristen Lewis.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.