

HCS HB 1262 -- AWARENESS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

SPONSOR: Black

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 16 to 1 with 1 voting present.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1262.

This bill creates the "Missouri Religious Liberty in Schools Awareness Act" and requires public schools to post a statement relating to religious freedoms.

The statement includes protected religious freedoms such as a student's ability to express beliefs about religion to others, pray and read the Bible or other religious texts or materials during free time, form and organize prayer groups and religious clubs, join or not join such clubs, and discuss the influence of religion in history and culture.

The bill requires the statement to be posted in a prominent location in each public school building where student instruction occurs regularly.

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 this bill is useful because it provides guidance for both students and teachers. Schools have an important role to play in the cultural and historical presentation of religions without promoting any one particular religion. This bill will help students know they can read their bible.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Black; Missouri NEA and Deanna Rhodes-Widmer;

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

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