

HB 2932 -- TREATMENT OF RELIGION BY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

SPONSOR: Gragg

Currently school districts must accept for credit full or partial course work for foster care children from public schools, nonpublic schools, or nonsectarian schools. This bill removes nonsectarian schools from the current list (Section 167.019 RSMo.).

Currently the State Board of Education may award funds for support services for pupils with a high risk of dropping out and such services are prohibited from being provided at sectarian nonpublic schools. This bill removes that prohibition (Section 167.280).

Currently the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority under Sections 173.350-173.450, is prohibited from offering loans for secondary school instruction that is sectarian in nature. This bill removes that prohibition (Section 173.355).

Currently the "Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program" requires that, to be an approved private institution of higher education that is eligible for an ACCESS grant, the private institution of higher education must permit faculty members to select textbooks without influence or pressure by religious or sectarian sources. Additionally, ACCESS grants currently may not be used for a course of study leading to a degree in theology or divinity. This bill removes those restrictions for this program (Sections 173.1102 and 173.1104).

Currently the "Missouri Health and Educational Facilities Authority Act" includes in the definition for educational and health facilities a restriction that such property not be used for sectarian instruction or study or as a place for religious worship in connection with a program of a school or department of divinity of a religion. This bill removes that restriction from those definitions. The bill also removes a requirement that future lease agreements include a clause that would prevent such instruction and that leased property would be subject to inspection for religious or sectarian uses (Sections 360.015 & 360.045).