

The Bible Is an Actual Classroom Textbook Again

This week, Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin ceremoniously signed into law a bill that officially makes the Bible a public-school classroom textbook once again.

House Bill 128 was adopted by the state House of Representatives on an 80-14 vote after Republicans easily defeated a Democrat amendment that would have removed references to the Bible and replaced it with “various religious texts of the many religions practiced in the Commonwealth.” The Senate approved the bill by a 34-4 margin.

The bill states:

Create a new section of KRS Chapter 156 to require the Kentucky Board of Education to promulgate administrative regulations to establish an elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament of the Bible, the New Testament or a combination of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible; require that the course provide to students knowledge of biblical content, characters, poetry and narratives that are prerequisites to understanding contemporary society and culture, including literature, art, music, mores, oratory and public policy; permit students to use various translations of the Bible for the course; amend KRS to permit a school council to offer an elective social studies course on the Hebrew Scriptures, Old Testament of the Bible, the New Testament or a combination of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the Bible.

Bevin officially signed the bill into law April 11, according to Kentucky officials, but held the ceremony this week to highlight the importance of the legislation.

“Whether someone is a believer or not, the Bible is an important part of our culture, and is key to understanding contemporary society,” the bill’s primary sponsor, state Rep. D.J. Johnson, said at the ceremony. “Thanks to this legislation, Kentucky’s students will now have the opportunity to learn about the Bible from a historical perspective, if they so choose.”

The new courses are likely to be available beginning in the fall. {eoa}