

This State's Legislature Considering Bill to Put the Bible Back in Classrooms

If approved, a bill currently working its way through the Kentucky Legislature could be the first step in reversing more than 50 years of educational policy in the U.S.

According to news reports last week out of the Bluegrass State, Senate Bill 278, which was approved unanimously by the Senate Education Committee, would allow "Bible literacy" courses to be taught in public schools. The elective course would be taught in the social studies domain.

The course would focus 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. It also would require that the course provide students with 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.

The bill also permits students to use various translations of the Bible for the course. It would not, however, "endorse, favor or promote, or disfavor or show hostility toward, any particular religion or nonreligious faith or religious perspective."

"Senate Bill 278 would not teach the Bible. It would teach about the Bible," State Sen. Gerald A. Neal (D-Louisville), chairman of the Minority Caucus, said to WKYT-TV. "The Bible isn't something we should run away from or run to."

The bill was sponsored by State Sen. Robin L. Webb (D-Grayson), who told WKYT she had "unanimous support" from her

colleagues. She introduced the bill March 3, and said the Bible is part of our historical context.

"I remember what it looked like when I had it as literature and it was just like the dissection and discussion of any other book," she said. "I'm optimistic, cautiously optimistic, like I am with any bill here."