

1 State of Arkansas  
2 89th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2013  
4

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1017

5 By: Representative D. Altes  
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## For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADOPT CURRICULUM  
9 STANDARDS AS DIRECTED BY THIS ACT FOR AN ACADEMIC  
10 STUDY OF THE BIBLE COURSE THAT MAY BE OFFERED AS AN  
11 ELECTIVE COURSE IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT; TO SET  
12 REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHING AN ACADEMIC STUDY OF THE  
13 BIBLE COURSE IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL AS DIRECTED BY THIS  
14 ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
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## Subtitle

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18 TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO ADOPT  
19 CURRICULUM STANDARDS FOR AN ACADEMIC  
20 STUDY OF THE BIBLE COURSE AS DIRECTED BY  
21 THIS ACT.  
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24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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26 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 16, Subchapter 1 is amended  
27 to add an additional section to read as follows:

28 6-16-141. Academic study of the Bible course.

29 (a)(1) The State Board of Education shall allow for an elective  
30 academic study of the Bible course or courses that consist of a nonsectarian,  
31 nonreligious academic study of the Bible and its influence on literature,  
32 art, music, culture, and politics to be offered to students in public school  
33 districts, if the academic study of the Bible course meets the standards  
34 listed in this section.

35 (2) The curriculum standards for an academic study of the Bible  
36 course shall meet the:



1                   (A) Academic rigor and standards of other elective courses  
 2 approved by the state board; and

3                   (B) Requirements of the Arkansas Constitution and the  
 4 United States Constitution.

5           (b)(1) A public school district that elects to offer an academic study  
 6 of the Bible course shall implement the course in accordance with the  
 7 Arkansas Constitution and the United States Constitution, including the  
 8 manner in which the course is taught in the classroom and the assignment of  
 9 school district personnel teaching the course.

10                   (2) Personnel assigned to teach the course shall be licensed to  
 11 teach in the State of Arkansas.

12                   (3) Personnel shall not be assigned to teach the course based on  
 13 any:

14                           (A) Religious test;

15                           (B) Profession of faith or lack of faith;

16                           (C) Prior or present religious affiliation or lack of  
 17 affiliation; or

18                           (D) Criteria involving particular beliefs or lack of  
 19 beliefs about the Bible.

20                   (c) An academic study of the Bible course offered by a public school  
 21 district shall:

22                           (1) Be taught in an objective and nondevotional manner with no  
 23 attempt made to indoctrinate students as to either the truth or falsity of  
 24 the biblical materials or texts from other religious or cultural traditions;

25                           (2) Not include teaching of religious doctrine or sectarian  
 26 interpretation of the Bible or of texts from other religious or cultural  
 27 traditions; and

28                           (3) Not disparage or encourage a commitment to a set of  
 29 religious beliefs.

30                   (d) A public school district that elects to offer an academic study of  
 31 the Bible course shall use only the standards in this section to:

32                           (1) Evaluate textbooks for an academic study of the Bible  
 33 course; and

34                           (2) Teach an academic study of the Bible course.

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