

By: Smith (35th)

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1149

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-13-163, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO ALLOW THE BIBLE TO BE USED AS A TEACHING AID IN ANY PUBLIC
3 SCHOOL; TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO INCLUDE AN ACADEMIC
4 BIBLE COURSE IN THEIR CURRICULUM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

6 SECTION 1. Section 37-13-163, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
7 amended as follows:

8 37-13-163. Any teacher, administrator, school council or
9 local school board in any public school district in this state
10 may: (a) post in a public school building, classroom or at any
11 school event or read from any historical document or writing
12 relating to the founding of the United States of America or this
13 state, or both, notwithstanding the fact that such materials may
14 include religious quotations, references or illustrations, or (b)
15 use the Bible as a teaching aid, provided that it is not used to
16 advocate the practice of religion or any particular religious
17 relief. There shall be no content-based censorship of American or
18 Mississippi History, heritage or culture based on any religious or
19 other references contained in such documents, writings or records.

20 SECTION 2. The school board of a local school district, in
21 its discretion, may authorize the schools in that district to
22 include in their curriculum a Bible class designed to teach
23 students about the Bible. The instruction in any Bible class
24 offered in the public schools may not advocate the practice of
25 religion or any particular religious belief. The participation of
26 students in any Bible class offered in the public schools must be
27 voluntary.

28 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from
29 and after July 1, 2000.