

By: Senator(s) Hill

To: Education

## SENATE BILL NO. 2076

1 AN ACT TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS TO  
2 OFFER STUDENTS ELECTIVE SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES RELATING TO, BUT  
3 NOT LIMITED TO, THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES, THE OLD TESTAMENT OF THE  
4 BIBLE, OR THE NEW TESTAMENT OF THE BIBLE; TO PROVIDE THAT THE  
5 PURPOSE OF ANY SUCH COURSE SHALL BE TO TEACH STUDENTS THE RELEVANT  
6 TEXT'S CONTENTS, HISTORY, LITERARY STYLE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON  
7 CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY AND CULTURE; TO PROVIDE THAT A STUDENT SHALL  
8 NOT BE REQUIRED TO USE A SPECIFIC TEXT TRANSLATION AS PART OF A  
9 COURSE; TO PROVIDE THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND PUBLIC CHARTER  
10 SCHOOLS THAT OFFER SUCH COURSES SHALL FOLLOW APPLICABLE LAWS  
11 RELATED TO RELIGION IN SCHOOLS AND SHALL MAINTAIN RELIGIOUS  
12 NEUTRALITY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

14 **SECTION 1.** (1) Any school district or public charter school  
15 may offer students elective social studies courses relating to,  
16 but not limited to, the following:

17 (a) The Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament of the  
18 Bible;

19 (b) The New Testament of the Bible; or

20 (c) The Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament of the  
21 Bible.

22 (2) The purposes of a course under subsection (1) of this  
23 section is to:



(a) Teach 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; and

(b) Familiarize students with, as applicable:

(i) The contents of the Hebrew Scriptures or the New Testament of the Bible;

(ii) The history of the Hebrew Scriptures or the New Testament of the Bible;

(iii) The literary style and structure of the Hebrew Scriptures or the New Testament of the Bible; and

(iv) The influence of the Hebrew Scriptures or the New Testament of the Bible on law, history, government, literature, art, music, customs, morals, values and culture.

(3) A student shall not be required to use a specific translation as the sole text of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament of the Bible and may use as the basic textbook a different translation of the Hebrew Scriptures or New Testament of the Bible from that chosen by the school district or public charter school.

(4) A course offered under this section shall follow applicable law and all federal and state guidelines in maintaining religious neutrality and accommodating the diverse religious views, traditions and perspectives of students in the school. A course offered under this section shall not endorse, favor, or



49 promote, or disfavor or show hostility toward, any particular  
50 religion or nonreligious faith or religious perspective.

51 (5) School districts and public charter schools, in  
52 complying with this section, shall not violate any provision of  
53 the Constitution of the United States or federal law, the  
54 Constitution of Mississippi or any state law, or any  
55 administrative regulations of the State Department of Education or  
56 the United States Department of Education.

57 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
58 and after July 1, 2024.

