

By: Senator(s) McMahan

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2337

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-12-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
 2 PROVIDE THAT A SCHOOL DISTRICT OR CHARTER SCHOOL MAY ACCEPT  
 3 CHAPLAINS, PASTORS, PRIESTS, RABBIS OR OTHER RELIGIOUS LEADERS AS  
 4 VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE SUPPORT, SERVICES AND PROGRAMS FOR  
 5 STUDENT-ORGANIZED PRAYER GROUPS, RELIGIOUS CLUBS OR OTHER  
 6 RELIGIOUS GATHERINGS; TO PROVIDE THAT A SCHOOL DISTRICT OR CHARTER  
 7 SCHOOL SHALL NOT ACCEPT AS A VOLUNTEER ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS BEEN  
 8 CONVICTED OF OR PLED GUILTY TO AN OFFENSE FOR WHICH A DEFENDANT IS  
 9 REQUIRED TO REGISTER AS A SEX OFFENDER UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS  
 10 STATE OR ANY OTHER STATE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

12 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-12-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
 13 amended as follows:

14 37-12-7. Students in public schools may pray or engage in  
 15 religious activities or religious expression before, during and  
 16 after the school day in the same manner and to the same extent  
 17 that students may engage in nonreligious activities or expression.  
 18 Students may organize prayer groups, religious clubs, "see you at  
 19 the pole" gatherings, or other religious gatherings before, during  
 20 and after school to the same extent that students are permitted to  
 21 organize other noncurricular student activities and groups.

22 Religious groups must be given the same access to school



23 facilities for assembling as is given to other noncurricular  
24 groups without discrimination based on the religious content of  
25 the students' expression. If student groups that meet for  
26 nonreligious activities are permitted to advertise or announce  
27 meetings of the groups, the school district may not discriminate  
28 against groups that meet for prayer or other religious speech. A  
29 school district may disclaim school sponsorship of noncurricular  
30 groups and events in a manner that neither favors nor disfavors  
31 groups that meet to engage in prayer or religious speech.

32 Students in public schools may wear clothing, accessories and  
33 jewelry that display religious messages or religious symbols in  
34 the same manner and to the same extent that other types of  
35 clothing, accessories and jewelry that display messages or symbols  
36 are permitted.

37 A school district or charter school may accept chaplains,  
38 pastors, priests, rabbis or other religious leaders as volunteers  
39 to provide support, services and programs for student-organized  
40 prayer groups, religious clubs, "see you at the pole" gatherings,  
41 or other religious gatherings. A school district or charter  
42 school shall not accept as a volunteer any individual who has been  
43 convicted of or pled guilty to an offense for which a defendant is  
44 required to register as a sex offender under the laws of this  
45 State or any other state.

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

