

HCS HB 179 -- TEACHING SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE REGARDING EVOLUTION

SPONSOR: Koenig

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 14 to 7.

This substitute requires the State Board of Education within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, public elementary and secondary school governing authorities, and school administrative entities to create a school environment that encourages students to explore scientific questions; learn about scientific evidence; develop critical thinking skills; respond appropriately and respectfully to differences of opinion about controversial issues, including biological and chemical evolution; and to assist teachers in finding effective ways to present controversial scientific material. These entities must not prohibit any teacher from helping students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and weaknesses of theories of biological or chemical evolution. The provisions of the substitute must not be construed as promoting any doctrine or discriminating for or against any belief. The department must notify all superintendents of the provisions of the substitute by the beginning of the 2014 - 2015 school year, and each superintendent must distribute a copy of these provisions to all of his or her school employees.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that teachers fear repercussions of teaching theories that conflict with theories that require a materialistic narrative.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Koenig; Joshua Youngkin, Discovery Institute; Concerned Women for America of Missouri; John H. Calvert; Missouri Family Network.

OPPONENTS: Testifying against the bill was the Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City (witness form submitted).