

Regular Session, 2008

SENATE BILL NO. 733 (Substitute of Senate Bill No. 561 by Senator Nevers)

BY SENATORS NEVERS, CROWE, RISER AND THOMPSON

CURRICULA. Provides for the La. Science Education Act (gov sig)

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AN ACT

To enact R.S. 17:285.1, relative to curriculum and instruction; to provide relative to the teaching of scientific subjects in public elementary and secondary schools; to promote students' critical thinking skills and open discussion of scientific theories; to provide relative to support and guidance for teachers; to provide relative to textbooks and instructional materials; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for effectiveness; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:285.1 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

§285.1. Science education; development of critical thinking skills

A. This Section shall be known and may be cited as the "Louisiana Science Education Act."

B.(1) The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, upon request of a city, parish, or other local public school board, shall allow and assist teachers, principals, and other school administrators to create and foster an environment within public elementary and secondary schools that promotes critical thinking skills, logical analysis, and open and objective discussion of

1 scientific theories being studied including, but not limited to, evolution, the
 2 origins of life, global warming, and human cloning.

3 (2) Such assistance shall include support and guidance for teachers
 4 regarding effective ways to help students understand, analyze, critique, and
 5 objectively review scientific theories being studied, including those enumerated
 6 in Paragraph (1) of this Subsection.

7 C. A teacher shall teach the material presented in the standard textbook
 8 supplied by the school system and thereafter may use supplemental textbooks
 9 and other instructional materials to help students understand, analyze, critique,
 10 and review scientific theories in an objective manner, as permitted by the city,
 11 parish, or other local public school board.

12 D. This Section shall not be construed to promote any religious doctrine,
 13 promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs, or
 14 promote discrimination for or against religion or nonreligion.

15 E. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and each
 16 city, parish, or other local public school board shall adopt and promulgate the
 17 rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this Section prior
 18 to the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year.

19 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
 20 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
 21 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
 22 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
 23 effective on the day following such approval.

The original instrument was prepared by Jeanne Johnston. The following
 digest, which does not constitute a part of the legislative instrument, was
 prepared by Linda Nugent.

DIGEST

Nevers (SB 733)

Provides that proposed law shall be known as the "Louisiana Science Education Act."

Proposed law requires BESE, upon request of a local school board, to allow and assist
 teachers, principals, and other school administrators to create and foster an environment

within public elementary and secondary schools that promotes critical thinking skills, logical analysis, and open and objective discussion of scientific theories being studied including evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning.

Provides that such assistance shall include support and guidance for teachers regarding effective ways to help students understand, analyze, critique, and objectively review such scientific theories being studied.

Provides that a teacher shall teach material presented in the standard textbook supplied by the school system and thereafter may use textbooks and other instructional materials to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review scientific theories in an objective manner, as permitted by the local school board.

Provides that proposed law shall not be construed to promote any religious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs, or promote discrimination for or against religion or nonreligion.

Requires BESE and local school boards to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement this Act prior to the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 17:285.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Senate Floor Amendments to engrossed bill.

1. Specifies the scientific theories being studied include evolution, the origins of life, global warming, and human cloning.
2. Requires a teacher to first teach material presented in the standard textbook supplied by the school system and then authorizes him to use supplemental textbooks and other instructional materials.