

Regular Session, 2008

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

BY SENATOR NEVERS

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.

2 (2) Such assistance shall include support and guidance for teachers
3 regarding effective ways to help students understand, analyze, critique, and
4 review scientific theories in an objective manner.

5 C. A teacher may use supplemental textbooks and other instructional
6 materials to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review scientific
7 theories in an objective manner, as permitted by the city, parish, or other local
8 public school board.

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

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

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

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jeanne C. Johnston.

DIGEST

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.

Provides that such assistance shall include support and guidance for teachers regarding effective ways to help students understand, analyze, critique, and review scientific theories in an objective manner.

Provides that a teacher 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)