



CHAIRMAN ROB EISSLER
HOUSE DISTRICT 15

To: Concerned Constituents

Date: May 8, 2007

**From: Chairman Rob Eissler
House Public Education Committee**

Re: Explanation of Committee Amendments for HB 1287

This bill was heard by the Public Education Committee not once, as is customary, but an unprecedented three times - three different days and times. The Committee heard from Biblical scholars, Constitutional scholars and representatives from the Jewish, Catholic, Muslim and Protestant faiths.

Once the committee heard the testimony, several amendments were added to ensure the proposed course Bible was academically sound. The Bible course would be an elective course - an enrichment course - that would need to meet the same criteria as all other courses offered in our public schools.

The amendments do the following:

- Require that the course be taught by qualified teachers
- Ensure that the textbooks used for the course will be academically sound
- Ensure that school districts will have curriculum standards to follow;
- Protect the religious freedom of all students
- Provide for training in the First Amendment and issues of religious freedom for all teachers of these courses
- Respect local control by giving school districts the right to decide whether and how often these courses will be taught

After amending the bill the committee unanimously voted to recommend this version to the Full House.

The House does not have to be divided over the Bible or over religion, but can feel secure that the proposed Bible course will be taught with the same respect and to standards given to other courses taught in our public schools.