

## **Please Vote NO on the Bible Course Curriculum Requirements**

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1. By refusing to write and adopt specific, clear, scholarly, and substantive standards, you are flouting the intent of the House Public Education Committee, which is bad public policy and a rebuke to the Representatives.
2. The Public Education Committee Representatives warned Chairman McLeroy to develop substantive standards. It would be foolish to not do so and create unnecessary ill will.
3. If you don't write standards, you will force every school district that wants to offer this course to write its own curriculum standards, which is a great deal of work to push onto hundreds of Texas school districts. These schools probably don't have the time and money to do this, so they will simply refuse to offer the course. Your actions will cause the course to be less successful, not more.
4. By refusing to write substantive standards, you are taking the liability for unconstitutional mistakes off the TEA and putting it onto the local school districts. They will be wary of writing their own standards for fear of not doing it properly to withstand Establishment Clause challenges and becoming litigation magnets. Schools want the protection of state-written standards that will be used throughout the state and offer more acceptance and stability.
5. Commissioner Robert Scott is responsible for training and certifying teachers who will teach the new course. By not writing standards, you are giving him no direction about what the training should cover. The TEA staff will have to make all the decisions themselves about what the Bible course should contain, which they will have to know ahead of time to be able to train teachers.
6. I testified that it is extremely difficult to teach a Bible course in a neutral, objective, scholarly, and secular manner, which is the legal requirement. Just stating that the course must be taught in this way doesn't guarantee that the course *will* be taught this way. Unless the Bible standards are properly and professionally constructed by Bible scholars who do not have a sectarian agenda, the standards will almost certainly be unconstitutional and eventually challenged in court when inevitable classroom abuses occur. This will cost school districts millions of dollars.
7. I testified that about 30 Texas high schools currently teach a Bible course using standards that are essentially similar to those being voted on. Almost all of these courses are presenting Biblical instruction in an illegal fashion that proselytizes in favor of Protestant Christianity, as research by the SMU religion professor showed. TFN presented specific examples of this illegal material. Substantive, scholarly standards must be created to prevent this unconstitutional abuse of the law.