



AN ACT REVISING EDUCATION LAWS RELATED TO RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND MATERIALS IN SCHOOLS; ALLOWING THE USE OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS DURING FREE READING AND FOR SELF-SELECTED READING REQUIREMENTS; EXPANDING AND CLARIFYING THE AUTHORIZATION OF PRAYER IN SCHOOLS; AMENDING SECTION 20-7-112, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 20-7-112, MCA, is amended to read:

"20-7-112. Sectarian publications prohibited and religious materials allowed -- prayer permitted. (1) (a) A publication of a sectarian or denominational character may not be distributed in any school. Instruction may not be given advocating sectarian or denominational doctrines. ~~However, any teacher, principal, or superintendent may open the school day with a prayer.~~

(b) This section-subsection (1) does not prohibit:

(i) a school library from including the Bible or other religious material having cultural, historical, or educational significance; or

(ii) a pupil from reading from the Bible or other religious material during free reading time.

(c) If a school, class, or course has requirements for self-selected reading, a pupil must be allowed to read from the Bible or other religious material to meet those requirements.

(2) Prayer is permitted in a school, on school grounds, and at school-sponsored events, but a person may not be compelled to pray. The school day may begin with a prayer."

Section 2. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2023.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HB 745, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2023.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2023.

HOUSE BILL NO. 745

INTRODUCED BY G. KMETZ

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