

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
House Bill No. 3071



Introduced by: Congressman **BIENVENIDO M. ABANTE, JR.**

AN ACT
TO INCLUDE THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE IN THE
CURRICULA OF ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, AND
UNIVERSITIES, AUTHORIZING THE PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION
THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV, Section 3 (3) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides: *"At the option expressed in writing by the parents or guardians, religion shall be allowed to be taught to their children or wards in public and elementary and high schools within the regular class hours by instructors designated or approved by the religious authorities of the religion to which the children or wards belong, without additional cost to the government."*

This constitutional provision is very clear. Religion may be taught in schools as long as the "consent in writing by the parents or guardians" and "no cost to the government" conditions, among others, are met.

The 1987 Constitution also declares as a State Policy that: "the State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, **moral, spiritual**, intellectual, and social well-being" (Sec. 13, Art. II); and "All educational institutions shall teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen **ethical and spiritual values**, develop **moral character and personal discipline** (Secs. 3(1) and (2), Art. XIV).

Teaching the Bible as literature in our schools is allowed under these Constitutional provisions. Although the Supreme Court ruled that students could not be forced to study the Bible for religious purposes, they are allowed to study the Bible as they would literature in order to understand its influence, language, and artistic legacy.

In the English language, more references are made to the Bible than to any other work of literature. Its number of references even beats out Greek and Roman mythology. Allusions to the Bible permeate our artwork, our music, our literature, our conversation, and even pop culture. In spite of the ever-present influence of the

Bible, many students lack a basic familiarity with the Bible, its stories, and its language.

A critical study of the Bible as literature can prepare students with the thinking skills needed in the 21st century. As an all-time bestseller, the Bible has had a profound impact on history, literature, and culture. It remains a vital part of the life of Filipinos.

Reading the Bible as literature in public schools does not violate the Constitution nor our hallowed notions of the separation of church and state. The Supreme Court has made that clear on multiple occasions. The Bible may constitutionally be used in an appropriate study of history, civilization, ethics, comparative religion, or the like.

It is in this light that this bill is introduced to implement these Constitutional provisions.



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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in session assembled:

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as **the “Bible Reading Act of 2025.”**

SEC. 2. *Statement of Policy.* While it is constitutional for schools to teach about religion, it is unconstitutional to use public funds to advance particular religious beliefs. Thus, the school's approach to religion should be academic, not devotional. This Act, therefore, sets out the following basic policies:

The schools may strive for student awareness of religions, but should not press for student acceptance of any religion.

The schools may teach the Bible NOT for religious purposes, but only as they would teach literature in order to understand its influence, language, and artistic legacy.

The schools may educate about all religions, but may not promote or denigrate any religion.

SEC. 3. *Integration into Curriculum.* The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall include in the prescribed curricula of all schools, colleges, and universities, public or private -- the reading and study of the Bible as literature.

SEC. 4. *Implementation and Regulatory Authority.* The DepEd and the CHED are hereby authorized and directed to adopt forthwith measures to implement and carry out the provisions of this Act, including the writing and printing of appropriate

primers, readers, and textbooks. The DepED and CHED shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate rules and regulations, including those of a disciplinary nature, to carry out and enforce the provisions of this Act. They shall promulgate rules and regulations providing for the exemption of students for reasons of religious belief stated in a sworn written statement, from the requirement of this Act. Said rules and regulations shall take effect thirty (30) days after their publication in the Official Gazette.

SEC. 5. *Availability of the Bible and Inclusion in Academic Resources.* All schools, colleges, and universities are encouraged to maintain an adequate number of Bible copies in their libraries as a standard literary and historical reference. The Bible shall also be included in the list of approved books for academic reading in both public and private educational institutions.

SEC. 6. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,