

1 ENGROSSED HOUSE
2 BILL NO. 1674

By: Blackwell, Kern and Hulbert
of the House

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4 Brecheen of the Senate
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8 An Act relating to schools; creating the Scientific
9 Education and Academic Freedom Act; providing short
10 title; stating legislative findings; directing State
11 Board of Education, district boards of education, and
12 certain administrators to create certain environment
13 within schools; permitting teachers to help students
14 understand certain information about scientific
15 theories; disallowing State Board of Education,
16 district boards of education, and certain
17 administrators from prohibiting teachers from helping
18 students understand certain information about
19 scientific theories; providing for evaluation of
20 students based on understanding of course materials;
21 prohibiting penalizing of students for holding
22 certain position on scientific theories; prohibiting
23 certain construction; stating intent; directing State
24 Department of Education to provide certain
notification; directing superintendents to
disseminate certain information; providing for
codification; providing an effective date; and
declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 11-121 of Title 70, unless there
is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

1 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Scientific
2 Education and Academic Freedom Act".

3 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified
4 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 11-122 of Title 70, unless there
5 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

6 A. The Oklahoma Legislature finds that an important purpose of
7 science education is to inform students about scientific evidence
8 and to help students develop critical thinking skills they need in
9 order to become intelligent, productive, and scientifically informed
10 citizens.

11 B. The State Board of Education, district boards of education,
12 district superintendents and administrators, and public school
13 principals and administrators shall endeavor to create an
14 environment within public elementary and secondary schools that
15 encourages students to explore scientific questions, learn about
16 scientific evidence, develop critical thinking skills, and respond
17 appropriately and respectfully to differences of opinion about
18 controversial issues. Educational authorities in this state shall
19 also endeavor to assist teachers to find more effective ways to
20 present the science curriculum where it addresses scientific
21 controversies. Toward this end, teachers shall be permitted to help
22 students understand, analyze, critique, and review in an objective
23 manner the scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses of
24 existing scientific theories pertinent to the course being taught.

1 C. The State Board of Education, a district board of education,
2 district superintendent or administrator, or public school principal
3 or administrator shall not prohibit any teacher in a school district
4 in this state from helping students understand, analyze, critique,
5 and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and
6 scientific weaknesses of existing scientific theories pertinent to
7 the course being taught.

8 D. Students may be evaluated based upon their understanding of
9 course materials, but no student in any public school or institution
10 shall be penalized in any way because the student may subscribe to a
11 particular position on scientific theories. Nothing in this
12 subsection shall be construed to exempt students from learning,
13 understanding, and being tested on curriculum as prescribed by state
14 and local education standards.

15 E. The provisions of the Scientific Education and Academic
16 Freedom Act shall only protect the teaching of scientific
17 information, and shall not be construed to promote any religious or
18 nonreligious doctrine, promote discrimination for or against a
19 particular set of religious beliefs or nonbeliefs, or promote
20 discrimination for or against religion or nonreligion. The intent
21 of the provisions of this act is to create an environment in which
22 both the teacher and students can openly and objectively discuss the
23 facts and observations of science, and the assumptions that underlie
24 their interpretation.

1 F. By no later than the start of the 2014-2015 school year, the
2 State Department of Education shall notify all district
3 superintendents of the provisions of the Scientific Education and
4 Academic Freedom Act. Each superintendent shall then disseminate to
5 all employees within the district a copy of the provisions of this
6 act.

7 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2014.

8 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
9 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby
10 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
11 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

12 Passed the House of Representatives the 3rd day of March, 2014.

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Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives

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Passed the Senate the ____ day of _____, 2014.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate

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