

Bill Summary
1st Session of the 58th Legislature

Bill No.:	SB 613
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Author:	Sen. Bullard
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Bill Analysis

SB 613 creates the Academic Freedom Act. The measure directs the State Board of Education, school district boards of education and school superintendents and principals to endeavor to create an environment that encourages students to explore scientific questions and assists teachers to find effective ways to present science curriculum as it addresses scientific controversies. The measure states that neither the State Board of Education, nor any school district board of education or school superintendent or principal shall prohibit a public school teacher from helping students understand, analyze, critique and review in an objective manner the scientific strengths and weaknesses of existing scientific theories using evidence-based, peer-reviewed material. It clarifies that the measure shall not be construed as promoting any religious or non-religious doctrine, discrimination for or against a particular set of religious beliefs or non-beliefs or discrimination for or against religion or nonreligion. The bill requires the State Department of Education to notify boards of education and superintendents of the Academic Freedom Act by the start of the 2021-22 school year. It also provides immunity from civil liability and termination of employment to teachers who comply with the Academic Freedom Act.

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