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### VOTE “NO” ON SB 1342a

**The ACLU of Idaho urges you to vote “NO” on SB 1342a because it will unconstitutionally inject religion into our public schools and because it emphasizes one religious text over all others.**

- Although amended to remove explicit reference to science classes, SB 1342a still authorizes the use of the Bible in science classes if a teacher believes it “may be useful or relevant.” Yet teaching creationism or “intelligent design” has been held unconstitutional in case after case.
- This law is intended to promote and encourage the teaching of the *Bible* in our classrooms. Although SB 1342a was amended to include other “*religious texts*” it still highlights the superiority of one text over any other religious text. This law would promote certain religions over all others. That is contrary to our principles and rich traditions of pluralism and religious diversity and the First Amendment’s prohibition against favoring some faiths over others in our public schools.
- In addition, the Idaho Attorney General provided an official opinion on SB 1342a stating that “it may raise a religious preference issue under art. I, sec. 4, but, in any event, is specifically prohibited by art. IX, sec. 6 of the Idaho Constitution,” which prohibits the use of “books, papers, tracts or documents of a political, sectarian or denominational character” in Idaho’s public schools.
- SB 1342a promotes and encourages the use of the Bible in any and all classes as long as the teacher personally believes it is “useful or relevant,” regardless of state educational standards or approved curricula. That’s not the legal standard under the Establishment Clause, and it puts teachers and school districts at real risk of costly litigation.
- Finally, SB 1342a is unnecessary. Properly trained teachers can already use religious texts for classes where its use serves appropriate pedagogical purposes such as in comparative religion and comparative literature classes. We don’t need to pass a new law to allow the proper and legal use of religious texts in our public schools.
- Parents, not the government, have the right to provide their children’s religious education. SB 1342a would usurp that right by encouraging public school teachers to inject religious beliefs into class—with no training and without appropriate teaching materials—whenever they feel it would be “useful or relevant.”