

Senate Resolution 1256

By: Senators Cagle of the 49th, Shafer of the 48th, Pearson of the 51st, Schaefer of the 50th and Heath of the 31st

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Study Committee on Bible Literacy Courses in Public Schools; and for
2 other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, there is an interest in offering and taking classes relating to the Bible as
4 literature and history; and

5 WHEREAS, there is a delicate balance between offering a religiously related course in a
6 public school and maintaining the constitutional rights of all citizens; and

7 WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court has provided that courses of this sort may be
8 offered if conducted in the following manner:

9 (1) Be taught in an objective and nondevotional manner with no attempt made to
10 indoctrinate students as to either the truth or falsity of the biblical materials or texts
11 from other religious or cultural traditions;

12 (2) Not include teaching of religious doctrine or sectarian interpretation of the Bible
13 or of texts from other religious or cultural traditions; and

14 (3) Not disparage or encourage a commitment to a set of religious beliefs; and

15 WHEREAS, even though this guidance has been provided by the Supreme Court, questions
16 still remain unaddressed as to other aspects of offering such courses; and

17 WHEREAS, it would be in the best interests of the state to study the issue with care and
18 caution so that any such course can be implemented in accordance with all constitutional
19 requirements.

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that there is created the Senate
21 Study Committee on Bible Literacy Courses in Public Schools to be composed of five
22 members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Assignments. The

1 Senate Committee on Assignments shall designate a member of the committee to serve as
2 chairperson of the committee. The committee shall meet at the call of the chairperson.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall undertake a study of the issues
4 discussed above and other related matters and recommend any action or legislation which
5 the committee deems necessary or appropriate. The committee may conduct such meetings
6 at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to
7 exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives
8 and purposes of this resolution. The members of the committee shall receive the allowances
9 provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. The
10 allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any member of the
11 committee for more than three days unless additional days are authorized. The funds
12 necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds
13 appropriated to the Senate. In the event the committee makes a report of its findings and
14 recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be
15 made on or before December 31, 2006. The committee shall stand abolished on December
16 31, 2006.