

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 745
2 INTRODUCED BY G. KMETZ

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4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING EDUCATION LAWS RELATED TO RELIGIOUS
5 PRACTICES AND MATERIALS IN SCHOOLS; ALLOWING THE USE OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS DURING FREE
6 READING AND FOR SELF-SELECTED READING REQUIREMENTS; EXPANDING AND CLARIFYING THE
7 AUTHORIZATION OF PRAYER IN SCHOOLS; AMENDING SECTION 20-7-112, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN
8 EFFECTIVE DATE."

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10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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12 **Section 1.** Section 20-7-112, MCA, is amended to read:

13 **"20-7-112. Sectarian publications prohibited and religious materials allowed -- prayer**
14 **permitted.** (1) (a) A publication of a sectarian or denominational character may not be distributed in any school.
15 Instruction may not be given advocating sectarian or denominational doctrines. ~~However, any teacher, principal,~~
16 ~~or superintendent may open the school day with a prayer.~~

17 (b) This section-subsection (1) does not prohibit:

18 (i) a school library from including the Bible or other religious material having cultural, historical, or
19 educational significance; or

20 (ii) a pupil from reading from the Bible or other religious material during free reading time.

21 (c) If a school, class, or course has requirements for self-selected reading, a pupil must be allowed
22 to read from the Bible or other religious material to meet those requirements.

23 (2) Prayer is permitted in a school, on school grounds, and at school-sponsored events, but a
24 person may not be compelled to pray. The school day may begin with a prayer."

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26 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2023.

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