**South Carolina General Assembly**

118th Session, 2009-2010

**A180, R219, S134**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Senators Sheheen, Verdin, Fair, Campsen and S. Martin

Document Path: l:\council\bills\ms\7040bb09.docx

Companion/Similar bill(s): 3858

Introduced in the Senate on January 13, 2009

Introduced in the House on April 13, 2010

Passed by the General Assembly on May 20, 2010

Governor's Action: May 28, 2010, Signed

Summary: Religion

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

Date Body Action Description with journal page number

12/10/2008 Senate Prefiled

12/10/2008 Senate Referred to Committee on **Education**

1/13/2009 Senate Introduced and read first time [SJ](file:///h:\SJ%20Archive\2009\01-13-09.docx)‑133

1/13/2009 Senate Referred to Committee on **Education** [SJ](file:///h:\SJ%20Archive\2009\01-13-09.docx)‑133

3/25/2010 Senate Committee report: Favorable **Education** [SJ](file:///h:\SJ%20Archive\2010\03-25-10.docx)‑12

3/26/2010 Scrivener's error corrected

3/30/2010 Senate Read second time [SJ](file:///h:\SJ%20Archive\2010\03-30-10.docx)‑12

3/31/2010 Senate Read third time and sent to House [SJ](file:///h:\SJ%20Archive\2010\03-31-10.docx)‑15

4/13/2010 House Introduced and read first time [HJ](file:///h:\HJ%20Archive\2010\04-13-10.docx)‑23

4/13/2010 House Referred to Committee on **Judiciary** [HJ](file:///h:\HJ%20Archive\2010\04-13-10.docx)‑23

5/12/2010 House Committee report: Favorable **Judiciary** [HJ](file:///h:\HJ%20Archive\2010\05-12-10.docx)‑7

5/19/2010 House Read second time [HJ](file:///h:\HJ%20Archive\2010\05-19-10.docx)‑25

5/19/2010 House Roll call Yeas‑107 Nays‑0 [HJ](file:///h:\HJ%20Archive\2010\05-19-10.docx)‑25

5/20/2010 House Read third time and enrolled [HJ](file:///h:\HJ%20Archive\2010\05-20-10.docx)‑13

5/25/2010 Ratified R 219

5/28/2010 Signed By Governor

6/3/2010 Effective date 05/28/10

6/9/2010 Act No. 180

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[12/10/2008](file:///p:\pprever\2009-10\134_20081210.docx)

[3/25/2010](file:///p:\pprever\2009-10\134_20100325.docx)

[3/26/2010](file:///p:\pprever\2009-10\134_20100326.docx)

[5/12/2010](file:///p:\pprever\2009-10\134_20100512.docx)

(A180, R219, S134)

**AN ACT** **TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 59‑1‑435 SO AS TO ENACT THE “RELIGIOUS VIEWPOINTS ANTIDISCRIMINATION ACT”, WHICH PROHIBITS A SCHOOL DISTRICT FROM DISCRIMINATING AGAINST A STUDENT BASED ON RELIGIOUS VIEWPOINT, ALLOWS A STUDENT TO EXPRESS HIS RELIGIOUS VIEWPOINT, ALLOWS A STUDENT TO EXPRESS HIS RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN HOMEWORK AND CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS WITHOUT PENALTY OR REWARD, AND ALLOWS STUDENTS TO ORGANIZE AND PARTICIPATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDENT GATHERINGS TO THE SAME EXTENT AS SECULAR NONCURRICULAR GROUPS.**

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

**Religious Viewpoints Antidiscrimination Act; school districts may not discriminate against student for expression of religious views; student religious expression permitted; student organization of religious groups permitted**

SECTION 1. Article 5, Chapter 1, Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 59‑1‑435. (A) This section may be cited as the ‘Religious Viewpoints Antidiscrimination Act’.

(B) As used in this section, ‘discriminate’ means to make a distinction in favor of or against a person on the basis of the group, class, or category to which the person belongs, rather than according to actual merit.

(C) A school district shall treat a student’s voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint, if any, on an otherwise permissible subject in the same manner the district treats a student’s voluntary expression of a secular or other viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject and must not discriminate against the student based on a religious viewpoint expressed by the student on an otherwise permissible subject.

(D) A student may express his beliefs about religion in homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free from discrimination based on the religious content of his submission. Homework and classroom assignments must be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance and against other legitimate pedagogical concerns identified by the school district. A student may not be penalized or rewarded based on the religious content of his work.

(E) Students may organize prayer groups, religious clubs, ‘see you at the pole’ gatherings, or other religious gatherings before, during, and after school to the same extent that students are permitted to organize other noncurricular student activities and groups. Religious groups must be given the same access to school facilities for assembling as is given to other noncurricular groups without discrimination based on the religious content of the students’ expression. If student groups that meet for nonreligious activities are permitted to advertise or announce meetings of the groups, the school district must not discriminate against groups that meet for prayer or other religious speech. A school district may disclaim school sponsorship of noncurricular groups and events in a manner that neither favors nor disfavors groups that meet to engage in prayer or religious speech.”

**Time effective**

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

Ratified the 25th day of May, 2010.

Approved the 28th day of May, 2010.

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