

2002 SESSION

INTRODUCED

020211636

HOUSE BILL NO. 135

Offered January 9, 2002

Prefiled December 21, 2001

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-203 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the observance of a minute of silence in public schools.

Patrons—Black, Abbitt, Athey, Carrico, Cole, Cosgrove, Gear, Hargrove, Janis, Johnson, Jones, S.C., Kilgore, Landes, Lingamfelter, Marshall, D.W., Marshall, R.G., McDonnell, Nixon, Oder, Stump, Ware and Wright; Senators: Colgan, Martin and Norment

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 22.1-203 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 22.1-203. Daily observance of one minute of silence.

In order that the right of every pupil to the free exercise of religion be guaranteed within the schools and that the freedom of each individual pupil be subject to the least possible pressure from the Commonwealth either to engage in, or to refrain from, religious observation on school grounds, the school board of each school division shall establish the daily observance of one minute of silence in each classroom of the division.

During such one-minute period of silence, the teacher responsible for each classroom shall take care that all pupils remain seated and silent and make no distracting display to the end that each pupil may, in the exercise of his or her individual choice, meditate, pray, or engage in any other silent activity which does not interfere with, distract, or impede other pupils in the like exercise of individual choice.

School boards shall develop policies to ensure that students are informed at least three times a year of the purpose of the observance of the minute of silence. Such policies shall include, among other things, guidance for school personnel in the development of any informational materials and appropriate methods of presenting such information.

The Office of the Attorney General shall intervene and shall provide legal defense of this law.

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