S SENATE BILL 370

Short Title:	Respect for Student Prayer. (Public)
Sponsors:	Senators Bingham, Daniel, Hise (Primary Sponsors); Allran, Barefoot, Brock, Cook, Curtis, D. Davis, J. Davis, Goolsby, Jackson, Newton, Rabin, Randleman, Sanderson, and Soucek.
Referred to:	Education/Higher Education.

March 20, 2013

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO CLARIFY STUDENT RIGHTS TO PRAY IN SCHOOL, TO PROHIBIT PRAYER OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED BY SCHOOLS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION, AND TO REQUIRE SCHOOL EMPLOYEES TO DEMONSTRATE APPROPRIATE RESPECT FOR STUDENT-INITIATED AND STUDENT-LED PRAYERS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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SECTION 1. G.S. 115C-47(29b) reads as rewritten:

- "(29b) To Ensure Freedom of Religion. No local board of education shall have a policy of denying, or that effectively prevents participation in, prayer in public schools by individuals on a voluntary basis, except when necessary to maintain order and discipline. No local board of education shall encourage or require any person to participate in prayer or influence the form or content of any prayer in public schools. <u>Policies of local boards regarding free</u> expression of religion shall reflect the following:
 - a. A student may pray silently at any time or audibly during noninstructional time when the student is free to pursue other activities if the prayer is voluntary and unofficial and does not interfere with teachers, school activities, or other students.
 - b. Prayer officially sanctioned by the school or school officials is not permitted during the school day and prior to, during, or after extracurricular school events, including athletic events, regardless of whether (i) the prayer is led or offered by a school employee, clergy, parent, or student; (ii) the prayer is nondenominational; or (iii) participation in the prayer is voluntary and optional.
 - c. Students may gather for prayers before, during, or after an extracurricular activity, including interscholastic athletics, if the prayers are student-initiated and student-led and those students voluntarily participating in the prayer do not pressure other students to participate. School employees supervising extracurricular activities, including coaches, may be present during the student-initiated and student-led prayer and, if present, shall demonstrate appropriate respect and may adopt a respectful posture.



	General Assembly of North Carolina	Session 2013
1	This subdivision shall not be construed to direct any loca	l board of education
2	to take any action in violation of the Constitutions of N	orth Carolina or the
3	United States. States, including prevention of or denia	l of participation in
4	constitutionally protected prayer in public schools."	
5	SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.	

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