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On Giving Credit for Bible Courses in Public Schools.

Strom Thurmond

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STATEMENT OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA, ON GIVING CREDIT FOR BIBLE COURSES IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, APRIL 15, 1946.

I regret that duties in connection with the General Assembly prevented me from attending the last meeting of the State Board of Education. At that meeting, the Board decided that no credits should be given to students electing to take courses in the Bible in our public schools.

Had I been present, I should have opposed this action, because I believe it contrary to the best interests of our children, our schools, and our State.

Nothing is more important than the building of Christian character in our youth. The Bible instills character and is the basis of our civilization.

It is essential that our citizens of tomorrow shall be grounded in the ethical teachings of the Bible if our State and Nation are to continue to progress.

Any action which fails to create an incentive to our youth to study the Bible does an injustice not only to this generation but to generations yet unborn.

When children are given credits in our public schools for studying dead languages, ancient history, and the like, and denied credits for courses on the teachings of the Master, then I feel that we have reached a time when a general spiritual awakening is badly needed. It seems to me that those who do elect to study the Bible, should receive credit on the same basis as they would for other subjects.

The issue involved is not one of requiring students to take courses in the Bible. The issue is simply whether or not the State shall give credits for such courses when a local Board of Trustees desires to make them available to its students.

Every child should be encouraged to read the Bible. It creates a deeper appreciation of Christian civilization, and gives knowledge and understanding of the most beautiful language ever written.

Every well-educated person should know the Bible. Universal knowledge of the Bible and its vast store of wisdom, history, literature, and moral
principles will be a wholesome influence in this era in which our world is swept by a wave of atheism, doubt, and discouragement.

At the meeting of the State Board of Education on Friday, I shall move that it reconsider its previous action to the end that credits for Bible study in our schools shall continue to be given.