

December 9, 2003

Hon. Bill Lockyer  
Attorney General  
1300 I Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, California 95814

Attention: Ms. Tricia Knight  
Initiative Coordinator

Dear Attorney General Lockyer:

As required by Elections Code Section 9005, this letter contains our review of the fiscal effect of the proposed initiative "Authorized or King James Textbook" (File Number SA2003RF0054).

### **Background**

Current law requires the state to provide each pupil in grades K-12 all instructional materials necessary for use in school without cost to the pupil. Under existing law, the State Board of Education is responsible for adopting textbooks for use in grades 1 through 8. The governing board of a high school district is responsible for adopting textbooks for use in grades 9 through 12. All instructional materials must be reviewed for social content, reflect a multicultural society, and avoid stereotyping.

### **Proposal**

This measure amends the State Constitution by requiring school districts to provide pupils with an additional textbook. Specifically, the measure:

- ***Requires the Provision of a King James Bible.*** Current law does not require school districts to provide pupils with a copy of the King James Bible or any other version of the Bible. This measure requires the state to provide each pupil in grades one through 12, unless a parent opts out by specific objection, with a free copy of the King James Bible.
- ***Specifies Educational Use of Bible.*** Current law requires that any discussion in public school related to religion or use of religious materials is to be conducted in a manner that accurately depicts the diversity of religious beliefs and avoids indoctrination. This measure recommends the use of the Bible in studying various secular subjects and specifically states that its use will be for educational

purposes only—not for the establishment of any sectarian religion nor doctrinal instruction.

- *Specifies Level of Use of Bible.* This measure states that reading and studying of the Bible in school is voluntary.

### **Fiscal Impact**

The fiscal implications of this measure would depend in large part on how parents respond to the measure's provisions. Specifically, it is unknown how many parents would object to their child receiving a Bible and elect to opt out.

*Cost of Providing a King James Bible.* To estimate the cost of providing a Bible to every pupil in grades 1 through 12, we took into account the following factors: (1) the first-year cost of providing a Bible to all pupils in the specified grade range, (2) annual costs for book replacement and any growth in the number of students, and (3) a range of Bible prices to reflect local district choice in purchasing either soft cover or hardcover versions of the Bible.

*Cost of Parent Notification.* While the initiative does not specifically require parental notification, it does state that parents may opt out of having their child receive a Bible. In order for a parent to exercise this right, however, the local school district would have to notify the parent of their right to opt out and would thus incur notification costs.

We estimate that first-year costs statewide to the state and/or school districts could range from tens of millions of dollars up to \$200 million, and annual costs thereafter could be in the low millions to tens of millions of dollars.

### **Summary of Fiscal Effects**

This measure would have the following major fiscal impact:

- Additional costs to the state and/or school districts from providing copies of the Bible to students: (1) one-time costs in the tens of millions of dollars up to \$200 million and (2) annual costs in the low millions to tens of millions of dollars.

Sincerely,

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Elizabeth G. Hill  
Legislative Analyst

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Donna Arduin  
Director of Finance