

SENATE BILL 3597

By Beavers

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to higher education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new, appropriately designated section:

49-7-150.

(a) No state higher education institution that grants recognition to any student organization or group shall discriminate against or deny recognition, equal access or a fair opportunity to any student organization or group on the basis of the religious content of the organization's or group's speech, including but not limited to, worship.

(b) A religious student organization may determine that ordering the organization's internal affairs, selecting the organization's leaders and members, defining the organization's doctrines and resolving the organization's disputes are in furtherance of the organization's religious mission and that only persons committed to that mission should conduct such activities.

(c) No state higher education institution shall deny recognition or any privilege or benefit to a student organization or group that exercises its rights pursuant to subsection (b).

(d) As used in this section, "state higher education institution" means any higher education institution governed by chapter 8 or 9 of this title.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2012, the public welfare requiring it.