

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

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SENATE BILL 442  
Corrected Copy 3/21/97  
Education/Higher Education Committee Substitute Adopted 4/28/97  
House Committee Substitute Favorable 6/11/97  
Fifth Edition Engrossed 6/26/97

Short Title: American History Act.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 20, 1997

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS RECEIVE  
ACCURATE INSTRUCTION ON OUR AMERICAN HISTORY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 115C-81(g) reads as rewritten:

"(g) Civic Literacy. –

- (1) Local boards of education shall require during the high school years the teaching of the nation's founding and related documents, which shall include at least the major principles in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and its amendments, and the most important of the Federalist Papers.
- (2) Local boards of education shall require that high school students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the nation's founding and related documents in order to receive a certificate or diploma of graduation from high school.
- (3) Local boards of education shall include among the requirements for graduation from high school a passing grade in all courses that include primary instruction in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and its amendments, and the most important of the Federalist Papers.

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1           (3a) Local boards of education shall allow and may encourage any public  
2 school teacher or administrator to read or post in a public school  
3 building, classroom, or event, excerpts or portions of writings,  
4 documents, and records that reflect the history of the United States,  
5 including, but not limited to, (i) the preamble to the North Carolina  
6 Constitution, (ii) the Declaration of Independence, (iii) the United  
7 States Constitution, (iv) the Mayflower Compact, (v) the national  
8 motto, (vi) the National Anthem, (vii) the Pledge of Allegiance, (viii)  
9 the writings, speeches, documents, and proclamations of the founding  
10 fathers and Presidents of the United States, (ix) decisions of the  
11 Supreme Court of the United States, and (x) acts of the Congress of the  
12 United States, including the published text of the Congressional  
13 Record. Local boards, superintendents, principals, and supervisors  
14 shall not allow content-based censorship of American history in the  
15 public schools of this State, including religious references in these  
16 writings, documents, and records.

17           (4) The State Board of Education shall require that any high school level  
18 curriculum-based tests developed and administered statewide  
19 beginning with academic year 1990-91 include questions related to the  
20 Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and its  
21 amendments, and the most important of the Federalist Papers.

22           (5) The State Department of Public Instruction and the local boards of  
23 education, as appropriate, shall establish curriculum content and  
24 provide for teacher training to ensure that the intent and provisions of  
25 this subsection are carried out. The curriculum content established  
26 shall include a review of the contributions made by Americans of all  
27 ~~rac~~es during the period in which our nation was founded. ~~rac~~es."

28           Section 2. The State Board of Education shall adopt a policy by September  
29 30, 1997, to ensure that the textbooks it adopts have no content-based censorship of  
30 American history, including religious references.

31           Section 3. The State Board of Education shall provide a copy of this act to  
32 each local school superintendent in the State, and each local school superintendent shall  
33 ensure that school personnel within the unit are informed about the act.

34           Section 4. The State Board of Education shall study the feasibility of  
35 requiring two high school courses in United States history and two high school courses  
36 in Economic, Legal, and Political Systems in Action as a condition of graduation. The  
37 State Board shall report the results of this study to the Joint Legislative Education  
38 Oversight Committee prior to September 15, 1998.

39           Section 5. This act is effective when it becomes law.