

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2015

FILED SENATE  
Mar 26, 2015  
S.B. 524  
PRINCIPAL CLERK

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SENATE DRS25137-TB-1 (03/04)

Short Title: Founding Principles/Graduation Requirement. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Curtis, Soucek, and Tillman (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ENHANCE THE RIGOR OF INSTRUCTION OF THE FOUNDING  
3 PRINCIPLES.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

6 "(g) Civic Literacy. –

7 (1) ~~Local boards of education~~ The State Board of Education shall require during  
8 the high school years the teaching of a semester course "~~American History I~~  
9 ~~The Founding Principles,~~" to include that includes instruction in at least the  
10 following: following Founding Principles of the United States of America:

- 11 a. The Creator-endowed inalienable rights of the people.  
12 b. Structure of government, separation of powers with checks and  
13 balances.  
14 c. Frequent and free elections in a representative government.  
15 d. Rule of law.  
16 e. Equal justice under the law.  
17 f. Private property rights.  
18 g. Federalism.  
19 h. Due process.  
20 i. Individual rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights.  
21 j. Individual responsibility.  
22 k. Constitutional limitations on government power to tax and spend and  
23 prompt payment of public debt.  
24 l. Money with intrinsic value.  
25 m. Strong defense and supremacy of civil authority over military.  
26 n. Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling  
27 alliances with none.  
28 o. Eternal vigilance by "We the People."

29 A passing grade in the course shall be required for graduation from high  
30 school.

31 (2), (3) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-273, s. 2, effective June 23, 2011, and  
32 applicable beginning with the 2014-2015 school year.

33 (3a) Local boards of education shall allow and may encourage any public school  
34 teacher or administrator to read or post in a public school building,  
35 classroom, or event, excerpts or portions of writings, documents, and records  
36 that reflect the history of the United States, including, but not limited to, (i)



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1 the preamble to the North Carolina Constitution, (ii) the Declaration of  
2 Independence, (iii) the United States Constitution, (iv) the Mayflower  
3 Compact, (v) the national motto, (vi) the National Anthem, (vii) the Pledge  
4 of Allegiance, (viii) the writings, speeches, documents, and proclamations of  
5 the founding fathers and Presidents of the United States, (ix) decisions of the  
6 Supreme Court of the United States, and (x) acts of the Congress of the  
7 United States, including the published text of the Congressional Record.  
8 Local boards, superintendents, principals, and supervisors shall not allow  
9 content-based censorship of American history in the public schools of this  
10 State, including religious references in these writings, documents, and  
11 records. Local boards and professional school personnel may develop  
12 curricula and use materials that are limited to specified topics provided the  
13 curricula and materials are aligned with the standard course of study or are  
14 grade level appropriate.

15 (3b) A local school administrative unit may display on real property controlled by  
16 that local school administrative unit documents and objects of historical  
17 significance that have formed and influenced the United States legal or  
18 governmental system and that exemplify the development of the rule of law,  
19 such as the Magna Carta, the Mecklenburg Declaration, the Ten  
20 Commandments, the Justinian Code, and documents set out in subdivision  
21 (3a) of this subsection. This display may include, but shall not be limited to,  
22 documents that contain words associated with a religion; provided however,  
23 no display shall seek to establish or promote religion or to persuade any  
24 person to embrace a particular religion, denomination of a religion, or other  
25 philosophy. The display of a document containing words associated with a  
26 religion shall be in the same manner and appearance generally as other  
27 documents and objects displayed and shall not be presented or displayed in  
28 any fashion that results in calling attention to it apart from the other  
29 displayed documents and objects. The display also shall be accompanied by  
30 a prominent sign quoting the First Amendment of the United States  
31 Constitution as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an  
32 establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or  
33 abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people  
34 peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of  
35 grievances."

36 (4) The State Board of Education shall require that any high school level  
37 curriculum-based tests for the course required in subdivision (1) of this  
38 subsection developed and administered statewide beginning with the  
39 2014-2015/2015-2016 academic year include questions related to the  
40 philosophical foundations of our form of government and the principles  
41 underlying the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution  
42 and its amendments, and the most important of the Federalist Papers.

43 (5) The Department of Public Instruction and the local boards of education, as  
44 appropriate, shall provide or cause to be provided curriculum content for the  
45 semester course required in subdivision (1) of this subsection and teacher  
46 training to ensure that the intent and provisions of this subsection are carried  
47 out. The curriculum content established shall include a review of the  
48 contributions made by Americans of all races.

49 (6) The Department of Public Instruction shall submit a biennial report by  
50 October 15 of each odd-numbered year to the Joint Legislative Education  
51 Oversight Committee covering the implementation of this subsection."

1                   **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with  
2 students entering the ninth grade in the 2015-2016 school year.