

By Representative Fischer

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to community service education;  
3           creating s. 233.615, F.S.; providing  
4           legislative findings; authorizing school  
5           districts to require 100 hours of community  
6           service education as a condition for high  
7           school graduation; providing exceptions;  
8           providing components for high school community  
9           service education programs; providing an  
10          effective date.

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12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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14           Section 1. Section 233.615, Florida Statutes, is  
15 created to read:

16           233.615 Mandatory high school community service  
17 education.--

18           (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.--The Legislature finds that:

19           (a) The public schools have a historic tradition of  
20 teaching values to their students, including values associated  
21 with community responsibility, and play a crucial role in the  
22 preparation of individuals for participation as citizens.

23           (b) Mandatory community service education programs  
24 further the state's legitimate function of educating its  
25 students by exposing students to the needs of their  
26 communities, helping them to recognize their place and value  
27 within their communities, and providing them opportunity to  
28 evaluate potential careers.

29           (c) In educating its students, the state has an  
30 interest in preparing them to participate effectively and  
31 intelligently in society, and this extends to teaching them

1 good citizenship and introducing them to their social  
2 responsibilities as citizens.

3 (d) Mandatory community service education programs do  
4 the following: expose students to the needs of their  
5 communities and the various ways in which a system of  
6 volunteerism can respond to those needs; help students develop  
7 a connection between school and work; and focus on  
8 learning-by-doing.

9 (2) MANDATORY COMMUNITY SERVICE EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
10 AUTHORIZED; PROGRAM COMPONENTS.--Each school district, by  
11 majority vote of its school board members, may adopt a  
12 mandatory community service education program that  
13 establishes, as a condition for high school graduation, a  
14 requirement that every public high school student entering the  
15 ninth grade in the 1997-1998 school year and thereafter,  
16 except for exceptional students as described in s. 232.247,  
17 must complete a total of 100 hours of community service  
18 education during the student's 4 years of high school. Each  
19 mandatory community service education program must have the  
20 following components:

21 (a) The mandatory community service education hours  
22 may be performed after school, on weekends, or during the  
23 summer. The school district shall let the student select the  
24 required community service from among the following:

25 1. Community service to any nonprofit organization  
26 provided through an agency approved by the school district.

27 2. Community service to any nonprofit organization  
28 provided through an independent program selected by the school  
29 district.

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1           3. Community service to any nonprofit organization  
2 provided through an independent program selected by the  
3 student and approved by the school.

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5 Required community service education hours may not include  
6 community service to any nonprofit organization that is a  
7 political or religious organization.

8           (b) Students may not receive pay for required  
9 community service, nor may their services displace any  
10 activities performed by paid employees of the nonprofit  
11 organization. The nonprofit organization for which the  
12 student works is responsible for on-the-job training and  
13 supervision and must document the hours worked by the student  
14 by a verified time sheet submitted to the school. Students  
15 shall set their own work schedules, in consultation with the  
16 nonprofit organization, and shall arrange for their own  
17 transportation.

18           (c) The school shall monitor each student's mandatory  
19 community service education progress and require benchmarks to  
20 be met annually as a condition for promotion. The school  
21 shall require all high school seniors to submit a paper  
22 documenting and summarizing their community service education  
23 hours and experiences. The school shall not permit a student  
24 to receive a high school diploma if the student has failed to  
25 comply with the school's mandatory community service education  
26 program. Transfer students must be required to complete  
27 prorated community service education hours or provide  
28 verification of community service education hours from  
29 comparable programs in their former schools.

30           Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 1997.

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HOUSE SUMMARY

Authorizes each school district to adopt a mandatory  
community service education program which requires 100  
hours of community service education for high school  
graduation. Provides community service requirements.