

By Representatives Melvin, Kilmer, Holloway, Needelman, Byrd, Goodlette, Diaz-Balart, Dockery, Arza, Kravitz, Simmons, Garcia, Paul, Berfield, Wallace, Johnson, Ball, Murman, Lacasa, Davis, Gibson, Clarke, Atwater, Bowen, Barreiro, (Additional Sponsors on Last Printed Page)

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to recitation of the
3 Declaration of Independence; creating s.
4 233.0659, F.S.; providing legislative findings;
5 requiring a portion of the Declaration of
6 Independence to be recited daily by public
7 school students; providing an effective date.

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

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11 Section 1. Section 233.0659, Florida Statutes, is
12 created to read:

13 233.0659 Recitation of the Declaration of
14 Independence.--

15 (1) The Legislature finds and declares that:

16 (a) The horrific attack on America and its ideals on
17 September 11, 2001, mandated that a war be declared against
18 the inhumane barbarism of terrorists. It promises to be a long
19 war. The strongest weapon in our arsenal is the firm American
20 character informed by the reasoned principles of the
21 Declaration of Independence. Reason is the strongest weapon
22 against the mindless fear the terrorist seeks.

23 (b) In writing the Declaration of Independence, in
24 addition to listing the specific grievances of the American
25 colonies against the British King and Parliament, Thomas
26 Jefferson set forth in 55 words a statement of the fundamental
27 human principles of government upon which the new nation was
28 to be founded, and this statement continues to have resonance
29 long after the contents of the remainder of the document have
30 been forgotten.

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1 (2) To underscore the importance of this statement in
2 forming American character, at the beginning of each school
3 day, public school principals and teachers shall conduct an
4 oral recitation by students of the following words of the
5 Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be
6 self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are
7 endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that
8 among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.
9 That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among
10 Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the
11 governed."

12 (3) Student recitation of this statement from the
13 Declaration of Independence shall serve to reaffirm the
14 American ideals of individual liberty.

15 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
16 law.

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19 HOUSE SUMMARY

20 Requires public school students to recite daily a portion
21 of the Declaration of Independence to underscore its
22 importance in forming American character and to reaffirm
23 the American ideals of individual liberty.

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26 ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

27 Brummer, Cantens, Wilson, McGriff, Romeo, Gannon, Harrell,
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29 Heyman, Russell, Kallinger, Mahon, Attkisson, Wishner,
30 Weissman, Ritter, Farkas, Littlefield, Mayfield, Ross,
31 Harrington, Hart, Brown, Hogan, Allen, Benson, Bean, Stansel
and Kendrick