

By Senator Clary

7-535-02

See HB 23-B

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to recitation of the Declaration of Independence; creating s. 233.0659, F.S.; providing legislative findings; requiring a portion of the Declaration of Independence to be recited daily by public school students; providing an effective date.

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

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

233.0659 Recitation of the Declaration of Independence.--

(1) The Legislature finds and declares that:

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

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

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  
the American ideals of individual liberty.

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