

By the Committee on Education; and Senator Clary

304-2192-02

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.; requiring Celebrate Freedom  
5           Week to be recognized in the public schools  
6           each September; requiring a portion of the  
7           Declaration of Independence to be recited daily  
8           by students during that week; providing an  
9           effective date.

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

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

15           233.0659 Recitation of the Declaration of  
16 Independence.--

17           (1) To educate students about the sacrifices made for  
18 freedom in the founding of this country and the values on  
19 which this country was founded, the last full week of classes  
20 in September shall be recognized in public schools as  
21 Celebrate Freedom Week. Celebrate Freedom Week must include at  
22 least 3 hours of appropriate instruction in each social  
23 studies class, as determined by each school district, which  
24 instruction shall include an in-depth study of the intent,  
25 meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence.

26           (2) To emphasize the importance of this week, at the  
27 beginning of each school day or in homeroom, during the last  
28 full week of September, public school principals and teachers  
29 shall conduct an oral recitation by students of the following  
30 words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these  
31 truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,

1 that they are endowed by their Creator with certain  
2 unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and  
3 the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights,  
4 governments are instituted among men, deriving their just  
5 powers from the consent of the governed."

6 (3) Student recitation of this statement shall serve  
7 to reaffirm the American ideals of individual liberty.

8 (4) Upon written request by a student's parent, the  
9 student must be excused from the recitation of the Declaration  
10 of independence.

11 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2002.

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13 STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN  
14 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
15 Senate Bill 1776

16 Establishes "Celebrate Freedom Week" in September to include  
17 instruction on and oral recitation of the Declaration of  
18 Independence.

19 Provides an opt out provision for students whose parents, in  
20 writing, request they be excused from the recitation.  
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