

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Provide limited government – This bill places a detailed mandate on local school districts to include specific topics in their instruction on U.S. history.

Safeguard individual liberty – The bill is intended to inculcate in public school students a better understanding of the history and foundations of individual liberty.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Required Instruction in U.S. History

Section 1003.43(1)(d) requires successful completion of one credit in American history for high school graduation. In addition, school districts are required by law to provide appropriate instruction designed to ensure students meet the SBE adopted standards in specified subjects, including social studies. The current standards cover American history topics and requirements.

Section 1003.42, F.S. requires school districts to provide instruction in a number of specified topics, including:

- The Declaration of Independence,
- The United States Constitution, and
- The history of the state.

The bill requires U.S. history to be taught at two grade levels in elementary school, and at one grade level each in middle school and high school. The bill also specifies in greater detail the following additional requirements for the instruction in certain U.S. history topics:

- Instruction on the Declaration of Independence must address its history and must include the ideas of national sovereignty, natural law, self-evident truth, equality of all persons, limited government, popular sovereignty, and God-given, inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property.
- Instruction in the U.S. Constitution must include the history, meaning, significance and effect of its provisions, with emphasis on the Bill of Rights.
- Instruction in the history of the state must also include the history of the State Constitution.

The bill adds a requirement for instruction in U.S. history which must:

- Include the period of discovery, early colonies, the War for Independence, Reconstruction, the Civil War, the expansion of the U.S., the world wars, and the civil rights movement;
- Be taught in a factual manner based on genuine history.

Other Required Instruction

The bill requires that the materials used for required instruction meet the highest standards for professionalism and historic accuracy.

Comprehensive health education is currently required to address mental and emotional health. The bill removes the requirement for instruction in mental and emotional health.

The bill adds a new requirement of instruction in the nature and importance of free enterprise to the U.S. economy.

Character-development programs are currently required. The bill amends the requirements for the content of such programs. The bill deletes the requirement that such programs stress attentiveness, patience and initiative. The bill adds requirements that the programs stress:

- The Golden Rule,
- Respect for authority, human life, liberty, and personal property, and
- Racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1. Amends s.1003.42, F.S., revising several provisions related to required instruction in public schools and requirements for teaching United States history.

Section 2. Amends s. 1003.43, F.S., requiring the study of the Declaration of Independence for high school graduation.

Section 3. Amends s. 1002.20, F.S., correcting a cross reference.

Section 4. Provides an effective date of July 1, 2006.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state government revenues.

2. Expenditures:

See Fiscal Comments.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on local government revenues.

2. Expenditures:

See Fiscal Comments.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

This bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on the private sector.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

This bill does not appear to require counties or municipalities to spend funds or take action requiring the expenditure of funds.

This bill does not reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenues in the aggregate.

This bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties and municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE & COMBINED BILL CHANGES

On March 28, 2006, the PreK-12 Committee adopted two amendments to House bill.

- Amendment One: The original bill required that SBE adopted “standards and assessments” conform to the instruction as described in the bill. This amendment deletes the word “assessments.”
- Amendment Two: The original bill required instruction of United States history at two grade levels each in middle school and high school. This amendment reduces this requirement to one grade level each in middle school and high school.

This bill analysis reflects the bill as amended.