

By Senator Siplin

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to required instruction for public
3 schools; amending s. 1003.42, F.S.; requiring that the
4 character-development program for kindergarten through
5 grade 12 include conflict-resolution management; providing
6 an effective date.

7
8 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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10 Section 1. Subsection (2) of section 1003.42, Florida
11 Statutes, is amended to read:

12 1003.42 Required instruction.--

13 (2) Members of the instructional staff of the public
14 schools, subject to the rules of the State Board of Education and
15 the district school board, shall teach efficiently and
16 faithfully, using the books and materials required that meet the
17 highest standards for professionalism and historic accuracy,
18 following the prescribed courses of study, and employing approved
19 methods of instruction, the following:

20 (a) The history and content of the Declaration of
21 Independence, including national sovereignty, natural law, self-
22 evident truth, equality of all persons, limited government,
23 popular sovereignty, and inalienable rights of life, liberty, and
24 property, and how they form the philosophical foundation of our
25 government.

26 (b) The history, meaning, significance, and effect of the
27 provisions of the Constitution of the United States and
28 amendments thereto, with emphasis on each of the 10 amendments

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29 | that make up the Bill of Rights and how the constitution provides
30 | the structure of our government.

31 | (c) The arguments in support of adopting our republican
32 | form of government, as they are embodied in the most important of
33 | the Federalist Papers.

34 | (d) Flag education, including proper flag display and flag
35 | salute.

36 | (e) The elements of civil government, including the primary
37 | functions of and interrelationships between the Federal
38 | Government, the state, and its counties, municipalities, school
39 | districts, and special districts.

40 | (f) The history of the United States, including the period
41 | of discovery, early colonies, the War for Independence, the Civil
42 | War, the expansion of the United States to its present
43 | boundaries, the world wars, and the civil rights movement to the
44 | present. American history shall be viewed as factual, not as
45 | constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and
46 | testable, and shall be defined as the creation of a new nation
47 | based largely on the universal principles stated in the
48 | Declaration of Independence.

49 | (g) The history of the Holocaust (1933-1945), the
50 | systematic, planned annihilation of European Jews and other
51 | groups by Nazi Germany, a watershed event in the history of
52 | humanity, to be taught in a manner that leads to an investigation
53 | of human behavior, an understanding of the ramifications of
54 | prejudice, racism, and stereotyping, and an examination of what
55 | it means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the
56 | purposes of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic

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57 society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and
58 institutions.

59 (h) The history of African Americans, including the history
60 of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the
61 development of slavery, the passage to America, the enslavement
62 experience, abolition, and the contributions of African Americans
63 to society.

64 (i) The elementary principles of agriculture.

65 (j) The true effects of all alcoholic and intoxicating
66 liquors and beverages and narcotics upon the human body and mind.

67 (k) Kindness to animals.

68 (l) The history of the state.

69 (m) The conservation of natural resources.

70 (n) Comprehensive health education that addresses concepts
71 of community health; consumer health; environmental health;
72 family life, including an awareness of the benefits of sexual
73 abstinence as the expected standard and the consequences of
74 teenage pregnancy; mental and emotional health; injury prevention
75 and safety; nutrition; personal health; prevention and control of
76 disease; and substance use and abuse.

77 (o) Such additional materials, subjects, courses, or fields
78 in such grades as are prescribed by law or by rules of the State
79 Board of Education and the district school board in fulfilling
80 the requirements of law.

81 (p) The study of Hispanic contributions to the United
82 States.

83 (q) The study of women's contributions to the United
84 States.

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85 (r) The nature and importance of free enterprise to the
86 United States economy.

87 (s) A character-development program in the elementary
88 schools, similar to Character First or Character Counts, which is
89 secular in nature. Beginning in school year 2004-2005, the
90 character-development program shall be required in kindergarten
91 through grade 12. Each district school board shall develop or
92 adopt a curriculum for the character-development program that
93 shall be submitted to the department for approval. The character-
94 development curriculum shall emphasize ~~stress~~ the qualities of
95 patriotism; responsibility; citizenship; kindness; respect for
96 authority, life, liberty, and personal property; honesty;
97 charity; self-control; racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance;
98 and cooperation; and conflict-resolution management, including
99 peer mediation.

100 (t) In order to encourage patriotism, the sacrifices that
101 veterans have made in serving our country and protecting
102 democratic values worldwide. Such instruction must occur on or
103 before Veterans' Day and Memorial Day. Members of the
104 instructional staff are encouraged to use the assistance of local
105 veterans when practicable.

106
107 The State Board of Education is encouraged to adopt standards and
108 pursue assessment of the requirements of this subsection.

109 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.