

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to American Founders' Month; providing
 3 a short title; creating s. 683.147, F.S.; designating
 4 the month of September as "American Founders' Month";
 5 authorizing the Governor to annually issue a
 6 proclamation designating the month and urging
 7 participation; amending s. 1003.44, F.S.; requiring
 8 district school boards to celebrate the American
 9 Founders and the principles inherent in the country's
 10 founding documents by observing American Founders'
 11 Month; specifying the focus of instruction during the
 12 month; providing that instruction may be integrated
 13 into the existing school curriculum; requiring
 14 distribution to school personnel of certain
 15 information; providing an effective date.

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

19 Section 1. This act may be cited as the "American
 20 Founders' Month Act."

21 Section 2. Section 683.147, Florida Statutes, is created
 22 to read:

23 683.147 American Founders' Month.—

24 (1) The month of September of each year is designated as
 25 "American Founders' Month."

26 (2) The Governor may annually issue a proclamation
 27 designating the month of September as "American Founders' Month"
 28 and urging all civic, fraternal, and religious organizations and

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29 public and private educational institutions to recognize and
30 observe this occasion through appropriate programs, meetings,
31 services, or celebrations in which state, county, and local
32 governmental officials are invited to participate.

33 Section 3. Subsection (2) of section 1003.44, Florida
34 Statutes, is amended, and subsections (3) and (4) are added to
35 that section, to read:

36 1003.44 Patriotic programs; rules.—

37 (2) Each district school board may allow any teacher or
38 administrator to read, or to post in a public school building or
39 classroom or at any school-related event, any excerpt or portion
40 of the following historic material: the national motto; the
41 national anthem; the pledge of allegiance; the Constitution of
42 the State of Florida, including the Preamble; the Constitution
43 of the United States, including the Preamble; the Bill of
44 Rights; the Declaration of Independence; the Mayflower Compact;
45 the Emancipation Proclamation; the writings, speeches,
46 documents, and proclamations of the presidents of the United
47 States, the signers of the Constitution of the United States and
48 the Declaration of Independence, and civil rights leaders; and
49 decisions of the United States Supreme Court. However, any
50 material that is read, posted, or taught pursuant to this
51 provision may be presented only from a historical perspective
52 and in a nonproselytizing manner. When less than an entire
53 document is used, the excerpt or portion must include as much
54 material as is reasonably necessary to reflect the sentiment of
55 the entire document and avoid expressing statements out of the
56 context in which they were originally made. If the material

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57 | refers to laws or judicial decisions that have been superseded,
58 | the material must be accompanied by a statement indicating that
59 | such law or decision is no longer the law of the land. No
60 | material shall be selected to advance a particular religious,
61 | political, or sectarian purpose. ~~The department shall distribute~~
62 | ~~a copy of this section to each district school board, whereupon~~
63 | ~~each district school superintendent shall distribute a copy to~~
64 | ~~all teachers and administrators.~~

65 | (3) (a) Each district school board shall celebrate the
66 | American Founders and the principles inherent in the country's
67 | founding documents by observing American Founders' Month in
68 | September of each year as provided in s. 683.147. This month may
69 | be coordinated with Celebrate Freedom Week, which is observed
70 | pursuant to s. 1003.421.

71 | (b) During American Founders' Month, students may be
72 | provided instruction that focuses on:

73 | 1. The leading figures present at the country's founding
74 | who were instrumental in crafting the founding documents that
75 | institutionalized individual liberty and limited government that
76 | derives its power from the consent of the governed.

77 | 2. The moral and civic virtue, self-sacrifice,
78 | intellectual genius, and patriotism demonstrated by the
79 | country's founding fathers.

80 | 3. The founding documents, including, but not limited to,
81 | the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United
82 | States, the Bill of Rights, and the Federalist Papers.

83 | 4. The historical and philosophical importance of the
84 | Declaration of Independence with its emphasis that all people

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85 "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,
86 that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of
87 happiness."

88 5. The principles inherent in the founding documents,
89 including, but not limited to, individual freedom, equality,
90 limited representative government, a free market system, civic
91 virtue, natural law, and self-evident truth.

92 (c) The instruction may be integrated into the existing
93 school curriculum through methods including, but not limited to,
94 supplementing lesson plans, holding school assemblies, or
95 providing school-related activities.

96 (4) The department shall distribute a copy of this section
97 to each district school board, whereupon each district school
98 superintendent shall distribute a copy to all school
99 administrators and instructional personnel at the beginning of
100 each school year.

101 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2012.