

By Senator Stargel

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to American Founders' Month; providing
3 a short title; creating s. 683.1455, 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; providing guidelines for instruction; providing
12 that instruction may be integrated into the existing
13 school curriculum; providing an effective date.

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

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

19 Section 2. Section 683.1455, Florida Statutes, is created
20 to read:

21 683.1455 American Founders' Month.—

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

24 (2) The Governor may annually issue a proclamation
25 designating the month of September as "American Founders' Month"
26 and urging all civic, fraternal, and religious organizations and
27 public and private educational institutions to recognize and
28 observe this occasion through appropriate programs, meetings,
29 services, or celebrations in which state, county, and local

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30 governmental officials are invited to participate.

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

34 1003.44 Patriotic programs; rules.—

35 (2) Each district school board may allow any teacher or
36 administrator to read, or to post in a public school building or
37 classroom or at any school-related event, any excerpt or portion
38 of the following historic material: the national motto; the
39 national anthem; the pledge of allegiance; the Constitution of
40 the State of Florida, including the Preamble; the Constitution
41 of the United States, including the Preamble; the Bill of
42 Rights; the Declaration of Independence; the Mayflower Compact;
43 the Emancipation Proclamation; the writings, speeches,
44 documents, and proclamations of the presidents of the United
45 States, the signers of the Constitution of the United States and
46 the Declaration of Independence, and civil rights leaders; and
47 decisions of the United States Supreme Court. However, any
48 material that is read, posted, or taught pursuant to this
49 provision may be presented only from a historical perspective
50 and in a nonproselytizing manner. When less than an entire
51 document is used, the excerpt or portion must include as much
52 material as is reasonably necessary to reflect the sentiment of
53 the entire document and avoid expressing statements out of the
54 context in which they were originally made. If the material
55 refers to laws or judicial decisions that have been superseded,
56 the material must be accompanied by a statement indicating that
57 such law or decision is no longer the law of the land. No
58 material shall be selected to advance a particular religious,

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59 political, or sectarian purpose. ~~The department shall distribute~~
60 ~~a copy of this section to each district school board, whereupon~~
61 ~~each district school superintendent shall distribute a copy to~~
62 ~~all teachers and administrators.~~

63 (3) (a) Each district school board shall celebrate the
64 American Founders and the principles inherent in the country's
65 founding documents by observing American Founders' Month in
66 September of each year as provided in s. 683.1455. This month
67 may be coordinated with Celebrate Freedom Week, which is
68 observed pursuant to s. 1003.421.

69 (b) During American Founders' Month, students may be
70 provided instruction that focuses on:

71 1. The leading figures present at the country's founding,
72 including those who were instrumental in crafting the founding
73 documents that institutionalized the principles of individual
74 liberty and a limited government that derives its power from the
75 consent of the governed.

76 2. The moral and civic virtue, self-sacrifice, intellectual
77 genius, and patriotism demonstrated by the country's founders.

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

81 4. The historical and philosophical importance of the
82 Declaration of Independence with its emphasis that all people
83 "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,
84 that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of
85 happiness."

86 5. The principles inherent in the founding documents,
87 including, but not limited to, individual freedom, equality,

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88 limited representative government, a free market system, civic
89 virtue, natural law, and self-evident truth.

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

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

99 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2013.