

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 5 Civic Education Curriculum
SPONSOR(S): Zika and others
TIED BILLS: None. **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1450

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 115 Y's 0 N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HB 5 passed the House on April 1, 2021, and subsequently passed the Senate on April 26, 2021.

The bill revises the social studies credit requirement for high school graduation by requiring the United States Government course to include a comparative discussion of political ideologies that conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy essential to the nation's founding principles.

To help students understand their roles, rights, and responsibilities as residents of the state, the Florida Department of Education (DOE) must develop or approve an integrated civic education curriculum for public school students in kindergarten through grade 12 to aid in students' development of civic responsibility and knowledge. As part of the curriculum requirements, the State Board of Education is required to develop civic-minded expectations for an upright citizenry.

The bill also creates the Portraits in Patriotism Act, which requires the DOE to curate oral history resources for use alongside the civic education curriculum. The oral history resources consist of personal stories of diverse individuals who demonstrate civic-minded qualities.

The DOE indicates that any fiscal impact of the bill can be absorbed within existing resources.

The bill was approved by the Governor on June 22, 2021, ch. 2021-158, L.O.F., and will become effective on July 1, 2021.

I. SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION

A. EFFECT OF CHANGES:

Civics Education in Florida

Present Situation

The mission of Florida’s K-20 education system is to “allow its students to increase their proficiency by allowing them the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through rigorous and relevant learning opportunities.”¹ Civic literacy and preparing students to become civically engaged and knowledgeable adults who positively contribute to their communities is a priority of the Florida education system.²

Secondary Education

Florida law requires each district school board to provide instruction on the history, significance, and principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, flag education, and civil government.³ District school boards must also provide instruction on the contributions of African Americans, Hispanics, and women to the United States.⁴

The law requires districts to provide a character-development program in kindergarten through grade 12.⁵ Each school district must develop or adopt a curriculum for its K-12 character-development program and submit it to the Florida Department of Education (DOE) for approval.⁶ The character development curriculum must “stress the qualities of patriotism; responsibility; citizenship; kindness; respect for authority, life, liberty, and personal property; honesty; charity; self-control; racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance; and cooperation.”⁷

To encourage patriotism, district school boards are required to provide instruction on the sacrifices made by veterans and Medal of Honor recipients while serving the country and protecting democratic values worldwide.⁸ A district school board may also adopt rules requiring patriotic programs in schools that encourage respect for the government of the United States and its national anthem and flag.⁹ Teachers or administrators may read or post historic material such as the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, and other foundational materials.¹⁰ Public schools are encouraged to coordinate instruction relating to the nation’s founding fathers with “American Founders’ Month” (September).¹¹

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

¹ Section 1000.03(4), F.S.

² Section 1000.03(5)(c), F.S.

³ Section 1003.42(2)(a)-(e), F.S.

⁴ Section 1003.42(2)(h) and (p)-(q), F.S.

⁵ Section 1003.42(2)(s), F.S.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Section 1003.42(t), F.S.

⁹ Section 1003.44(1), F.S.

¹⁰ Section 1003.44(2), F.S.

¹¹ Sections 1003.44(3) and 683.1455, F.S.

Currently, Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for social studies include civics content in kindergarten through grade 12.¹² For middle grades, a student must successfully complete three middle school or higher courses in social studies to be promoted to high school.¹³ One of the three courses must be a civics education course that includes the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments; the structures and functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; and the meaning and significance of documents such as the Articles of Confederation, Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States.¹⁴

At the high school level, 24 credits are required for a standard high school diploma.¹⁵ Three credits must be in social studies, including one credit each in United States History and World History; one-half credit in economics; and one-half credit in United States Government.¹⁶ Course standards for United States Government include evaluating and defending positions on the founding ideals and principles of American government, explaining how nations are governed differently, and comparing indicators of democratization in other countries, among others.¹⁷

Students in the middle grades civics course and the high school United States History course must take an end-of-course assessment¹⁸ that constitutes 30 percent of the student's final course grade.¹⁹

Review of Civics Education

To further address civics education in Florida, Governor DeSantis issued Executive Order 19-32 in January 2019, directing the Commissioner of Education (commissioner) to review Florida's K-12 academic standards and identify opportunities to prepare high school graduates to be knowledgeable citizens, particularly in the principles of the United States Constitution.²⁰

Additionally, in 2019, the Legislature required the commissioner, in consultation with specified organizations and stakeholders, to review the state-approved middle grades civics education course instructional materials and the test specifications for the statewide, standardized civics end-of-course assessment.²¹ The commissioner provided recommendations for improvements to the materials and test specifications to the Governor and Legislature on December 31, 2019.²² The DOE began a review of the statewide civics education course standards on January 1, 2020.²³ The State Board of Education (SBE) is expected to adopt the revisions to standards by summer 2021 and the approval of new course descriptions, with revised standards, is expected by fall 2021.²⁴

Effect of the Bill

The bill revises the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards social studies credit requirement for high school graduation. The bill requires instruction in United States Government to include a

¹² See CPALMS, *Browse and Search Standards*, <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Standard> (last visited April 27, 2021) (providing the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for each subject area, by grade level).

¹³ Section 1003.4156(1)(c), F.S.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Section 1003.4282(1)(a), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 1003.4282(3)(d), F.S.

¹⁷ See CPALMS, *United States Government Course Standards*, <https://www.cpalms.org/Public/PreviewCourse/Preview/633> (last visited April 27, 2021).

¹⁸ Section 1008.22(3)(b), F.S.

¹⁹ Sections 1003.4156(1)(c) and 1003.4282(3)(d), F.S.

²⁰ Fla. Exec. Order No. 19-32 (Jan. 31, 2019).

²¹ Section 1003.4156(1)(c), F.S. See also Florida Department of Education, *Civics Review*, <http://www.fldoe.org/civicsreview/> (last visited April 27, 2021).

²² Memorandum re Committee Substitute for (CS/HB) 807- Civics Education Report (Dec. 31, 2019).

²³ *Id.* See also Florida Department of Education, *Civics Review*, <http://www.fldoe.org/civicsreview/> (last visited April 27, 2021).

²⁴ Florida Department of Education, *Civics Review*, <http://www.fldoe.org/civicsreview/> (last visited April 27, 2021).

comparative discussion of political ideologies, such as communism and totalitarianism, that conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy essential to the founding principles of the United States.

To assist in students' preparation to be civically responsible and knowledgeable adults, the bill requires the DOE to develop or approve an integrated civic education curriculum for students in kindergarten through grade 12. School districts and charter schools must incorporate the curriculum as part of students' regular school work. The curriculum must assist students in developing:

- An understanding of their rights and responsibilities as residents of Florida and of the United States' founding principles as described in s. 1003.42(a)-(c), F.S.²⁵
- A sense of civic pride and desire to participate regularly in government.
- An understanding of the process for effectively advocating before government bodies and officials.
- An understanding of the civic-minded expectations, developed by the SBE, of an upright and desirable citizenry that recognizes and accepts responsibility for preserving and defending the liberty inherited from prior generations and secured by the United States Constitution.

The bill also requires the DOE to curate oral history resources for use with the civic education curriculum. Designated as the "Portraits in Patriotism Act," the bill provides that these resources will be based on diverse individuals' personal stories embodying civic-minded qualities. The stories may include first-person accounts of victims of other nations' governing ideologies and comparisons to the United States' governing ideologies.

The bill requires the DOE to approve integrated civic education curricula submitted by school districts and charter schools.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

- 1. Revenues:
None.
- 2. Expenditures:
The DOE indicates that any costs associated with developing the civic education curriculum and the curation of oral history resources required by the bill can be absorbed within existing resources.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

- 1. Revenues:
None.
- 2. Expenditures:
None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

²⁵ Section 1003.42(a)-(c), F.S. requires district school boards to provide instruction on the history and content of the Declaration of Independence, the meaning and significance of the United States Constitution and its amendments, and the arguments supporting a republican form of government as advocated in the Federalist Papers.

