

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

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SENATE BILL 442  
Corrected Copy 3/21/97  
Education/Higher Education Committee Substitute Adopted 4/28/97  
House Committee Substitute Favorable 6/11/97

Short Title: American History Act.

(Public)

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Sponsors:

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Referred to:

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March 20, 1997

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS RECEIVE ACCURATE  
3 INSTRUCTION ON OUR AMERICAN HISTORY.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 Section 1. G.S. 115C-81(g) reads as rewritten:

6 "(g) Civic Literacy. –

7 (1) Local boards of education shall require during the high school years the  
8 teaching of the nation's founding and related documents, which shall  
9 include at least the major principles in the Declaration of Independence,  
10 the United States Constitution and its amendments, and the most  
11 important of the Federalist Papers.

12 (2) Local boards of education shall require that high school students  
13 demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the nation's founding and  
14 related documents in order to receive a certificate or diploma of  
15 graduation from high school.

16 (3) Local boards of education shall include among the requirements for  
17 graduation from high school a passing grade in all courses that include

1 primary instruction in the Declaration of Independence, the United  
2 States Constitution and its amendments, and the most important of the  
3 Federalist Papers.

4 (3a) Local boards of education shall allow and may encourage any public  
5 school teacher or administrator to read or post in a public school  
6 building, classroom, or event, any excerpts or portions of writings,  
7 documents, and records that reflect the history of the United States,  
8 including, but not limited to, (i) the preamble to the North Carolina  
9 Constitution, (ii) the Declaration of Independence, (iii) the United  
10 States Constitution, (iv) the Mayflower Compact, (v) the national motto,  
11 (vi) the National Anthem, (vii) the Pledge of Allegiance, (viii) the  
12 writings, speeches, documents, and proclamations of the founding  
13 fathers and Presidents of the United States, (ix) decisions of the  
14 Supreme Court of the United States, and (x) acts of the Congress of the  
15 United States, including the published text of the Congressional Record.  
16 Local boards, superintendents, principals, and supervisors shall not  
17 allow content-based censorship of American history in the public  
18 schools of this State based on religious references in these writings,  
19 documents, and records.

20 (4) The State Board of Education shall require that any high school level  
21 curriculum-based tests developed and administered statewide beginning  
22 with academic year 1990-91 include questions related to the Declaration  
23 of Independence, the United States Constitution and its amendments,  
24 and the most important of the Federalist Papers.

25 (5) The State Department of Public Instruction and the local boards of  
26 education, as appropriate, shall establish curriculum content and provide  
27 for teacher training to ensure that the intent and provisions of this  
28 subsection are carried out. The curriculum content established shall  
29 include a review of the contributions made by Americans of all ~~raees~~  
30 ~~during the period in which our nation was founded.~~ racess."

31 Section 2. The State Board of Education shall adopt a policy by September 30,  
32 1997, to ensure that the textbooks it adopts have no content-based censorship of  
33 American history based on religious references.

34 Section 3. The State Board of Education shall provide a copy of this act to  
35 each local school superintendent in the State, and each local school superintendent shall  
36 ensure that school personnel within the unit are informed about the act.

37 Section 4. The State Board of Education shall study the feasibility of requiring  
38 two high school courses in United States history and two high school courses in  
39 Economic, Legal, and Political Systems in Action as a condition of graduation. The State  
40 Board shall report the results of this study to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight  
41 Committee prior to September 15, 1998.

42 Section 5. This act is effective when it becomes law.