

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE BILL 588
Committee Substitute Favorable 6/7/11

Short Title: The Founding Principles Act.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 5, 2011

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ENACT THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES ACT.

3 Whereas, the survival of the republic requires that our nation's children, the future
4 guardians of its heritage and participants in its governance, have a clear understanding of the
5 Founding Philosophy and the Founding Principles of government for a free people, which are
6 found in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Federalist Papers,
7 and the writings of the Founders, and an understanding of their preservation; Now, therefore,
8 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

9 SECTION 1. This act shall be known as "The Founding Principles Act."

10 SECTION 2. G.S. 115C-81(g) reads as rewritten:

11 "(g) Civic Literacy. –

12 (1) Local boards of education shall require during the high school years the
13 teaching of ~~the nation's founding and related documents, which shall include~~
14 ~~at least the major principles in the Declaration of Independence, the United~~
15 ~~States Constitution and its amendments, and the most important of the~~
16 ~~Federalist Papers.~~ a semester course "American History I – The Founding
17 Principles," to include at least the following:

18 a. The Creator-endowed inalienable rights of the people.

19 b. Structure of government, separation of powers with checks and
20 balances.

21 c. Frequent and free elections in a representative government.

22 d. Rule of law.

23 e. Equal justice under the law.

24 f. Private property rights.

25 g. Federalism.

26 h. Due process.

27 i. Individual rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights.

28 j. Individual responsibility.

29 A passing grade in the course shall be required for graduation from high
30 school.

31 ~~(2) Local boards of education shall require that high school students~~
32 ~~demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the nation's founding and~~
33 ~~related documents in order to receive a certificate or diploma of graduation~~
34 ~~from high school.~~

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



- 1 ~~primary instruction in the Declaration of Independence, the United States~~
2 ~~Constitution and its amendments, and the most important of the Federalist~~
3 ~~Papers.~~
- 4 (3a) Local boards of education shall allow and may encourage any public school
5 teacher or administrator to read or post in a public school building,
6 classroom, or event, excerpts or portions of writings, documents, and records
7 that reflect the history of the United States, including, but not limited to, (i)
8 the preamble to the North Carolina Constitution, (ii) the Declaration of
9 Independence, (iii) the United States Constitution, (iv) the Mayflower
10 Compact, (v) the national motto, (vi) the National Anthem, (vii) the Pledge
11 of Allegiance, (viii) the writings, speeches, documents, and proclamations of
12 the founding fathers and Presidents of the United States, (ix) decisions of the
13 Supreme Court of the United States, and (x) acts of the Congress of the
14 United States, including the published text of the Congressional Record.
15 Local boards, superintendents, principals, and supervisors shall not allow
16 content-based censorship of American history in the public schools of this
17 State, including religious references in these writings, documents, and
18 records. Local boards and professional school personnel may develop
19 curricula and use materials that are limited to specified topics provided the
20 curricula and materials are aligned with the standard course of study or are
21 grade level appropriate.
- 22 (3b) A local school administrative unit may display on real property controlled by
23 that local school administrative unit documents and objects of historical
24 significance that have formed and influenced the United States legal or
25 governmental system and that exemplify the development of the rule of law,
26 such as the Magna Carta, the Mecklenburg Declaration, the Ten
27 Commandments, the Justinian Code, and documents set out in subdivision
28 (3a) of this subsection. This display may include, but shall not be limited to,
29 documents that contain words associated with a religion; provided however,
30 no display shall seek to establish or promote religion or to persuade any
31 person to embrace a particular religion, denomination of a religion, or other
32 philosophy. The display of a document containing words associated with a
33 religion shall be in the same manner and appearance generally as other
34 documents and objects displayed and shall not be presented or displayed in
35 any fashion that results in calling attention to it apart from the other
36 displayed documents and objects. The display also shall be accompanied by
37 a prominent sign quoting the First Amendment of the United States
38 Constitution as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an
39 establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or
40 abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people
41 peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of
42 grievances."
- 43 (4) The State Board of Education shall require that any high school level
44 curriculum-based tests developed and administered statewide beginning with
45 the 2014-2015 academic year ~~1990-91~~ include questions related to the
46 philosophical foundations of our form of government and the principles
47 underlying the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution
48 ~~and its amendments,~~ Constitution, and the most important of the Federalist
49 Papers.
- 50 (5) The ~~State~~ Department of Public Instruction and the local boards of
51 education, as appropriate, shall ~~establish~~ provide or cause to be provided

1 curriculum content for the semester course required in subdivision (1) of this
2 subsection and ~~provide for~~ teacher training to ensure that the intent and
3 provisions of this subsection are carried out. ~~The curriculum content~~
4 ~~established shall include a review of the contributions made by Americans of~~
5 ~~all races.~~
6 (6) The Department of Public Instruction shall submit a biennial report by
7 October 15 of each odd-numbered year to the Joint Legislative Education
8 Oversight Committee covering the implementation of this subsection."
9 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with
10 the 2014-2015 school year.