

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2015

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SENATE BILL 524

Short Title: Founding Principles/Graduation Requirement. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Curtis, Soucek, Tillman (Primary Sponsors); Barefoot, Hise, Krawiec, McInnis, Newton, Pate, and Sanderson.

Referred to: Education/Higher Education.

March 30, 2015

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ENHANCE THE RIGOR OF INSTRUCTION OF THE FOUNDING
3 PRINCIPLES.

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~~ The State Board of Education shall require during
8 the high school years the teaching of a semester course "~~American History I~~
9 ~~The Founding Principles,~~" to include that includes instruction in at least the
10 following: following Founding Principles of the United States of America:

- 11 a. The Creator-endowed inalienable rights of the people.
12 b. Structure of government, separation of powers with checks and
13 balances.
14 c. Frequent and free elections in a representative government.
15 d. Rule of law.
16 e. Equal justice under the law.
17 f. Private property rights.
18 g. Federalism.
19 h. Due process.
20 i. Individual rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights.
21 j. Individual responsibility.
22 k. Constitutional limitations on government power to tax and spend and
23 prompt payment of public debt.
24 l. Money with intrinsic value.
25 m. Strong defense and supremacy of civil authority over military.
26 n. Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling
27 alliances with none.
28 o. Eternal vigilance by "We the People."

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

31 (2), (3) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-273, s. 2, effective June 23, 2011, and
32 applicable beginning with the 2014-2015 school year.

33 (3a) Local boards of education shall allow and may encourage any public school
34 teacher or administrator to read or post in a public school building,
35 classroom, or event, excerpts or portions of writings, documents, and records



1 that reflect the history of the United States, including, but not limited to, (i)
2 the preamble to the North Carolina Constitution, (ii) the Declaration of
3 Independence, (iii) the United States Constitution, (iv) the Mayflower
4 Compact, (v) the national motto, (vi) the National Anthem, (vii) the Pledge
5 of Allegiance, (viii) the writings, speeches, documents, and proclamations of
6 the founding fathers and Presidents of the United States, (ix) decisions of the
7 Supreme Court of the United States, and (x) acts of the Congress of the
8 United States, including the published text of the Congressional Record.
9 Local boards, superintendents, principals, and supervisors shall not allow
10 content-based censorship of American history in the public schools of this
11 State, including religious references in these writings, documents, and
12 records. Local boards and professional school personnel may develop
13 curricula and use materials that are limited to specified topics provided the
14 curricula and materials are aligned with the standard course of study or are
15 grade level appropriate.

16 (3b) A local school administrative unit may display on real property controlled by
17 that local school administrative unit documents and objects of historical
18 significance that have formed and influenced the United States legal or
19 governmental system and that exemplify the development of the rule of law,
20 such as the Magna Carta, the Mecklenburg Declaration, the Ten
21 Commandments, the Justinian Code, and documents set out in subdivision
22 (3a) of this subsection. This display may include, but shall not be limited to,
23 documents that contain words associated with a religion; provided however,
24 no display shall seek to establish or promote religion or to persuade any
25 person to embrace a particular religion, denomination of a religion, or other
26 philosophy. The display of a document containing words associated with a
27 religion shall be in the same manner and appearance generally as other
28 documents and objects displayed and shall not be presented or displayed in
29 any fashion that results in calling attention to it apart from the other
30 displayed documents and objects. The display also shall be accompanied by
31 a prominent sign quoting the First Amendment of the United States
32 Constitution as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an
33 establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or
34 abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people
35 peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of
36 grievances."

37 (4) The State Board of Education shall require that any high school level
38 curriculum-based tests for the course required in subdivision (1) of this
39 subsection developed and administered statewide beginning with the
40 ~~2014-2015~~2015-2016 academic year include questions related to the
41 philosophical foundations of our form of government and the principles
42 underlying the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution
43 and its amendments, and the most important of the Federalist Papers.

44 (5) The Department of Public Instruction and the local boards of education, as
45 appropriate, shall provide or cause to be provided curriculum content for the
46 semester course required in subdivision (1) of this subsection and teacher
47 training to ensure that the intent and provisions of this subsection are carried
48 out. The curriculum content established shall include a review of the
49 contributions made by Americans of all races.

1 (6) The Department of Public Instruction shall submit a biennial report by
2 October 15 of each odd-numbered year to the Joint Legislative Education
3 Oversight Committee covering the implementation of this subsection."
4 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with
5 students entering the ninth grade in the 2015-2016 school year.