

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 352

BY REPRESENTATIVES HODGES, AMEDEE, BACALA, CREWS, DESHOTEL, ECHOLS, EDMONDS, EDMONSTON, FIRMENT, FRIEMAN, GADBERRY, GAROFALO, HARRIS, HOLLIS, HORTON, MACK, MCFARLAND, MIGUEZ, CHARLES OWEN, SCHAMERHORN, AND SEABAUGH

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

CURRICULA: Provides relative to required instruction in American history and civics in public schools

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:265 and to repeal R.S. 17:268, relative to required instruction  
3 in public schools; to require public school governing authorities to provide  
4 instruction on certain aspects of American history and civics; and to provide for  
5 related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 17:265 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

8 §265. The Founding Principles of the United States of America; required instruction

9 A.(1) The governing authority of each public school that offers courses in  
10 American history and civics as prerequisites to graduation shall integrate into such  
11 courses instruction regarding the Founding Principles of the United States of  
12 America.

13 B. ~~(2)~~ Such instruction shall include but need not be limited to providing  
14 students with information on the following:

15 ~~(1)~~ (a) The Creator-endowed unalienable rights of the people.

16 ~~(2)~~ (b) Structure of government and separation of powers with checks and  
17 balances.

18 ~~(3)~~ (c) Frequent and free elections in a representative government.

- 1           ~~(4)~~ (d) Rule of law.
- 2           ~~(5)~~ (e) Equal justice under the law.
- 3           ~~(6)~~ (f) Private property rights.
- 4           ~~(7)~~ (g) Federalism.
- 5           ~~(8)~~ (h) Due process.
- 6           ~~(9)~~ (i) Individual rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights.
- 7           ~~(10)~~ (j) Individual responsibility.
- 8           (k) National sovereignty.
- 9           (l) The ideas and form of government that make the American experiment
- 10          unique.

11           B. Each public school governing authority shall provide age- and grade-  
 12          appropriate instruction in civics, including but not limited to the following founding  
 13          principles in grades kindergarten through eight:

- 14           (1) The Creator-endowed unalienable rights of the people.
- 15           (2) Structure of government and separation of powers with checks and
- 16          balances.
- 17           (3) Rule of law.
- 18           (4) Equal justice under the law.
- 19           (5) Due process.
- 20           (6) Individual rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights.
- 21           (7) Individual responsibility.

22           C. Textbooks and instructional materials used in the instruction required by  
 23          this Section shall include the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the  
 24          United States, the Federalist Papers, and the Gettysburg Address as primary source  
 25          materials and any other textbooks and instructional materials recommended by the  
 26          state Department of Education or approved by the public school governing authority.

27          Section 2. R.S. 17:268 is hereby repealed in its entirety.

28          Section 3. The Legislature of Louisiana finds that:

1           (1) The purpose of civics education is to help provide a foundational  
2 knowledge of the form and function of government that the founding fathers  
3 established.

4           (2) The purpose of such foundational knowledge is to provide for an  
5 understanding of the powers, roles, responsibilities, duties, process, and limitations  
6 that entangle a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, to the  
7 people.

8           (3) The founding fathers knew that in order to provide for the blessings of  
9 liberty for themselves and posterity, a group of culturally diverse states, with their  
10 competing interests, beliefs, and perspectives, must unite together in order to form  
11 a more perfect union.

12           (4) The United States of America has always been strongest when its people  
13 come together and embrace those American principles that unite us instead of the  
14 issues and perspectives that can divide us.

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#### DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

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HB 352 Reengrossed

2021 Regular Session

Hodges

**Abstract:** Requires further instruction on American history and civics in public schools.

Present law requires the governing authority of each public high school offering American history and civics as prerequisites to graduation to include specified information regarding the founding principles of the U.S. in such courses. Proposed law retains present law and adds the following to the list of required information in such courses:

- (1) National sovereignty.
- (2) The ideas and form of government that make the American experiment unique.

Proposed law requires that information on the following founding principles of the U.S. be taught in grades kindergarten through eight:

- (1) The Creator-endowed unalienable rights of the people.
- (2) Structure of government and separation of powers with checks and balances.
- (3) Rule of law.
- (4) Equal justice under the law.

- (5) Due process.
- (6) Individual rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights.
- (7) Individual responsibility.

Proposed law requires that instructional materials adopted for use in public schools for such instruction include the Declaration of Independence, Constitution of the U.S., Federalist Papers, and Gettysburg Address.

(Amends R.S. 17:265; Repeals R.S. 17:268)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

- 1. Regarding lists of founding principles to be taught, remove certain proposed additions and limit the ones required in K-8 instruction.
- 2. Require instructional materials to include certain primary historical documents.