

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 401

BY REPRESENTATIVE HODGES

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.

19 ~~(4)~~ (d) Rule of law.

20 ~~(5)~~ (e) Equal justice under the law.

- 1 ~~(6)~~ (f) Private property rights.
- 2 ~~(7)~~ (g) Federalism.
- 3 ~~(8)~~ (h) Due process.
- 4 ~~(9)~~ (i) Individual rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights.
- 5 ~~(10)~~ (j) Individual responsibility.
- 6 (k) The Declaration of Independence.
- 7 (l) The Constitution of the United States.
- 8 (m) The Federalist Papers.
- 9 (n) The Gettysburg Address.
- 10 (o) Comparative discussion of political ideologies, such as communism and
11 totalitarianism, that conflict with the ideology of the United States.
- 12 (p) National sovereignty.
- 13 (q) The ideas and form of government that make the American experiment
14 unique.
- 15 B. Each public school governing authority shall provide age- and grade-
16 appropriate instruction in civics, including but not limited to the following founding
17 principles, in grades kindergarten through eight:
- 18 (1) The Creator-endowed unalienable rights of the people.
- 19 (2) Structure of government and separation of powers with checks and
20 balances.
- 21 (3) Rule of law.
- 22 (4) Equal justice under the law.
- 23 (5) Due process.
- 24 (6) Individual rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights.
- 25 (7) Individual responsibility.
- 26 C. Each public school governing authority shall provide age- and grade-
27 appropriate instruction in comparative discussion of political ideologies, such as
28 communism and totalitarianism, that conflict with the ideology of the United States
29 in grades five through eight.

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 R.S. 17:268 is hereby repealed in its entirety.

2 Section 3. The Legislature of Louisiana finds that:

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

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

10 (3) The founders knew that in order to provide for the blessings of liberty for
11 themselves and their posterity, a group of culturally diverse states, with their
12 competing interests, beliefs, and perspectives, must unite together in order to form
13 a more perfect union. The Constitution, through the amendment process, provided
14 a mechanism whereby our country was able to perfect the union and provide equal
15 protection under the law for all citizens.

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

19 (5) Incorporating patriotism in education is about the preservation of a free
20 America, and it is essential that children be taught about their duties, responsibilities,
21 and obligations as Americans.

22 (6) It is critical to teach students the entire, contextual, and documented
23 experience of the United States and to use curricula and instructional materials that
24 teach apolitical and fact-based history.

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)]

HB 401 Original

2022 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) The Declaration of Independence
- (2) The U.S. Constitution.
- (3) The Federalist Papers.
- (4) The Gettysburg Address.
- (5) Comparative discussion of political ideologies, such as communism and totalitarianism, that conflict with the ideology of the U.S.
- (6) National sovereignty.
- (7) 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 public school governing authorities to provide instruction that includes a comparative discussion of political ideologies, such as communism and totalitarianism, that conflict with the ideology of the U.S. to students in grades five through eight.

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