

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
1997 SESSION

SESSION LAW 1997-422  
SENATE BILL 442

AN ACT TO ENSURE THAT PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS RECEIVE  
ACCURATE INSTRUCTION ON OUR AMERICAN HISTORY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

"(g) Civic Literacy. –

- (1) Local boards of education shall require during the high school years the teaching of the nation's founding and related documents, which shall include at least the major principles in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and its amendments, and the most important of the Federalist Papers.
- (2) Local boards of education shall require that high school students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the nation's founding and related documents in order to receive a certificate or diploma of graduation from high school.
- (3) Local boards of education shall include among the requirements for graduation from high school a passing grade in all courses that include primary instruction in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and its amendments, and the most important of the Federalist Papers.
- (3a) Local boards of education shall allow and may encourage any public school teacher or administrator to read or post in a public school building, classroom, or event, excerpts or portions of writings, documents, and records that reflect the history of the United States, including, but not limited to, (i) the preamble to the North Carolina Constitution, (ii) the Declaration of Independence, (iii) the United States Constitution, (iv) the Mayflower Compact, (v) the national motto, (vi) the National Anthem, (vii) the Pledge of Allegiance, (viii) the writings, speeches, documents, and proclamations of the founding fathers and Presidents of the United States, (ix) decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, and (x) acts of the Congress of the United States, including the published text of the Congressional Record. Local boards, superintendents, principals, and supervisors shall not allow content-based censorship of American history in the public schools of this State, including religious references in these

writings, documents, and records. Local boards and professional school personnel may develop curricula and use materials that are limited to specified topics provided the curricula and materials are aligned with the standard course of study or are grade level appropriate."

- (4) The State Board of Education shall require that any high school level curriculum-based tests developed and administered statewide beginning with academic year 1990-91 include questions related to the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and its amendments, and the most important of the Federalist Papers.
- (5) The State Department of Public Instruction and the local boards of education, as appropriate, shall establish curriculum content and provide for teacher training to ensure that the intent and provisions of this subsection are carried out. The curriculum content established shall include a review of the contributions made by Americans of all ~~rac~~es during the period in which our nation was founded. ~~rac~~es."

Section 2. The State Board of Education shall adopt a policy by November 30, 1997, to ensure that the textbooks it adopts have no content-based censorship of American history, including religious references. The State Board may adopt textbooks that are limited to specified topics provided the textbooks are aligned with the standard course of study or are grade level appropriate.

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

Section 4. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 14th day of August, 1997.

s/ Dennis A. Wicker  
President of the Senate

s/ Harold J. Brubaker  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ James B. Hunt, Jr.  
Governor

Approved 2:14 p.m. this 22nd day of August, 1997