

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE DRH50199-LE-7G (11/22)

Short Title: The Founding Principles Act.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Brubaker.

Referred to:

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

3 Whereas, the adoption of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the signing  
4 of the United States Constitution in 1787 were seminal events in the history of the United  
5 States, the Declaration of Independence providing the philosophical foundation on which the  
6 nation rests, and the Constitution of the United States providing its structure of government;  
7 and

8 Whereas, the Federalist Papers embody the most eloquent and forceful argument  
9 made in support of the adoption of our republican form of government; and

10 Whereas, these documents, along with the writings of the Founders, stand as the  
11 foundation of our form of democracy, providing at the same time the touchstone of our national  
12 identity and the vehicle for orderly growth and change; and

13 Whereas, these Founding Documents established a set of principles, known as the  
14 Founders' Principles, which are the heart and soul of a government for a free society; and

15 Whereas, these principles enabled a group of 13 colonies to become the greatest and  
16 most powerful nation on earth in a relatively short period of time; and

17 Whereas, most Americans do not know about nor understand the timely and  
18 timeless importance of these principles to our form of government and to their current lives;  
19 and

20 Whereas, the survival of the republic requires that our nation's children, the future  
21 guardians of its heritage and participants in its governance, have a clear understanding of these  
22 principles and the importance of their preservation; Now, therefore,

23 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

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

26 "(g) Civic Literacy. –

27 (1) Local boards of education shall require during the high school years the  
28 teaching of ~~the nation's founding and related documents, which shall include~~  
29 ~~at least the major principles in the either a semester course or a full-year~~  
30 course that focuses on the following:

31 a. The philosophical foundations of our form of government.

32 b. The principles underlying the Declaration of Independence, the  
33 United States Constitution and its amendments, and the most  
34 important of the Federalist Papers. Constitution, the Federalist Papers,  
35 and the writings of the Founders, which are the principles of



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

- 1 peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of  
2 grievances."
- 3 (4) The State Board of Education shall require that any high school level  
4 curriculum-based tests developed and administered statewide beginning with  
5 the 2012-2013 academic year ~~1990-91~~ include questions related to the  
6 philosophical foundations of our form of government and the principles  
7 underlying the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution  
8 and its amendments, Constitution, and the most important of the Federalist  
9 Papers.
- 10 (5) The State Department of Public Instruction and the local boards of  
11 education, as appropriate, shall ~~establish~~ provide or cause to be provided  
12 curriculum content for the semester course or a full-year course and ~~provide~~  
13 ~~for~~ teacher training to ensure that the intent and provisions of this subsection  
14 are carried out. ~~The curriculum content established shall include a review of~~  
15 ~~the contributions made by Americans of all races.~~
- 16 (6) The State Department of Public Instruction shall submit a biennial report to  
17 the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and to the chairs of the  
18 education committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives  
19 covering the following:
- 20 a. The implementation of this subsection.
- 21 b. The statewide student results from the State curriculum-based tests  
22 administered in accordance with subdivision (3) of this subsection."

23 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with  
24 the 2012-2013 school year.