

National & Texas Legislation – American Heritage Education

Provided by the American Heritage Education Foundation, Inc.

www.americanheritage.org

National Legislation - American Heritage Education

Congressional House Resolution 2336, 108th Congress (June 4, 2003). Authors: Petri, Rahall, Dreier, Wicker, and Garrett. **To amend Higher Education Act to establish and strengthen post-secondary programs and courses in subjects of traditional American history, free institutions, and Western civilization.** The purpose of this act is to promote and sustain post-secondary academic centers, institutes, and programs that offer undergraduate and graduate courses, support research, and develop teaching materials for the purpose of developing and imparting a knowledge of traditional American history, the American founding, the history and nature of, and threats to, free institutions, or of the nature, history and achievements of Western Civilization, particularly for undergraduate students in teacher education, K-12 teachers in related subject areas, and graduate students and post-secondary faculty who teach in related subject areas. See www.beta.congress.gov

Congressional House Bill SF0139. 83rd Minnesota Legislature (2003). Author: Bachmann. Action: 01/27/2003. **“American Heritage Education in Minnesota Public Schools Act” requiring school districts to develop and establish policies for grade level instruction to assure student access to founding documents of the country and the state pertinent to understanding the principles, character and world view of the founders;** requiring school districts to permit principals or teachers to post the documents and prohibiting districts from limiting or restraining instruction in American or Minnesota state history or heritage based on religious references in documents, writings, speeches, proclamations or records, requiring use of the materials for educational purposes; authorizing students to voluntarily choose to read, write, share, report or otherwise study topics religious in nature under certain conditions. See www.beta.congress.gov

Congressional House Resolution 366 / Senate Resolution 129. (June 29, 2000, January 24, 2000/July 10, 2000). 106th Congress, Second Session. House of Representatives, June 29, 2000. **Expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the importance and value of education in United States history.** The resolution cites the **importance of civic education** to insure that democracy is sustained in future generations. It cites the danger that in today’s schools and universities students are not being taught American history and/or are losing America’s civic memory. The resolution resolves to recognize that historical illiteracy is a serious problem, colleges/universities should add U. S. history to their curricula, state officials should review and promote such curricula, parents should encourage their children to select schools requiring U. S. history, students should choose to take U. S. history required or not, and educators of all levels should make efforts to bolster knowledge of U. S. history in students. See www.beta.congress.gov

Texas Legislation - American Heritage Education

Texas House Bill 3678. 80th Texas Legislature (2007). Author: Howard, Chisum. Signed into law by Gov. Perry on June 11, 2007. **Religious Viewpoint Anti-Discrimination Act (RVAA) / Schoolchildren's Religious Liberties Act.** This bill **requires a school district to adopt and implement a policy that provides for a limited public forum and voluntary student expression of religious viewpoints at school events and graduation ceremonies, in class assignments, and in noncurricular school groups and activities.** The bill requires the district to treat voluntary student religious expression on an otherwise permissible subject in the same manner as the expression of a secular or other viewpoint and prohibits the district from discriminating against a student based on his or her expressed religious viewpoint. The district policy must ensure that a student speaker does not engage in obscene or indecent speech and provide a disclaimer that a student's speech is not endorsed or sponsored by the district. The bill provides a model policy that, if adopted, would place the district in compliance with requirements. The bill takes effect for the 2007-2008 school year. (Texas Legislature Online) See www.capitol.state.texas.us

Texas House Bill 1287. 80th Texas Legislature (2007). Author: Chisum. Signed into law by Gov. Perry. This bill **authorizes school districts to offer elective high school courses on the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, for historical and literary value,** if 15 or more students register for the course. The bill requires a course to follow federal and state law and guidelines to maintain religious neutrality and accommodate students' diverse religious views, traditions, and perspectives. The State Board of Education must submit proposed essential knowledge and skills for the course to the attorney general for approval before adopting rules for offering the course to ensure that it complies with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The bill takes effect on June 15, 2007. The Supreme Court has ruled that elective Bible courses in public schools is constitutional. (Texas Legislature Online) See www.capitol.state.texas.us

Texas House Bill 219. 78th Texas Legislature (2003). Author: Hope. Signed into law by Gov. Perry. Statute amended or added: Adds section 1.004, Education Code. This bill **authorizes a public school or institution of higher education to display the national motto "In God We Trust"** in each classroom, auditorium, or cafeteria. See www.capitol.state.texas.us

Texas House Bill 319. 78th Texas Legislature (2003). Author: Grusendorf. Signed into law by Gov. Perry. Last Action: 05/20/2003 E Effective on 9/1/03. Statute amended or added: Adds section 4.001(b), education code. Relating to the objectives of public education. This bill adds an objective of public education **requiring that educators prepare students in the areas of state and national heritage, active citizenship, and free enterprise.** See www.capitol.state.texas.us

Texas House Bill 1776, 78th Texas Legislature (2003). Author: Hughes et al. Sponsor: Nelson. Signed into law by Gov. Perry. Last Action: 06/20/2003 E Effective immediately. Relating to Celebrate Freedom Week and to certain instruction in social studies classes in public schools. **Celebrate Freedom Week, designated the week of November 11 in public schools,** encourages appropriate instruction, as determined by each school district, in each social studies class. Instruction should include study of the

intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, in their historical context. See www.capitol.state.texas.us

Texas Senate Bill 83. 78th Texas Legislature (2003). Author: Wentworth. Sponsor: Branch. Signed into law by Gov. Perry. Last Action: 05/28/2003 E Effective on 9/1/03 (2003-04 school year). Statute amended or added: section 25.082, education code. **Relating to the pledges of allegiance to the United States and Texas flags and to observance of one minute of silence in public schools.** This bill directs school boards to require students to recite the pledges to the United States and Texas flags once each school day. A district shall excuse a student from reciting a pledge on request of the student's parents or guardian. The legislation also directs school boards to provide for a minute of silence following the pledges during which a student may reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in another silent activity that is not distracting to other students. School employees are required to ensure that students remain silent and do not distract other students. Change from current law: Recitation of pledges is not currently addressed at this time. Current statute authorizes but does not require school boards to provide for a period of silence at the beginning of the school day during which students may reflect or meditate. Action required: Implement requirements for recitation of pledges to the U. S. and Texas flags each school day followed by a minute of silence. See www.capitol.state.texas.us

Texas Education Code 28.002 (h). Texas Legislature (1995). Subtitle F. Curriculum, Programs, and Services. Chapter 28. Courses of Study; Advancement. Subchapter A. Essential Knowledge and Skills, Curriculum. **The state legislature instructed the state board of education to uphold the law that United States and Texas history should be regular subject matter and textbook material in order to prepare students as citizens in a democracy:** "(h) The State Board of Education and each school district shall foster the continuation of the tradition of teaching United States and Texas history and the free enterprise system in regular subject matter and in reading courses and in the adoption of textbooks. A primary purpose of the public school curriculum is to prepare thoughtful, active citizens who understand the importance of patriotism and can function productively in a free enterprise society with appreciation for the basic democratic values of our state and national heritage." See www.capitol.state.texas.us