

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1776  
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Public Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

A recent study found that college freshmen in Texas could only correctly answer 49.3 percent of basic questions on American civics. It has been observed that a fundamental understanding of the founding principles of the nation's government, including knowledge of the separation of powers and how laws are made, is essential to the ability of citizens to fully participate in democracy. Concerns have been raised that too many Texas students complete high school without such an understanding.

H.B. 1776 seeks to address these concerns by requiring each public school district and open-enrollment charter school that offers a high school program to provide an elective course on the founding principles of the United States and also requiring the board of trustees of an independent school district to permit and encourage the posting of a copy of the founding documents of the United States in a district classroom or school building.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1776 amends the Education Code to require each public school district and open-enrollment charter school that offers a high school program to provide an elective course on the founding principles of the United States that meets the requirements for a one-half elective credit under the foundation high school program. The bill requires the course to focus on the principles underlying the United States form of government, the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the writings of the Founding Fathers of the United States. This provision applies beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.

H.B. 1776 requires the board of trustees of an independent school district to permit and encourage the posting in a district classroom or school building of a copy of the founding documents of the United States. The bill subjects an open-enrollment charter school to this posting requirement.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.