

SUBJECT: Establishing the American History and Civics Project in certain schools

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Kuempel, Paul, Burns, Burrows, Clardy, Raney
4 nays — Cole, M. González, Howard, Lalani
1 absent — Bucy

SENATE VOTE: On final passage (April 26) — 27 - 4

WITNESSES: None (*considered in a formal meeting on May 17*)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that creating a program to support teachers and strengthen education in American history and civics in schools could better equip students as knowledgeable, responsible citizens.

DIGEST: SB 2136 would establish the American History and Civics Project to strengthen American history and civics education at public high schools and higher education institutions and encourage the development and effective use of high-quality digital content and professional development materials for use in American history and civics education. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) would be required to convene an expert commission of scholars and educators to assist in the creation of this project.

Using funds appropriated or otherwise available for the project, THECB would be required to award grants to individuals with relevant expertise and school districts or higher education institutions to recommend and develop digital content and professional development materials for use in American history and civics education at public high schools and institutions of higher education. Digital content recommended or developed using a grant could include interactive and audiovisual resources, assignments, and model syllabuses that addressed the major themes of American history from the nation's founding onward and could

be used in the delivery of survey courses, dual credit, or public high school courses.

To encourage the effective use of digital content, THECB would be required to support the establishment of a professional development program for individuals who taught one or more American history and civics courses. The professional development program could include an annual statewide conference. THECB would be required to include any digital content or professional development materials developed using a grant in the state repository of open educational resources.

SB 2136 would require a college or university receiving state support or aid from public funds to ensure that a student could satisfy American history credit requirements by successfully completing survey courses that addressed the major themes of American history from the nation's founding onward.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.