

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
78R11656 JLZ-F

H.C.R. 73  
By: Griggs (Nelson)  
Education  
5/13/2003  
Engrossed

### **DIGEST**

Bombarded with media images and messages that seem to glorify irresponsible and destructive behavior and that elevate figures in the sports and entertainment industries to celebrity status irrespective of their personal behavior, a growing number of Americans are becoming increasingly troubled about the state of the union and the character of America's youth. Concerns about children in today's society are compounded by highly publicized accounts of violence in our schools, high levels of drug use and promiscuity, and the increasing inability of many young people to fulfill their responsibilities as students. Although these behaviors and the self-destructive attitudes that engender them frequently manifest themselves in the classroom and create problems for teachers, school administrators, and other students, they also are awakening a conviction within the education community and among parents, policy makers, and other concerned citizens that our public schools have an important role to play, along with family, religion, and the larger community, in helping children develop good consciences and ethical behavior. While the primary responsibility for instilling character in our nation's youth rests with each child's parents, our schools can play a pivotal role in reinforcing the values being taught in the home through a curriculum that treats the development of personal character traits as a matter equally as important as academic achievement. The public school system's role as a force in society to promulgate the fundamental values and beliefs on which this nation was founded becomes more important at a time when changes in family structures and the pressures of the modern age leave many parents, whether busy with work or absent altogether, unable to impart those values and beliefs that once were vital components of family life. Numerous school districts, both within the state and across the nation, have either implemented character education programs or successfully incorporated a virtues program into their daily curricula for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Often developed as a joint project involving faith-based communities, parent-teacher organizations, public school administrators and teachers, the local business community, students, and elected school officials, virtues education programs focus the attention of schoolchildren on those character traits of prominent past and present individuals that display the virtues society most highly prizes. By stressing the fundamental importance of values that all can agree are worth emulating, virtues education programs can help solve problems such as student violence, teenage pregnancies, and substance abuse; help raise levels of academic performance; and restore hope in the future of society. Some examples of virtues that many individuals consider appropriate include attentiveness, availability, citizenship, compassion, confidence, contentment, courage, dependability, diligence, discretion, efficiency, encouragement, enthusiasm, fairness, faith, forgiveness, friendliness, generosity, gentleness, gratitude, honesty, humility, initiative, joy, kindness, obedience, optimism, patience, peace, perseverance, purity, respect, responsibility, reverence, self-control, thoughtfulness, and wisdom.

### **PURPOSE**

H.C.R. 73 submits the following resolutions:

That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby direct the Texas Education Agency and the State Board of Education (SBOE) to adopt and promote a virtues education program and to provide school districts with materials and support to assist in the program's implementation. That the virtues education program include age-appropriate curricula and educational material and be structured to provide instruction beginning in kindergarten and continuing through 12th grade. That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the commissioner of education and to the SBOE chair.