

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R3182 KJE-D

S.B. 1776
By: Campbell
Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

A 2019 study found that only 37 percent of Texans could pass the United States citizenship exam. A fundamental understanding of the founding principles of our 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 our democracy. It is the state's responsibility to provide an educational foundation for our children that prepares them for the workforce and empowers them to be good citizens who can contribute to our nation's prosperity. S.B. 1776 would require that every independent school district and open-enrollment charter school that offers a high school program, offer an elective course on America's founding principles. The bill also requires that all independent school district board of trustees permit and encourage the posting of America's founding documents on their high school campuses. The Founding Principles Act requires that each school district offer a high-school level elective course on the founding principles. The Founding Principles Act also explicitly permits and encourages the posting of a copy of the founding documents of the United States, including the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights in a district classroom or public school building.

As proposed, S.B. 1776 amends current law relating to the inclusion of an elective course on the founding principles of the United States in the curriculum for public high school students and the posting of the founding documents of the United States in public school buildings.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 11, Education Code, by adding Section 11.172, as follows:

Sec. 11.172. POSTING OF FOUNDING DOCUMENTS. 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, including the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the writings of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

SECTION 2. Reenacts Section 12.104(b), Education Code, as amended by Chapters 262 (H.B. 1597), 464 (S.B. 11), 467 (H.B. 4170), and 943 (H.B. 3), Acts of the 86th Legislature, Regular Session, 2019, and amends it, as follows:

(b) Provides that an open-enrollment charter school is subject to certain provisions, including a prohibition, restriction, or requirement, as applicable, imposed by Title 2 (Public Education) or a rule adopted under Title 2, relating to certain topics, including the posting of founding documents under Section 11.172. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 28, Education Code, by adding Section 28.0111, as follows:

Sec. 28.0111. FOUNDING PRINCIPLES ELECTIVE. (a) Requires each 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 Section 28.025 (High School Diploma and Certificate; Academic Achievement Record).

(b) Requires that the course focus on the principles underlying the United States form of government, the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the writings of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

SECTION 4. Provides that Section 28.0111, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.

SECTION 5. Provides that to the extent of any conflict, this Act prevails over another Act of the 87th Legislature, Regular Session, 2021, relating to nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in enacted codes.

SECTION 6. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.