

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 2136
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Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Knowledge about our government and our common history has eroded, even among college students. If American democracy is to thrive, our nation needs a citizenry with a common civic knowledge base as well as the civic skills and dispositions essential to informed, respectful debate.

In partnership with institutions of higher education, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) shall establish the American History and Civics Project. The proposed project is designed to strengthen education in American history and civics across high schools and colleges by supporting teachers and faculty in identifying, developing, and implementing high-quality digital resources, expand opportunities for students across the state to develop an understanding of the major themes of U.S. history and development of the American system of government, and better equip students as knowledgeable, responsible citizens.

As proposed, S.B. 2136 amends current law relating to measures to support public secondary and postsecondary American history and civics education, including the satisfaction of curriculum requirements in American History at institutions of higher education and the establishment of the American History and Civics Project.

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 Section 51.302(b), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Requires a college or university receiving state support or state aid from public funds to ensure that a student may satisfy the requirement for six credit hours or its equivalent in American history by successfully completing survey courses that address the major themes of American history from the nation's founding onward.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.0518, as follows:

Sec. 61.0518. AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS PROJECT. (a) Defines "project."

(b) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), in consultation with institutions of higher education, to establish the American History and Civics Project (project) to:

(1) strengthen American history and civics education at public high schools and institutions of higher education; and

(2) encourage the development and effective use of high-quality digital content and professional development materials for use in American

history and civics education at public high schools and institutions of higher education.

(c) Requires THECB to convene an expert commission of scholars and educators to assist in the creation of the project.

(d) Requires THECB, using funds appropriated or otherwise available for purposes of the project, to award grants to individuals with relevant subject matter expertise, school districts, or institutions of higher education 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.

(e) Authorizes digital content recommended or developed using a grant awarded under Subsection (d) to include interactive and audiovisual resources, assignments, and model syllabuses that:

(1) address the major themes of American history from the nation's founding onward; and

(2) are authorized to be used in the delivery of survey courses offered by institutions of higher education, dual credit or dual enrollment courses offered by public high schools or institutions of higher education, or public high school courses for which students are authorized to receive credit that satisfies all or part of the requirements under Section 51.302(b).

(f) Requires THECB, to encourage the effective use of digital content recommended or developed using a grant awarded under Subsection (d), using funds appropriated or otherwise available for purposes of the project, to support the establishment of a professional development program for individuals who teach one or more American history and civics courses, including a dual credit or dual enrollment course, at a public high school or institution of higher education. Authorizes the professional development program to include an annual statewide conference.

(g) Requires THECB to include in the state repository of open educational resources developed under Section 61.0670 (State Repository of Open Educational Resources) any digital content or professional development materials developed using a grant awarded under Subsection (d).

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2023.