

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE BILL 588  
Committee Substitute Favorable 6/7/11  
Senate Education/Higher Education Committee Substitute Adopted 6/14/11  
Fourth Edition Engrossed 6/15/11  
Proposed Conference Committee Substitute H588-PCCS30407-RQ-2

Short Title: The Founding Principles Act.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 5, 2011

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ENACT THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES ACT.

3 Whereas, the survival of the republic requires that our nation's children, the future  
4 guardians of its heritage and participants in its governance, have a clear understanding of the  
5 Founding Philosophy and the Founding Principles of government for a free people, which are  
6 found in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Federalist Papers,  
7 and the writings of the Founders, and an understanding of their preservation; Now, therefore,  
8 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

9 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known as "The Founding Principles Act."

10 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 115C-81(g) reads as rewritten:

11 "(g) Civic Literacy. –

12 (1) Local boards of education shall require during the high school years the  
13 teaching of ~~the nation's founding and related documents, which shall include~~  
14 ~~at least the major principles in the Declaration of Independence, the United~~  
15 ~~States Constitution and its amendments, and the most important of the~~  
16 ~~Federalist Papers.~~ a semester course "American History I – The Founding  
17 Principles," to include at least the following:

18 a. The Creator-endowed inalienable rights of the people.

19 b. Structure of government, separation of powers with checks and  
20 balances.

21 c. Frequent and free elections in a representative government.

22 d. Rule of law.

23 e. Equal justice under the law.

24 f. Private property rights.

25 g. Federalism.

26 h. Due process.

27 i. Individual rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights.

28 j. Individual responsibility.

29 A passing grade in the course shall be required for graduation from high  
30 school.



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- 1           (2) ~~Local boards of education shall require that high school students~~  
2 ~~demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the nation's founding and~~  
3 ~~related documents in order to receive a certificate or diploma of graduation~~  
4 ~~from high school.~~
- 5           (3) ~~Local boards of education shall include among the requirements for~~  
6 ~~graduation from high school a passing grade in all courses that include~~  
7 ~~primary instruction in the Declaration of Independence, the United States~~  
8 ~~Constitution and its amendments, and the most important of the Federalist~~  
9 ~~Papers.~~
- 10          (3a) Local boards of education shall allow and may encourage any public school  
11 teacher or administrator to read or post in a public school building,  
12 classroom, or event, excerpts or portions of writings, documents, and records  
13 that reflect the history of the United States, including, but not limited to, (i)  
14 the preamble to the North Carolina Constitution, (ii) the Declaration of  
15 Independence, (iii) the United States Constitution, (iv) the Mayflower  
16 Compact, (v) the national motto, (vi) the National Anthem, (vii) the Pledge  
17 of Allegiance, (viii) the writings, speeches, documents, and proclamations of  
18 the founding fathers and Presidents of the United States, (ix) decisions of the  
19 Supreme Court of the United States, and (x) acts of the Congress of the  
20 United States, including the published text of the Congressional Record.  
21 Local boards, superintendents, principals, and supervisors shall not allow  
22 content-based censorship of American history in the public schools of this  
23 State, including religious references in these writings, documents, and  
24 records. Local boards and professional school personnel may develop  
25 curricula and use materials that are limited to specified topics provided the  
26 curricula and materials are aligned with the standard course of study or are  
27 grade level appropriate.
- 28          (3b) A local school administrative unit may display on real property controlled by  
29 that local school administrative unit documents and objects of historical  
30 significance that have formed and influenced the United States legal or  
31 governmental system and that exemplify the development of the rule of law,  
32 such as the Magna Carta, the Mecklenburg Declaration, the Ten  
33 Commandments, the Justinian Code, and documents set out in subdivision  
34 (3a) of this subsection. This display may include, but shall not be limited to,  
35 documents that contain words associated with a religion; provided however,  
36 no display shall seek to establish or promote religion or to persuade any  
37 person to embrace a particular religion, denomination of a religion, or other  
38 philosophy. The display of a document containing words associated with a  
39 religion shall be in the same manner and appearance generally as other  
40 documents and objects displayed and shall not be presented or displayed in  
41 any fashion that results in calling attention to it apart from the other  
42 displayed documents and objects. The display also shall be accompanied by  
43 a prominent sign quoting the First Amendment of the United States  
44 Constitution as follows: "Congress shall make no law respecting an  
45 establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or  
46 abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people  
47 peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of  
48 grievances."
- 49          (4) The State Board of Education shall require that any high school level  
50 curriculum-based tests developed and administered statewide beginning with  
51 the 2014-2015 academic year ~~1990-91~~ include questions related to the

1 philosophical foundations of our form of government and the principles  
2 underlying the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution  
3 and its amendments, and the most important of the Federalist Papers.

4 (5) The ~~State~~ Department of Public Instruction and the local boards of  
5 education, as appropriate, shall ~~establish~~ provide or cause to be provided  
6 curriculum content for the semester course required in subdivision (1) of this  
7 subsection and ~~provide for~~ teacher training to ensure that the intent and  
8 provisions of this subsection are carried out. The curriculum content  
9 established shall include a review of the contributions made by Americans of  
10 all races.

11 (6) The Department of Public Instruction shall submit a biennial report by  
12 October 15 of each odd-numbered year to the Joint Legislative Education  
13 Oversight Committee covering the implementation of this subsection."

14 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with  
15 the 2014-2015 school year.