

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011

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HOUSE BILL 588
PROPOSED COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE H588-PCS30378-RJ-20

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.

31 ~~(2) Local boards of education shall require that high school students~~
32 ~~demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the nation's founding and~~



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

- 1 ~~and its amendments, Constitution,~~ and the most important of the Federalist
2 Papers.
- 3 (5) The ~~State~~ Department of Public Instruction and the local boards of
4 education, as appropriate, shall ~~establish~~ provide or cause to be provided
5 curriculum content for the semester course required in subdivision (1) of this
6 subsection and ~~provide for~~ teacher training to ensure that the intent and
7 provisions of this subsection are carried out. ~~The curriculum content~~
8 ~~established shall include a review of the contributions made by Americans of~~
9 ~~all races.~~
- 10 (6) The Department of Public Instruction shall submit a biennial report by
11 October 15 of each odd-numbered year to the Joint Legislative Education
12 Oversight Committee covering the implementation of this subsection."

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