

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1234 Session of  
1989

INTRODUCED BY PITTS, NOYE, J. L. WRIGHT, VROON, BARLEY, SCHEETZ,  
PHILLIPS, SAURMAN, TRELLO, DISTLER, HERSHEY, CLYMER, NAHILL,  
GEIST, JOHNSON, MAIALE, E. Z. TAYLOR, FLICK, WOGAN, LEH,  
BUNT, GLADECK, FOX, LASHINGER, LANGTRY, DIETTERICK, COY,  
BROUJOS, BATTISTO, ALLEN, FARMER, JACKSON, CAWLEY, FREIND,  
CARLSON, MICOZZIE, SEMMEL, DEMPSEY, HAGARTY, REBER, OLASZ,  
RAYMOND, CIVERA AND BUSH, APRIL 19, 1989

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, APRIL 19, 1989

AN ACT

1 Requiring a Civic Literacy Education Program for students in the  
2 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Civic  
7 Literacy Act.

8 Section 2. Findings.

9 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

10 (1) The adoption of the Declaration of Independence in  
11 1776 and the signing of the United States Constitution were  
12 principal events in the history of the United States.

13 (2) The Federalist Papers embody an eloquent and  
14 forceful argument made in support of the adoption of our  
15 republican form of government.

1           (3) These documents stand as the foundation of our form  
2 of democracy, providing at the same time the touchstone of  
3 our national identity and the vehicle for orderly growth and  
4 change.

5           (4) Many Americans lack even the most basic knowledge  
6 and understanding about the history of our nation and the  
7 principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence,  
8 codified in the Constitution and defended in the Federalist  
9 papers.

10          (5) The survival of the Republic requires that our  
11 Nation's children, the future guardians of its heritage and  
12 participants in its governance, have a firm knowledge and  
13 understanding of its principles and history.

14 Section 3. Statement of purpose.

15          The purpose and intent of this act is to include among the  
16 requirements for secondary school graduation a thorough  
17 knowledge and understanding of the nation's founding documents.

18 Section 4. Requirements for secondary school graduation.

19          No pupil in any public secondary school may receive a  
20 certificate or diploma of graduation without having first  
21 demonstrated a thorough knowledge and understanding of the  
22 Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and  
23 the Federalist Papers.

24 Section 5. Administration.

25          The State Board of Education shall adopt and promulgate rules  
26 and regulations for the administration of this act which shall:

27           (1) Include among the requirements for secondary school  
28 graduation a thorough knowledge and understanding of the  
29 Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution  
30 and the Federalist Papers.

1           (2) Specifically provide for student testing, curriculum  
2       content and teacher training to ensure that the intent of  
3       this legislation is satisfied.

4   Section 6. Reporting and accountability.

5       The State Board of Education shall submit an annual report to  
6   the General Assembly describing the specific rules and  
7   regulations issued pursuant to this act and reporting the  
8   effectiveness of these rules and regulations as measured by  
9   tests administered to students pursuant to section 5(2).

10   Section 7. Effective date.

11       This act shall take effect in 60 days.