
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2410 Session of
1992

INTRODUCED BY HANNA, SURRA, DeWEESE, STURLA, NOYE, FAJT, MELIO,
KOSINSKI, KRUSZEWSKI, DALEY, GERLACH, BELARDI, CORRIGAN AND
KASUNIC, FEBRUARY 10, 1992

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 10, 1992

AN ACT

1 Requiring high school graduates to exhibit a thorough knowledge
2 of their civic duties and responsibilities as a prerequisite
3 to receiving their certificates of graduation; and providing
4 an exception.

5 The purpose of this act is to require each high school
6 graduate to exhibit a thorough knowledge of the fundamental
7 heritage and values of the United States by a clear
8 understanding of the Declaration of Independence, the
9 Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of
10 Pennsylvania, the most important of the Federalist Papers and
11 other documents central to the history of the nation.

12 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
13 hereby enacts as follows:

14 Section 1. Short title.

15 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Civic
16 Literacy Act.

17 Section 2. Civic literacy.

18 (a) Specific documents.--Local boards of education, in

1 educational institutions which are supported by the public,
2 shall require during the high school years the teaching of and
3 requiring a passing grade in the nation's founding and related
4 documents which shall include at least the major principles in
5 the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United
6 States, the Constitution of Pennsylvania and the most important
7 of the Federalist Papers.

8 (b) Types of examinations.--Local boards of education shall
9 require that high school students demonstrate, through oral or
10 written evaluations, an understanding of the nation's founding
11 and related documents in order to receive a certificate or
12 diploma of graduation from high school.

13 (c) Curriculum.--Local boards of education shall make all
14 possible effort to ensure that the school curriculum also
15 focuses, to the best possible degree available, on other related
16 documents which have contributed to the fundamental beliefs and
17 values of the United States. Local boards of education are
18 encouraged to provide that all students demonstrate their
19 knowledge of the nation's founding and related documents through
20 community service programs.

21 (d) State duties.--The State Board of Education shall
22 require that any curriculum-based tests developed and
23 administered Statewide include questions related to the
24 Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United
25 States, the Constitution of Pennsylvania and the most important
26 of the Federalist Papers.

27 (e) Joint duties.--The Department of Education and the local
28 boards of education, as appropriate, shall establish curriculum
29 content and provide for teacher-training to ensure that the
30 intent and provisions of this section are carried out. The

1 curriculum content established shall include a review of the
2 contributions made by Americans of all races during the period
3 in which our nation was founded.

4 Section 3. Exemptions.

5 This act shall not apply to any student with a learning
6 disability.

7 Section 4. Reports to General Assembly.

8 The Secretary of Education shall submit a biennial report to
9 the General Assembly on the implementation of this act.

10 Section 5. Applicability.

11 This act shall apply beginning with the academic year
12 immediately following the effective date of this act.

13 Section 6. Effective date.

14 This act shall take effect immediately.