

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 723 Session of 2017

INTRODUCED BY RAFFERTY, DINNIMAN, LANGERHOLC, MARTIN, FOLMER, AUMENT, SCARNATI, FONTANA, ARGALL, HUTCHINSON, WAGNER, MCGARRIGLE, REGAN, ALLOWAY, McILHINNEY, SABATINA, SCAVELLO, WHITE, BLAKE, VULAKOVICH, BARTOLOTTA, EICHELBERGER, RESCHENTHALER, BOSCOLA AND BROWNE, MAY 19, 2017

SENATOR EICHELBERGER, EDUCATION, AS AMENDED, JUNE 28, 2017

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," in high schools, providing for civics <--
6 test graduation requirement FURTHER PROVIDING FOR COURSES OF <--
7 STUDY.

8 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
9 hereby enacts as follows:

10 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known <--
11 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a
12 section to read:

13 Section 1613.1. Civics Test Graduation Requirement. (a)
14 Notwithstanding 22 Pa. Code § 4.24 (relating to high school
15 graduation requirements), beginning in the 2020-2021 school year
16 and in each school year thereafter, each school entity shall
17 require a student, as a condition of high school graduation, to
18 correctly answer at least sixty percent (60%) of the questions
19 on a test that is identical to the one hundred (100) question

1 ~~civics test used by the United States Citizenship and~~
2 ~~Immigration Services.~~

3 ~~(b) Each school entity may administer the test required~~
4 ~~under subsection (a) in any grade from grades seven through~~
5 ~~twelve, and shall:~~

6 ~~(1) Determine the manner in which the test shall be~~
7 ~~administered.~~

8 ~~(2) Offer students the opportunity to take the test at least~~
9 ~~three times each year as follows:~~

10 ~~(i) Once in the fall.~~

11 ~~(ii) Once in the spring.~~

12 ~~(iii) Once in the summer.~~

13 ~~(3) Indicate that a student has satisfied the requirements~~
14 ~~of this section in a student's academic record.~~

15 ~~(c) Each student shall be permitted to take the test~~
16 ~~required under subsection (a) as many times as necessary in~~
17 ~~order to meet the requirements of this section.~~

18 ~~(d) A student with an individualized education program shall~~
19 ~~not be required to comply with the requirements of this section~~
20 ~~if the provisions of the student's individualized education~~
21 ~~program indicate otherwise.~~

22 ~~(e) The chief school administrator of a school entity may~~
23 ~~waive the requirements of this section for students in grade~~
24 ~~twelve on a case by case basis for good cause in extenuating~~
25 ~~circumstances. Waivers granted under this subsection shall not~~
26 ~~exceed ten percent (10%) of the students in the graduating class~~
27 ~~of the school entity.~~

28 ~~(f) The department shall post on its publicly accessible~~
29 ~~Internet website links to the one hundred (100) question civics~~
30 ~~test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration~~

~~1 Services and any related resources offered by the United States
2 Citizenship and Immigration Services. The department shall also
3 post on its publicly accessible Internet website any additional
4 materials that the department deems useful to school entities in
5 complying with the requirement in this section.~~

~~6 (g) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require
7 school entities to collect and report new data to the
8 department.~~

~~9 (h) As used in this section, the following words and phrases
10 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection, unless
11 the context clearly indicates otherwise:~~

~~12 "Department" shall mean the Department of Education of the
13 Commonwealth.~~

~~14 "Individualized education program" shall mean an
15 individualized education program established under 22 Pa. Code
16 Ch. 14 (relating to special education services and programs).~~

~~17 "School entity" shall mean each school district, area
18 vocational technical school, intermediate unit, charter school,
19 cyber charter school, regional charter school, or nonpublic
20 school from which a student may graduate high school.~~

21 SECTION 1. SECTION 1605 OF THE ACT OF MARCH 10, 1949 <--
22 (P.L.30, NO.14), KNOWN AS THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CODE OF 1949, IS
23 AMENDED BY ADDING A SUBSECTION TO READ:

24 SECTION 1605. COURSES OF STUDY.--* * *

25 (D) BEGINNING WITH THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR, THE CURRICULUM
26 FOR SOCIAL STUDIES UNDER SUBSECTION (A) AND COURSES ENUMERATED
27 IN THAT SUBSECTION SHALL CONTAIN A UNIT OF STUDY THAT INCLUDES
28 CIVICS-RELATED SUBJECT MATTER OF WHICH NATURALIZED CITIZENS ARE
29 REQUIRED TO DEMONSTRATE A KNOWLEDGE. THE FOLLOWING SHALL APPLY:

30 (1) AS A MEANS TO INFORM CIVICS-RELATED CURRICULA AND

1 INSTRUCTION, UNDER ANY OF THE ENUMERATED COURSES OF STUDY UNDER
2 SUBSECTION (B), A TEST SHALL BE ADMINISTERED WHICH IS IDENTICAL
3 TO THE CIVICS PORTION OF THE NATURALIZATION TEST USED BY THE
4 UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES TO SURVEY A
5 STUDENT'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE HISTORY,
6 PRINCIPLES AND FORM OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

7 (2) THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL PROMULGATE RULES AND
8 REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBSECTION,
9 WHICH SHALL INCLUDE, BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

10 (I) REQUIRING THAT THE AGGREGATED RESULTS OF THE TEST FOR A
11 PUBLIC, PRIVATE OR PAROCHIAL SCHOOL BE REPORTED TO THE
12 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ON AN ANNUAL BASIS TO HELP INFORM THE
13 OVERALL STATE APPROACH TO THE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM;

14 (II) PROVIDING A WRITTEN REPORT TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
15 OF THE SENATE AND THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF
16 REPRESENTATIVES WITHIN FIVE YEARS AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
17 THIS SUBSECTION TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THE TEST ON THE SOCIAL
18 STUDIES CURRICULUM; AND

19 (III) DEVELOPING A CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION FOR THOSE
20 STUDENTS SCORING ONE HUNDRED PERCENT (100%) ON THE TEST.

21 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.