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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 2204 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY ROTHMAN, KINSEY, LEWIS DELROSSO, JAMES, SANCHEZ,  
N. NELSON, ROWE AND O'MARA, DECEMBER 22, 2021

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, DECEMBER 22, 2021

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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 terms and courses of study,  
6 providing for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., nonviolence and  
7 civil rights instruction.

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 1555. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Nonviolence and  
14 Civil Rights Instruction.--(a) Beginning with the 2023-2024  
15 school year, and each school year thereafter, a school entity  
16 shall offer instruction in the events of the Civil Rights  
17 Movement during the period from 1954 to 1968. The instruction  
18 shall be integrated within the social studies course of study  
19 required in accordance with the State academic standards  
20 approved by the State Board of Education. The instruction may

1 also be integrated in other appropriate courses of study. The  
2 instruction shall include:

3 (1) Jim Crow-era laws in the United States, including laws  
4 which embodied the "separate but equal" doctrine.

5 (2) The leadership and tactics and strategies of nonviolent  
6 resistance to Jim Crow-era laws championed by Dr. Martin Luther  
7 King, Jr.

8 (3) The principles of natural rights and natural law which  
9 informed the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

10 (4) Passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960 and 1964.

11 (5) Passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

12 (b) No later than twelve (12) months after the effective  
13 date of this section, the department shall develop model  
14 curriculum and curriculum guidelines for the instruction  
15 required under subsection (a). The model curriculum and  
16 curriculum guidelines shall:

17 (1) Be age appropriate.

18 (2) Provide guidance for integration into social studies  
19 courses or other appropriate courses of study.

20 (3) Be made available to all school entities.

21 (c) As used in this section, the following words and phrases  
22 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless  
23 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

24 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
25 Commonwealth.

26 "School entity." A school district, intermediate unit, area  
27 career and technical school, charter school, cyber charter  
28 school or regional charter school.

29 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.