

ASSEMBLY, No. 425

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 209th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2000 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JOEL WEINGARTEN

District 21 (Essex and Union)

Assemblyman KEVIN J. O'TOOLE

District 21 (Essex and Union)

Co-Sponsored by:

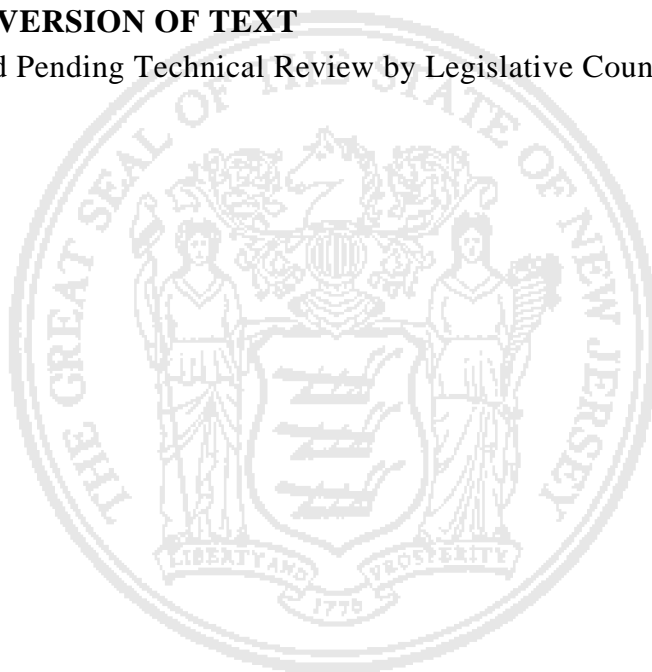
Assemblymen Blee, Zecker and Merkt

SYNOPSIS

Requires public school districts to provide instruction on the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT concerning the public school curriculum and supplementing
2 chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

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7 1. Each board of education shall offer instruction on the United
8 States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence in accordance
9 with the Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies as
10 adopted by the State Board of Education. Each board of education
11 shall align its curriculum covering these documents with the social
12 studies standards as modeled through the suggestions in the New
13 Jersey Social Studies Curriculum Framework.

14 Study of these documents and their impact on American history and
15 current events shall be ongoing, age appropriate, and shall constitute
16 annually no less than the equivalent of a full day's instruction for
17 students in grades kindergarten through 12. Instruction shall include
18 study of the primary source documents, including the United States
19 Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence;
20 and may include study of the Notes of Debates in the Federal
21 Convention of 1787 by James Madison, the Federalist Papers, and
22 United States Supreme Court decisions. Study of these documents
23 shall culminate annually in activities that promote student discussion
24 and reflection on these documents.

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26 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the
27 1999-2000 school year.

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30 STATEMENT

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32 This bill would expand the requirements currently provided for in
33 the law concerning the teaching of the United States Constitution in
34 public schools. N.J.S.18A:6-3 requires that courses in the United
35 States Constitution begin no later than the seventh grade.
36 N.J.S.18A:35-1 requires that each board of education adopt a suitable
37 two-year course of study in the history of the United States to be
38 given to each student during the four years of high school.
39 N.J.S.18A:35-2 provides that this course of study include instruction
40 in "the principles and ideals of the American form of representative
41 government as expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the
42 Constitution of the United States and particularly in the Bill of
43 Rights. . . ."

44 This bill provides that the instruction required to be offered by
45 boards of education on the United States Constitution and the
46 Declaration of Independence shall be in accordance with the Core

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1 Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies which have been
2 adopted by the State Board of Education. The bill provides that
3 instruction must include study of the primary source documents and
4 may include study of the Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention
5 of 1787 by James Madison, the Federalist Papers and United States
6 Supreme Court decisions. The bill will first apply to the 1999-2000
7 school year.