

Title 18A.  
Subtitle 6.  
Part 2.  
Chapter 35.  
Article 6. (New)  
Civics  
§§1,3,4-  
C.18A:35-40 to  
18A:35-42

P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 185, *approved July 23, 2021*  
Senate Committee Substitute for  
Senate, Nos. 854 and 237

1    **AN ACT** concerning civics education in public schools and  
2       designated as Laura Wooten’s Law, amending P.L.1987, c.425,  
3       and supplementing chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey  
4       Statutes.  
5  
6       **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
7       *of New Jersey:*  
8  
9       1. (New section) The Legislature finds and declares that:  
10      a. New Jersey law requires school districts to provide a two-  
11      year course of United States history in high school, which is  
12      supposed to include curriculum on civics, economics, and the  
13      history of the State of New Jersey; however, most school districts’  
14      curricula focus solely on a chronology of United States history in  
15      meeting this statutory requirement;  
16      b. New Jersey law also requires school districts to adopt a  
17      course of study about New Jersey history, geography, and  
18      community civics in an elementary grade; however, there are no  
19      social studies requirements for middle school;  
20      c. Civic literacy and engagement are essential to maintaining a  
21      representative democracy;  
22      d. Unlike 40 other states, New Jersey does not require school  
23      districts to provide a specific course in civics;  
24      e. By age 10, students possess the higher order thinking skills  
25      necessary for a rigorous, reflective course in civics;  
26      f. Independent studies conclude that well-designed civics  
27      education fosters an understanding and appreciation of democracy  
28      and the skills needed for participation in a democratic society;  
29      g. Requiring students to complete a civics course in middle  
30      school will ensure that all New Jersey students have the opportunity  
31      to gain the knowledge and skills for active citizenship;  
32      h. Professional development for teachers is critical to ensure  
33      effective classroom instruction; and

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】** in the above bill is  
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.  
  
Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 i. The New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The  
2 State University has substantial expertise and 30 years of  
3 experience providing professional development, sample curricula,  
4 and resources for New Jersey teachers.

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6 2. Section 1 of P.L.1987, c.425 (C.18A:35-2.1) is amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 1. The **【State Department of Education】** New Jersey Center for  
9 Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University shall prepare  
10 curriculum guidelines **【for the teaching of civics which may be used**  
11 **by】** and provide professional development for high school social  
12 studies teachers to help local school boards in fulfilling the  
13 requirements of integrating civics, economics, and the history of  
14 New Jersey as part of the required United States history course  
15 established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2.  
16 (cf: P.L.1987, c.425, s.1)

17  
18 3. (New section) Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year,  
19 each board of education shall provide a course of study in civics,  
20 which shall be taken by all students in an appropriate middle school  
21 grade. The course shall address: the values and principles  
22 underlying the American system of constitutional democracy; the  
23 function and limitations of government; and the role of a citizen in a  
24 democratic society. The board shall ensure that the course of study  
25 includes a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the  
26 equivalent.

27  
28 4. (New section) The New Jersey Center for Civic Education  
29 at Rutgers, the State University shall provide a clearinghouse of  
30 materials, an online resource center, technical assistance,  
31 professional development and any other activities to encourage the  
32 integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the  
33 teaching of United States history pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and  
34 N.J.S.18A:35-2 and to enhance the middle school civics course of  
35 study as required pursuant to section 3 of this act. The Legislature  
36 shall annually appropriate such sums as are necessary to effectuate  
37 the purposes of this act to the New Jersey Center for Civic  
38 Education at Rutgers, the State University.

39  
40 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

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44 “Laura Wooten’s Law”; requires civics instruction in middle  
45 school; authorizes New Jersey Center for Civic Education to  
46 provide curricula, professional development and technical  
47 assistance for middle and high school civics.