



Ninety-Ninth Legislature - Second Session - 2006
Committee Statement
LB 1211

Hearing Date: February 13, 2006
Committee On: Education

Introducer(s): (Cornett)
Title: Change provisions relating to Americanism instruction

Roll Call Vote – Final Committee Action:

Advanced to General File
Advanced to General File with Amendments
X Indefinitely Postponed

Vote Results:

7	Yes	Senators Bourne, Byars, Howard, Kopplin, McDonald, Raikes, and Stuhr
1	No	Senator Schrock
0	Present, not voting	
0	Absent	

Proponents:
Senator Abbie Cornett
Robert Klotz

Representing:
Introducer
Self

Opponents:
Robert Haller

Representing:
Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska

Neutral:

Representing:

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

Legislative bill 1211 would amend § 79-724 by adding new provisions to require an opportunity for students to study America's founding documents.

The new provisions would require all students to be encouraged and have the opportunity to read and study the founding documents pertinent to understanding the principles, character, and world view of America's founders. The documents would include those that contributed to the foundation or maintenance of the U.S. form of government, the Bill of Rights, and the free-market economy. Specific attention would be given to the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Federalist Papers, the Pledge of Allegiance, Patrick Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech, Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address, the writings, speeches, documents, and proclamations of the founding fathers and presidents of the United States, the

acts and published records of the U.S. Congress, and published decisions and records of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The section currently requires school districts to appoint committees on Americanism, which approve history and government textbooks meeting certain requirements. The committees are also required to assure that all teachers have a knowledge and acceptance of the American form of government.

The current provisions also require all public, private, denominational, and parochial schools, to devote at least 1 hour per week in grades K-5 to the stories of American history, the singing of patriotic songs including the memorization of the Star-Spangled Banner and America, and the development of reverence for the flag. For at least 2 grades from 5th grade to 8th grade, at least 3 periods per week are required to be set aside for American history, taught to make the course interesting and attractive and to develop a love of country. For at least 2 grades in high school, at least 3 periods per week are required to be devoted to teaching civics, with specific attention to:

1. The U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of Nebraska;
2. The benefits and advantages of the U.S. form of government and the dangers of Nazism, Communism, and similar ideologies; and
3. The duties of citizenship.

Every school board, the State Board of Education, and the superintendent of each school district are held directly responsible for carrying out the section. The Department of Education would be authorized to adopt rules and regulations to carry out the section.

Explanation of amendments, if any:

Senator Ron Raikes, Chairperson