

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA

ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE BILL 544**

Introduced by Pahls, 31.

Read first time January 19, 2011

Committee: Education

A BILL

- 1 FOR AN ACT relating to schools; to amend section 79-724, Reissue
- 2 Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to change provisions
- 3 relating to civics education; and to repeal the original
- 4 section.
- 5 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1           Section 1. Section 79-724, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
2 Nebraska, is amended to read:

3           79-724 An informed, loyal, just, and patriotic citizenry  
4 is necessary to a strong, stable, just, and prosperous America. Such  
5 a citizenry necessitates that every member thereof be fully  
6 acquainted with the nation's history and that he or she be in full  
7 accord with our form of government and fully aware of the liberties,  
8 opportunities, and advantages of which we are possessed and the  
9 sacrifices and struggles of those through whose efforts these  
10 benefits were gained. Since youth is the time most susceptible to the  
11 acceptance of principles and doctrines that will influence men and  
12 women throughout their lives, it is one of the first duties of our  
13 educational system to conduct its activities, choose its textbooks,  
14 and arrange its curriculum in such a way that the love of liberty,  
15 justice, democracy, and America will be instilled in the hearts and  
16 minds of the youth of the state.

17           (1) Every school board shall, at the beginning of each  
18 school year, appoint from its members a committee of three, to be  
19 known as the committee on Americanism. The committee on Americanism  
20 shall:

21           (a) Carefully examine, inspect, and approve all textbooks  
22 used in the teaching of American history and civil government in the  
23 school. Such textbooks shall adequately stress the services of the  
24 men and women who achieved our national independence, established our  
25 constitutional government, and preserved our union and shall be so

1 written to include contributions by ethnic groups as to develop a  
2 pride and respect for our institutions and not be a mere recital of  
3 events and dates;

4 (b) Assure themselves as to the character of all teachers  
5 employed and their knowledge and acceptance of the American form of  
6 government; and

7 (c) Take all such other steps as will assure the carrying  
8 out of the provisions of this section.

9 (2) All American history courses approved for grade  
10 levels as provided by this section shall include and adequately  
11 stress contributions of all ethnic groups (a) to the development and  
12 growth of America into a great nation, (b) to art, music, education,  
13 medicine, literature, science, politics, and government, and (c) to  
14 the war services in all wars of this nation.

15 (3) All grades of all public, private, denominational,  
16 and parochial schools, below the sixth grade, shall devote at least  
17 one hour per week to exercises or teaching periods for the following  
18 purpose:

19 (a) The recital of stories having to do with American  
20 history or the deeds and exploits of American heroes;

21 (b) The singing of patriotic songs and the insistence  
22 that every pupil memorize the Star-Spangled Banner and America; and

23 (c) The development of reverence for the flag and  
24 instruction as to proper conduct in its presentation.

25 (4) In at least two of the three grades from the fifth

1 grade to the eighth grade in all public, private, denominational, and  
2 parochial schools, at least three periods per week shall be set aside  
3 to be devoted to the teaching of American history from approved  
4 textbooks, taught in such a way as to make the course interesting and  
5 attractive and to develop a love of country.

6 (5) In at least two grades of every high school, at least  
7 three periods per week shall be devoted to the teaching of civics,  
8 during which courses specific attention shall be given to the  
9 following matters:

10 (a) The United States Constitution and the Constitution  
11 of Nebraska;

12 (b) The benefits and advantages of our form of government  
13 and the dangers and fallacies of Nazism, Communism, and similar  
14 ideologies; and

15 (c) The duties of citizenship, including active  
16 participation in the improvement of a citizen's community, state,  
17 country, and world and the value and practice of civil discourse  
18 between opposing interests.

19 (6) Appropriate patriotic exercises suitable to the  
20 occasion shall be held under the direction of the superintendent in  
21 every public, private, denominational, and parochial school on  
22 Lincoln's birthday, Washington's birthday, Flag Day, Memorial Day,  
23 and Veterans Day, or on the day preceding or following such holiday,  
24 if the school is in session.

25 (7) Every school board, the State Board of Education, and

1 the superintendent of each school district in the state shall be held  
2 directly responsible in the order named for carrying out this  
3 section, and neglect thereof by any employee or appointed official  
4 shall be considered a dereliction of duty and cause for dismissal.

5                   Sec. 2. Original section 79-724, Reissue Revised Statutes  
6 of Nebraska, is repealed.