

By: Hughes

H.B. No. 1776

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of Celebrate Freedom Week in public schools.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter Z, Section 29.903 Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 29.903. To educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values on which this country was founded, ~~[the last full week of classes in September]~~ the week including November 11 is designated as Celebrate Freedom Week in public schools. Celebrate Freedom Week ~~[may]~~ must include appropriate instruction, as determined by each school district, in each social studies class. Instruction should include study of the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, in their historical context. The study of the Declaration of Independence should include the relationship of the idea expressed in that document to subsequent American history, including but not limited to the relationship of its ideas to the rich diversity of our people as a nation of immigrants, the American Revolution, the formulation of the United States Constitution, and the abolitionist movement, which led to the Emancipation Proclamation and the women's suffrage movement. During Celebrate Freedom Week, a school district ~~[may]~~ shall

1 require students in grade levels 3 through 12 to recite [~~study~~] the
2 text quoted below at the beginning of each school day:

3 WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are
4 created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain
5 unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the
6 Pursuit of Happiness--That to secure these Rights, Governments are
7 instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent
8 of the Governed

9 On written request from a student's parent or guardian, a
10 school district shall excuse the student from the recitation
11 required by this subsection. The provision of this subsection
12 requiring the recitation does not apply to a student who:

13 (1) has a conscientious objection to the recitation;
14 or

15 (2) is the child of a representative of a foreign
16 government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic
17 immunity.

18 SECTION 2. This Act applies beginning with the 2001-2002
19 school year.

20 (b) This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote
21 of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided
22 by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does
23 not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes
24 effect September 1, 2003.