

By: Davis of Dallas

H.B. No. 2874

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishment of a state public school curriculum commission.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 7, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter E to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER E. CURRICULUM COMMISSION

Sec. 7.151. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "commission" means the curriculum commission established under this subchapter.

Sec. 7.152. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The legislature finds that:

(1) during the period beginning late in the 15th century, millions of individuals of African origin were enslaved and brought to the western hemisphere, including this country, and between 20 and 50 percent of enslaved Africans died during the journey;

(2) the enslavement of the Africans and their descendants was part of a concerted effort of physical and psychological terrorism that deprived groups of people of African descent the opportunity to preserve many of their social, religious, political, and other customs;

(3) the vestiges of slavery, including laws, segregation, and other similar practices, and the legacy of slavery have pervaded the fabric of our society;

1 (4) in spite of this history, there are endless
2 examples of the triumphs of African Americans and their significant
3 contributions to the development of our country;

4 (5) everyone should know of and remember the human
5 carnage and dehumanizing atrocities committed during the period of
6 the African slave trade and slavery in America, and be aware of the
7 vestiges of slavery in this country;

8 (6) it is in fact vital to educate our citizens on this
9 history, the legacy of slavery, the sad history of racism in this
10 country, and the principles of human rights and dignity in a
11 civilized society;

12 (7) it is the policy of this state that the history of
13 the African slave trade and slavery in America, the depth of the
14 impact of slavery on our society, and the triumphs of African
15 Americans and their significant contributions to the development of
16 this state and country are proper concerns of all people,
17 particularly students enrolled in the public schools of this state;
18 and

19 (8) the establishment of a state curriculum commission
20 will ensure that this state, on a continuous basis:

21 (A) surveys, designs, encourages, and promotes
22 the implementation of education and awareness programs in this
23 state concerned with the African slave trade, slavery in America,
24 the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of
25 African Americans in building our state and country; and

26 (B) develops workshops, institutes, seminars,
27 and other teacher training activities designed to educate teachers

1 on this subject matter, and coordinates events on a regular basis
2 throughout this state that provide appropriate commemoration of the
3 events concerning the enslavement of Africans and their descendants
4 in this country as well as their struggle for freedom and liberty.

5 Sec. 7.153. COMPOSITION. (a) The commission consists of:

6 (1) the following persons, serving ex officio:

7 (A) the secretary of state, or a person
8 designated by the secretary of state;

9 (B) the commissioner, or a person designated by
10 the commissioner;

11 (C) the governor's chief of staff or another
12 member of the governor's executive staff designated by the
13 governor; and

14 (D) two members of the board, as designated by
15 the board, with a priority given to the selection of any members of
16 the board who are African American; and

17 (2) 12 public members, appointed as follows:

18 (A) four members appointed by the governor, with
19 not more than two of those members associated with any one political
20 party;

21 (B) one member appointed by the lieutenant
22 governor;

23 (C) one member appointed by the speaker of the
24 house of representatives; and

25 (D) three additional members appointed by the
26 lieutenant governor and three additional members appointed by the
27 speaker of the house of representatives, from a list of persons

1 recommended by the Texas Legislative Black Caucus.

2 (b) In order to be eligible for appointment as a public
3 member, a person must:

4 (1) be a resident of this state; and

5 (2) demonstrate an interest in the history of the
6 African slave trade and slavery in this country and the
7 contribution of African Americans to our society.

8 (c) Appointments of public members to the commission must
9 reflect the ethnic diversity of this state and provide for
10 representation of the various geographical areas of this state.

11 Sec. 7.154. TERMS. (a) Public members serve two-year
12 staggered terms, with the terms of six members expiring February 1
13 of each year.

14 (b) A public member may serve more than one term.

15 Sec. 7.155. OFFICERS. The secretary of state, or the person
16 designated to serve on the commission by the secretary of state,
17 serves as the chair of the commission. The commissioner, or the
18 person designated to serve on the commission by the commissioner,
19 serves as the vice chair of the commission.

20 Sec. 7.156. COMPENSATION. (a) A public member of the
21 commission may not receive compensation for serving on the
22 commission but is entitled to reimbursement for reasonable and
23 necessary travel expenses incurred by the member while conducting
24 the business of the commission, as provided by the General
25 Appropriations Act.

26 (b) Service on the commission by a state officer or employee
27 is an additional duty of the member's office or employment.

1 Sec. 7.157. DUTIES. The commission shall:

2 (1) provide, based on the collective interest of the
3 members and the knowledge and experience of the commission's staff
4 and consultants, assistance and advice to public and private
5 schools in this state regarding education awareness programs,
6 textbooks, and educational materials concerned with the African
7 slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this
8 country, and the contributions of African Americans to our society;

9 (2) survey and catalog the extent and breadth of
10 education concerning the African slave trade, slavery in America,
11 the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of
12 African Americans to our society presently being incorporated into
13 the curricula and textbooks and taught in the public schools of this
14 state, and inventory memorials, exhibits, and resources relating to
15 the African slave trade, American slavery, or relevant African
16 American history that should be incorporated into courses of study
17 at educational institutions and schools throughout this state;

18 (3) assist the secretary of state, the agency, and
19 other appropriate state agencies in the development and
20 implementation of African slave trade, American slavery, and
21 African American history education programs;

22 (4) act as a liaison with textbook publishers, public
23 and nonpublic schools, public and private nonprofit resource
24 organizations, and members of the United States Senate and House of
25 Representatives and the Texas Senate and House of Representatives
26 in order to facilitate the inclusion of the history of African
27 slavery and of African Americans in the United States in the

1 curricula of public and private schools;

2 (5) compile a roster of individual volunteers who are
3 willing to share their knowledge and experience in classrooms,
4 seminars, and workshops with students and teachers on the subject
5 of the African slave trade, American slavery and the impact of
6 slavery on our society today, and the contributions of African
7 Americans to our society;

8 (6) coordinate events memorializing the African slave
9 trade, American slavery, and the history of African Americans in
10 this country that reflect the contributions of African Americans in
11 overcoming the burdens of slavery and its vestiges, and seek
12 volunteers who are willing and able to participate in commemorative
13 events that will enhance student awareness of the significance of
14 African slavery, its historical impact, and the struggle for
15 freedom;

16 (7) prepare reports for the governor and the
17 legislature regarding the commission's findings and
18 recommendations on facilitating the inclusion of African slave
19 trade, American slavery studies, and African American history and
20 special programs in the educational system of this state; and

21 (8) develop, in consultation with the agency and the
22 board, curriculum guidelines for the teaching of information on the
23 African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in
24 this country, and the contributions of African Americans to our
25 society.

26 Sec. 7.158. AGENCY SUPPORT. (a) The Texas Historical
27 Commission shall provide administrative support and resources as

1 necessary for the curriculum commission to perform its duties.

2 (b) The agency shall assist the curriculum commission by:

3 (1) distributing educational information and
4 materials to public schools in this state on the African slave
5 trade, slavery in this country, the vestiges of slavery in this
6 country, and the contributions of African Americans to our society;

7 (2) monitoring the inclusion of information and
8 materials described by Subdivision (1) in the curriculum used in
9 the public schools of this state;

10 (3) consulting with the commission on methods for
11 surveying, cataloging, and extending the degree to which
12 information and materials described by Subdivision (1) are included
13 in the curriculum required to be taught in the public schools of
14 this state; and

15 (4) conducting at least one teacher workshop each year
16 on providing instruction regarding the African slave trade, slavery
17 in this country, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the
18 contributions of African Americans to our society.

19 SECTION 2. In appointing the initial public members of the
20 curriculum commission established under Subchapter E, Chapter 7,
21 Education Code, as added by this Act:

22 (1) the governor shall appoint two members to serve
23 terms expiring February 1, 2008, and two members to serve terms
24 expiring February 1, 2009;

25 (2) the lieutenant governor shall appoint two members
26 to serve terms expiring February 1, 2008, and two members to serve
27 terms expiring February 1, 2009; and

1 (3) the speaker of the house of representatives shall
2 appoint two members to serve terms expiring February 1, 2008, and
3 two members to serve terms expiring February 1, 2009.

4 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
5 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
6 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
7 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
8 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.