

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 1776
By: Campbell
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been observed that a fundamental understanding of the founding principles of our nation's government, including knowledge of the separation of powers and how laws are made, is essential to the ability of citizens to fully participate in our democracy. Concerns have been raised that too many Texas students complete high school without such an understanding. C.S.S.B. 1776 seeks to address these concerns by requiring the State Board of Education to develop the curriculum for an elective course on the founding principles of the United States at the high school level and by requiring the appropriate governing bodies to permit and encourage the posting of the founding documents of the United States in school buildings or classrooms.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 1776 amends the Education Code to require the board of trustees of an independent school district to permit and encourage the posting in a district classroom or school building of a copy of the founding documents of the United States, including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the writings of the Founding Fathers of the United States. The bill subjects an open-enrollment charter school to this requirement and to any related rule adopted under applicable law.

C.S.S.B. 1776 requires the State Board of Education to develop the curriculum for an elective course on the founding principles of the United States that meets the requirements for a one-half elective credit under the foundation high school program. The bill requires the course to focus on the principles underlying the United States form of government, the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the writings of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

C.S.S.B. 1776 applies beginning with the 2020-2021 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF SENATE ENGROSSED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.S.B. 1776 may differ from the engrossed in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the engrossed and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute does not require each public school district and open-enrollment charter school that offers a high school program to provide an elective course on the founding principles of the United States, but the substitute requires the State Board of Education to develop the curriculum for such a course.