

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 4509  
By: Bonnen  
Public Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

There have been calls to provide Texas students with instruction in "informed patriotism," a term used by President Ronald Reagan in his farewell address to the nation in 1989, to prevent an "eradication of the American memory that could result, ultimately, in an erosion of the American spirit." Additionally, it has been noted that America's founding fathers had the foresight and wisdom to declare their grievances of tyrannical rule in writing, making a clear and concise argument for freedom from taxation and oppression, and that these writings make up the historical truths surrounding America's birth and preserve the firsthand struggles, triumphs, challenges, and beliefs by which our country was established. C.S.H.B. 4509 seeks to provide for the adoption of curriculum and instructional materials in public schools, including the founding documents of the United States, to develop students' civic knowledge.

### **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.H.B. 4509 amends the Education Code to require the State Board of Education (SBOE) and each public school district to require the teaching of informed American patriotism, Texas history, and the free enterprise system in the adoption of instructional materials for kindergarten through grade 12, including the founding documents of the United States. The bill requires the SBOE, in adopting the essential knowledge and skills for the foundation curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12, to adopt, as appropriate, essential knowledge and skills that develop each student's civic knowledge, including an understanding of the following concepts:

- the fundamental moral, political, and intellectual foundations of the American experiment in self-government;
- the history, qualities, traditions, and features of civic engagement in the United States;
- the structure, function, and processes of government institutions at the federal, state, and local levels; and
- the founding documents of the United States, including certain specified documents, which must be used by a district or open-enrollment charter school as part of the instructional materials for the related instruction.

The bill updates the stated objectives of public education in state law to reflect educators responsibility in the cultivation in students of an informed American patriotism and in leading students in a close study of the founding documents of the United States and Texas and establishes the purpose of that objective. The bill applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.

**COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 4509 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes a specification not in the original that the required teachings in the adoption of instructional materials for kindergarten through grade 12 include the founding documents of the United States.

The substitute includes a provision not in the original requiring a district or charter school to use the founding documents of the United States as part of the instructional materials for instruction relating to those documents.