By:  Toth H.B. No. 3979

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to civics instruction public school students and instruction policies in public schools.

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

SECTION 1.  Section 28.002, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsections (h-1), (h-2), and (h-3) to read as follows:

(h-1)  In adopting the essential knowledge and skills for the social studies curriculum, the State Board of Education shall adopt essential knowledge and skills that develop each student's civic knowledge, including an understanding of:

(1)  the fundamental moral, political, and intellectual foundations of the American experiment in self-government, as well as the history, qualities, traditions, and features of civic engagement in the United States;

(2)  the structure, function, and processes of government institutions at the federal, state, and local levels; and

(3)  the founding documents of the United States, including the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Federalist Papers (including but not limited to Essays 10 and 51), excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America, the first Lincoln-Douglas debate, and the writings of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

(h-2)  In the instruction of the essential knowledge and skills for the social studies curriculum, in applicable courses of Texas, United States, and world history, government, civics, social studies, or similar subject areas:

(1)  no teacher shall be compelled by a policy of any state agency, school district, campus, open-enrollment charter school, or school administration to discuss current events or widely debated and currently controversial issues of public policy or social affairs;

(2)  teachers who choose to discuss current events or widely debated and currently controversial issues of public policy or social affairs shall, to the best of their ability, strive to explore such issues from diverse and contending perspectives without giving deference to any one perspective;

(3)  no school district or teacher shall require, make part of a course, or award course grading or credit including extra credit for, student work for, affiliation with, or service learning in association with any organization engaged in lobbying for legislation at the local, state or federal level, or in social or public policy advocacy; and

(4)  no school district or teacher shall require, make part of a course, or award course grading or credit including extra credit for, political activism, lobbying, or efforts to persuade members of the legislative or executive branch to take specific actions by direct communication at the local, state or federal level, or any practicum or like activity involving social or public policy advocacy.

(5)  No teacher, administrator, or other employee in any state agency, school district, campus, open-enrollment charter school, or school administration shall be required to engage in training, orientation, or therapy that presents any form of race or sex stereotyping or blame on the basis of race or sex.

(6)  No teacher, administrator, or other employee in any state agency, school district, campus, open-enrollment charter school, or school administration shall shall require, or make part of a course the following concepts: (1) one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; (2) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously; (3) an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race or sex; (4) members of one race or sex cannot and should not attempt to treat others without respect to race or sex; (5) an individual's moral character is necessarily determined by his or her race or sex; (6) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex; (7) any individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race or sex; or (8) meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are racist or sexist, or were created by a members of a particular race to oppress members of another race.

(h-3)  No private funding shall be accepted by state agencies, school district, campuses, open-enrollment charter schools, or school administrations for the purposes of curriculum development, purchase or choice of curricular materials, teacher training, or professional development pertaining to courses on Texas, United States, and world history, government, civics, social studies, or similar subject areas.

SECTION 2  This Act applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school year.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2021.