

By: Toth, Leach, Metcalf, Bonnen, Parker,
et al.

H.B. No. 3979

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the social studies curriculum 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-2), (h-3), (h-4), and (h-5) to read as follows:

(h-2) 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;

(2) the history, qualities, traditions, and features of civic engagement in the United States;

(3) the history of Native Americans;

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

(5) the founding documents of the United States, including:

(A) the Declaration of Independence;

(B) the United States Constitution;

(C) the Federalist Papers;

(D) the transcript of the first Lincoln-Douglas

1 debate;

2 (E) the writings of and about the founding
3 fathers and mothers and other founding persons of the United
4 States, including the writings of:

5 (i) George Washington;

6 (ii) Ona Judge;

7 (iii) Thomas Jefferson;

8 (iv) Sally Hemings; and

9 (v) any other founding persons of the
10 United States;

11 (F) writings from Frederick Douglass's
12 newspaper, the North Star;

13 (G) the Book of Negroes;

14 (H) the Fugitive Slave Acts of 1793 and 1850;

15 (I) the Indian Removal Act;

16 (J) Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Danbury
17 Baptists; and

18 (K) William Still's Underground Railroad
19 Records;

20 (6) historical documents related to the civic
21 accomplishments of marginalized populations, including documents
22 related to:

23 (A) the Chicano movement;

24 (B) women's suffrage and equal rights;

25 (C) the civil rights movement;

26 (D) the Snyder Act of 1924; and

27 (E) the American labor movement;

1 (7) the history of white supremacy, including but not
2 limited to the institution of slavery, the eugenics movement, and
3 the Ku Klux Klan, and the ways in which it is morally wrong;

4 (8) the history and importance of the civil rights
5 movement, including the following documents:

6 (A) Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a
7 Birmingham Jail" and "I Have a Dream" speech;

8 (B) the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42
9 U.S.C. Section 2000a et seq.);

10 (C) the United States Supreme Court's decision in
11 *Brown v. Board of Education*;

12 (D) the Emancipation Proclamation;

13 (E) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

14 (F) the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth
15 Amendments to the United States Constitution;

16 (G) the United States Court of Appeals for the
17 Ninth Circuit decision in *Mendez v. Westminster*;

18 (H) Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of*
19 *Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*;

20 (I) the life and work of Cesar Chavez; and

21 (J) the life and work of Dolores Huerta;

22 (9) the history and importance of the women's suffrage
23 movement, including the following documents:

24 (A) the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52
25 U.S.C. Section 10101 et seq.);

26 (B) the Fifteenth, Nineteenth, and Twenty-Sixth
27 Amendments to the United States Constitution;

1 (C) Abigail Adams's letter "Remember the
2 Ladies";

3 (D) the works of Susan B. Anthony; and

4 (E) the Declaration of Sentiments;

5 (10) the life and works of Dr. Hector P. Garcia;

6 (11) the American GI Forum;

7 (12) the League of United Latin American Citizens; and

8 (13) *Hernandez v. Texas* (1954).

9 (h-3) For any social studies course in the required
10 curriculum:

11 (1) a teacher may not be compelled to discuss a
12 particular current event or widely debated and currently
13 controversial issue of public policy or social affairs;

14 (2) a teacher who chooses to discuss a topic described
15 by Subdivision (1) shall, to the best of the teacher's ability,
16 strive to explore the topic from diverse and contending
17 perspectives without giving deference to any one perspective;

18 (3) a school district, open-enrollment charter
19 school, or teacher may not require, make part of a course, or award
20 a grade or course credit, including extra credit, for a student's:

21 (A) political activism, lobbying, or efforts to
22 persuade members of the legislative or executive branch at the
23 federal, state, or local level to take specific actions by direct
24 communication; or

25 (B) participation in any internship, practicum,
26 or similar activity involving social or public policy advocacy; and

27 (4) a teacher, administrator, or other employee of a

1 state agency, school district, or open-enrollment charter school
2 may not:

3 (A) be required to engage in training,
4 orientation, or therapy that presents any form of race or sex
5 stereotyping or blame on the basis of race or sex;

6 (B) require or make part of a course the concept
7 that:

8 (i) one race or sex is inherently superior
9 to another race or sex;

10 (ii) an individual, by virtue of the
11 individual's race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or
12 oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously;

13 (iii) an individual should be discriminated
14 against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of
15 the individual's race;

16 (iv) members of one race or sex cannot and
17 should not attempt to treat others without respect to race or sex;

18 (v) an individual's moral character,
19 standing, or worth is necessarily determined by the individual's
20 race or sex;

21 (vi) an individual, by virtue of the
22 individual's race or sex, bears responsibility for actions
23 committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex;

24 (vii) an individual should feel discomfort,
25 guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on
26 account of the individual's race or sex;

27 (viii) meritocracy or traits such as a hard

1 work ethic are racist or sexist or were created by members of a
2 particular race to oppress members of another race;

3 (ix) the advent of slavery in the territory
4 that is now the United States constituted the true founding of the
5 United States; or

6 (x) with respect to their relationship to
7 American values, slavery and racism are anything other than
8 deviations from, betrayals of, or failures to live up to, the
9 authentic founding principles of the United States, which include
10 liberty and equality; and

11 (C) require an understanding of The 1619 Project.

12 (h-4) A state agency, school district, or open-enrollment
13 charter school may not accept private funding for the purpose of
14 developing a curriculum, purchasing or selecting curriculum
15 materials, or providing teacher training or professional
16 development for a course described by Subsection (h-3)(3).

17 (h-5) A school district or open-enrollment charter school
18 may not implement, interpret, or enforce any rules or student code
19 of conduct in a manner that would result in the punishment of a
20 student for discussing, or have a chilling effect on student
21 discussion of, the concepts described by Subsection (h-3)(4).

22 SECTION 2. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of
23 this section, this Act applies beginning with the 2021-2022 school
24 year.

25 (b) Section 28.002(h-2), Education Code, as added by this
26 Act, applies beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.

27 SECTION 3. Not later than December 31, 2022, the State Board

1 of Education shall review and revise, as needed, the essential
2 knowledge and skills of the social studies curriculum as required
3 by Section 28.002(h-2), Education Code, as added by this Act.

4 SECTION 4. If any provision of this Act or its application
5 to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does
6 not affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can be
7 given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to
8 this end the provisions of this Act are declared to be severable.

9 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
10 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
11 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
12 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
13 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.