By:  Creighton S.B. No. 2136

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to measures to support public secondary and postsecondary American history and civics education, including the satisfaction of curriculum requirements in American History at institutions of higher education and the establishment of the American History and Civics Project.

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

SECTION 1.  Section 51.302(b), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  Except as provided by Subsection (c), a college or university receiving state support or state aid from public funds may not grant a baccalaureate degree or a lesser degree or academic certificate to any person unless the person has credit for six semester hours or its equivalent in American History. A student is entitled to submit as much as three semester hours of credit or its equivalent in Texas History in partial satisfaction of this requirement. The college or university shall ensure that a student may satisfy this requirement by successfully completing survey courses that address the major themes of American history from the nation's founding onward. The college or university may determine that a student has satisfied this requirement in whole or part on the basis of credit granted to the student by the college or university for a substantially equivalent course completed at another accredited college or university, or on the basis of the student's successful completion of an advanced standing examination administered on the conditions and under the circumstances common for the college or university's advanced standing examinations. The college or university may grant as much as three semester hours of credit or its equivalent toward satisfaction of this requirement for substantially equivalent work completed by a student in the program of an approved senior R.O.T.C. unit.

SECTION 2.  Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.0518 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.0518.  AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS PROJECT. (a) In this section, "project" means the American History and Civics Project.

(b)  The board, in consultation with institutions of higher education, shall establish the American History and Civics Project to:

(1)  strengthen American history and civics education at public high schools and institutions of higher education; and

(2)  encourage the development and effective use of high-quality digital content and professional development materials for use in American history and civics education at public high schools and institutions of higher education.

(c)  The board shall convene an expert commission of scholars and educators to assist in the creation of the project.

(d)  Using funds appropriated or otherwise available for purposes of the project, the board shall award grants to individuals with relevant subject matter expertise, school districts, or institutions of higher education to recommend and develop digital content and professional development materials for use in American history and civics education at public high schools and institutions of higher education.

(e)  Digital content recommended or developed using a grant awarded under Subsection (d) may include interactive and audiovisual resources, assignments, and model syllabuses that:

(1)  address the major themes of American history from the nation's founding onward; and

(2)  may be used in the delivery of:

(A)  survey courses offered by institutions of higher education;

(B)  dual credit or dual enrollment courses offered by public high schools or institutions of higher education; or

(C)  public high school courses for which students may receive credit that satisfies all or part of the requirements under Section 51.302(b).

(f)  To encourage the effective use of digital content recommended or developed using a grant awarded under Subsection (d), the board shall, using funds appropriated or otherwise available for purposes of the project, support the establishment of a professional development program for individuals who teach one or more American history and civics courses, including a dual credit or dual enrollment course, at a public high school or institution of higher education. The professional development program may include an annual statewide conference.

(g)  The board shall include in the state repository of open educational resources developed under Section 61.0670 any digital content or professional development materials developed using a grant awarded under Subsection (d).

(h)  The board may adopt rules necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.