

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 821

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT  
2 relating to the essential knowledge and skills for the public  
3 school foundation curriculum and social studies curriculum.

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

5 SECTION 1. Sections 28.002(h-1) and (h-2), Education Code,  
6 are amended to read as follows:

7 (h-1) In adopting the essential knowledge and skills for the  
8 foundation curriculum under Subsection (a)(1), the State Board of  
9 Education shall, as appropriate, adopt essential knowledge and  
10 skills that develop each student's civic knowledge, including an  
11 understanding of:

12 (1) the fundamental moral, political, and  
13 intellectual foundations of the American experiment in  
14 self-government;

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

17 (3) the structure, organization, function, and  
18 processes of government institutions at the federal, state, and  
19 local levels; and

20 (4) the founding documents of the United States,  
21 including:

22 (A) the entirety of the Declaration of  
23 Independence;

24 (B) the entirety of the United States

1 Constitution;

2 (C) the Federalist Papers, including the  
3 entirety of Essays 10, ~~[and]~~ 51, and 78;

4 (D) excerpts from *Marbury v. Madison*, 5 U.S. 137  
5 (1803);

6 (E) excerpts from Alexis de Tocqueville's  
7 Democracy in America;

8 (F) ~~[(E)]~~ the transcript of the first  
9 Lincoln-Douglas debate;

10 (G) ~~[(F)]~~ the writings of the founding fathers of  
11 the United States;

12 (H) ~~[(G)]~~ the entirety of Frederick Douglass's  
13 speeches "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro" and "What the  
14 Black Man Wants"; and

15 (I) ~~[(H)]~~ the entirety of Martin Luther King  
16 Jr.'s speech "I Have a Dream."

17 (h-2) In adopting the essential knowledge and skills for the  
18 social studies curriculum for each grade level from kindergarten  
19 through grade 12, the State Board of Education shall adopt  
20 essential knowledge and skills that develop each student's civic  
21 knowledge, including:

22 (1) an understanding of:

23 (A) the fundamental moral, political,  
24 entrepreneurial, and intellectual foundations of the American  
25 experiment in self-government;

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

1 (C) the structure, organization, function, and  
2 processes of government institutions at the federal, state, and  
3 local levels, with an emphasis on:

4 (i) the structure of the federal court  
5 system and the court system of this state;

6 (ii) the role the judiciary, as a co-equal  
7 branch of government, plays in providing checks and balances on  
8 governmental power;

9 (iii) the selection of judicial  
10 officeholders within the federal and state judicial systems, with  
11 special consideration given to state and local officeholders of  
12 this state;

13 (iv) the processing and flow of cases at all  
14 court levels in this state;

15 (v) the role judges and juries play in the  
16 criminal and civil justice systems; and

17 (vi) the sharing of governance between the  
18 federal and state governments in a federalist system and the  
19 interplay between the judicial examination of legal issues at the  
20 federal and state level; and

21 (D) the founding documents of the United States;

22 (2) the ability to:

23 (A) analyze and determine the reliability of  
24 information sources;

25 (B) formulate and articulate reasoned positions;

26 (C) understand the manner in which local, state,  
27 and federal government works and operates through the use of

1 simulations and models of governmental and democratic processes;

2 (D) actively listen and engage in civil  
3 discourse, including discourse with those with different  
4 viewpoints; and

5 (E) participate as a citizen in a constitutional  
6 democracy by voting; and

7 (3) an appreciation of:

8 (A) the importance and responsibility of  
9 participating in civic life;

10 (B) a commitment to the United States and its  
11 form of government; and

12 (C) a commitment to free speech and civil  
13 discourse.

14 SECTION 2. This Act applies beginning with the 2025-2026  
15 school year.

16 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
17 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
18 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
19 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
20 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.