
HOUSE BILL 2857

State of Washington 58th Legislature 2004 Regular Session

By Representatives Delvin, Ahern, Anderson, Roach, McMorris, Condotta, McMahan, Crouse, Talcott, Nixon, Campbell, Tom, Orcutt, Hinkle, Clements, Newhouse, Woods, Chandler, Carrell, Armstrong, Schoesler, Buck, Bush and Upthegrove

Read first time 01/21/2004. Referred to Committee on Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring the teaching of the relationship of
2 the Declaration of Independence to the constitutions of the United
3 States and Washington state; amending RCW 28A.230.170; adding a new
4 section to chapter 28A.230 RCW; and creating a new section.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The Declaration of Independence makes it
7 clear "that all men are created equal and are endowed with certain
8 unalienable rights, that among these rights are Life, Liberty, and the
9 pursuit of Happiness. To secure these rights governments are
10 instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of
11 the governed"

12 The Washington state Constitution echoes the Declaration of
13 Independence. The preamble states: "We the people of the state of
14 Washington grateful to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for our
15 liberties, do ordain this constitution." Then Article 1, section 1
16 states: "All political power is inherent in the people, and
17 governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed,
18 and are established to protect and maintain individual rights." The
19 schools have neglected to teach this principle.

1 It is the intent of the legislature to give children and their
2 children's children the blessings of liberty. Schools must teach the
3 relationship of the Declaration of Independence to the United States
4 and Washington state constitutions for this to happen. This is not a
5 religion or a separation of church and state issue. The issue is
6 teaching the substance and meanings of the liberties provided by the
7 United States and Washington state constitutions as outlined by the
8 Declaration of Independence.

9 **Sec. 2.** RCW 28A.230.170 and 1985 c 341 s 1 are each amended to
10 read as follows:

11 ~~((The study of))~~ Schools shall teach the relationship of the
12 Declaration of Independence to the Constitution of the United States
13 and the Constitution of the state of Washington ~~((shall be))~~ as
14 a condition prerequisite to graduation from the public and private high
15 schools of this state. The state board of education acting upon the
16 advice of the superintendent of public instruction shall provide by
17 rule ~~((or regulation))~~ for the implementation of this section
18 into the K-12 social studies curriculum. Local school boards are responsible
19 for providing books that explain the meaning and substance of the
20 Declaration of Independence and the constitutions of the United States
21 and the state of Washington. Local school boards shall ensure that
22 each school conspicuously display copies of the Declaration of
23 Independence, the Bill of Rights, the United States Constitution, and
24 the Washington state Constitution.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.230
26 RCW to read as follows:

27 As used in RCW 28A.230.170 "teach" includes:

28 (1) Illustrating, by teacher instruction, how the Declaration of
29 Independence provided the outline for both the United States
30 Constitution and the Washington state Constitution;

31 (2) Relating sections of the Washington state Constitution to
32 statements made in the Declaration of Independence and the United
33 States Constitution;

34 (3) Teaching the heritage and meaning of this statement from the
35 Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident,
36 that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator

1 with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty,
2 and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, governments
3 are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent
4 of the governed." Suggested sources are: The Magna Carta (1215), the
5 1628 Petition of Right to King Charles I, the writings of Sir Edward
6 Coke (1552-1634), John Locke (1632-1704), the Spirit of Laws (1748) by
7 Charles De Montesquieu, and Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780);

8 (4) Requiring teacher instruction on the Northwest Ordinance, which
9 sets the requirements for states to join the union. Emphasis shall be
10 placed on teaching the educational intent of the founding fathers as
11 presented in Article 3 of the Northwest Ordinance, which states:
12 "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government
13 and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall
14 forever be encouraged ...";

15 (5) Teaching the heritage and meaning of the religious freedom
16 statement of Article I, section 11 of the Washington state
17 Constitution. Suggested student readings include: Thomas Jefferson's
18 "Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom" (1786) and James Madison's
19 "Memorial and Remonstrance." The purpose of this instruction is to
20 illustrate the struggle for obtaining "absolute freedom of conscience
21 in all matters of religious sentiment ..." as stated in Article I,
22 section 11 of the Washington state Constitution;

23 (6) Requiring that students be encouraged to memorize the preamble
24 of the United States Constitution along with the preamble and Article
25 I, section 1 of the Washington state Constitution;

26 (7) Requiring that students read and be taught George Washington's
27 first inaugural address and his farewell address and Abraham Lincoln's
28 first inaugural address and his Gettysburg address for their advice in
29 supporting and defending the United States Constitution;

30 (8) Testing, including state standardized testing, on the meanings
31 of the constitutions and on the meaning of such words as: Tyrant,
32 despotism, providence, consanguinity, rectitude, endowed, unalienable,
33 created equal, tranquility, posterity, ordain, blessings,
34 licentiousness, and "law of nature" as defined in the 1828 edition of
35 Webster's Dictionary;

36 (9) Displaying the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights,
37 preamble to the United States Constitution, and the preamble and the

1 first twelve sections of the Washington state Constitution with a note
2 stating: "For the complete text of the Washington state Constitution
3 go to the school library"; and

4 (10) Illustrating, with teacher instruction, the relationship of
5 the "Pledge of Allegiance to the United States" to the Declaration of
6 Independence and the Washington state Constitution (the preamble,
7 Article I, section 1, and Article I, section 11). This instruction
8 shall be taught at the time the "Pledge of Allegiance" is taught.

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