

By: Senator(s) Hewes, Gollott

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2255

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI CIVIC LITERACY ACT; TO
2 REQUIRE THE TEACHING OF THE NATION'S FOUNDING AND RELATED
3 DOCUMENTS DURING THE HIGH SCHOOL YEARS; TO REQUIRE THE STATE
4 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR
5 AND LEGISLATURE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CURRICULUM ON CIVIC
6 LITERACY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

8 **SECTION 1.** This act may be cited as the Mississippi Civic
9 Literacy Act.

10 **SECTION 2.** The Legislature finds and declares that:

11 (a) The adoption of the Declaration of Independence in
12 1776 and the signing of the United States Constitution were
13 principal events in the history of the United States, the
14 Declaration of Independence providing the philosophical foundation
15 on which this nation rests and the Constitution of the United
16 States providing its structure of government;

17 (b) The Federalist Papers embody the most eloquent and
18 forceful argument made in support of the adoption of our
19 republican form of government;

20 (c) The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President
21 Abraham Lincoln in 1862 clarified human rights during the crisis
22 of the War Between the States;

23 (d) These documents stand as the foundation of our form
24 of democracy, providing at the same time the basis of our national
25 identity and the vehicle for orderly growth and change;

26 (e) Many Americans lack even the most basic knowledge
27 and understanding of the history of our nation and the principles
28 set forth in the Declaration of Independence, codified in the

29 Constitution and defended in the Federalist Papers and the
30 Emancipation Proclamation; and

31 (f) The survival of the Republic requires that our
32 nation's children, the future guardians of its heritage and
33 participants in its governance, have a firm knowledge and
34 understanding of its principles and history.

35 **SECTION 3.** The purpose and intent of this act are to require
36 during the high school years the teaching of the nation's founding
37 and related documents, which shall include the Declaration of
38 Independence, the United States Constitution, the Federalist
39 Papers and the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862.

40 **SECTION 4.** The State Department of Education shall develop
41 and report to the Education Committees of the Senate and House of
42 Representatives which specifically describes the civic literacy
43 curriculum content and teacher training to ensure that the intent
44 of this legislation is satisfied.

45 **SECTION 5.** Beginning with the 2009 Regular Session, the
46 State Department of Education shall submit an annual report to the
47 Governor and the Legislature describing the effectiveness of these
48 civic literacy courses involved pursuant to Sections 3 and 4 of
49 this act.

50 **SECTION 6.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
51 and after July 1, 2007.