

By: Senator(s) Hill

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2065

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DEMONSTRATION OF PROFICIENCY IN CIVICS
 2 AS A CONDITION OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION BY REQUIRING STUDENTS TO
 3 TAKE THE UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP TEST AS A PART OF THE UNITED
 4 STATES HISTORY CURRICULUM; TO REQUIRE THE UNITED STATES HISTORY
 5 CURRICULUM AND TEST TO INCLUDE HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE BEGINNING WITH
 6 THE SETTLEMENT OF JAMESTOWN, VIRGINIA, IN 1607; TO AMEND SECTION
 7 37-16-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY; AND FOR RELATED
 8 PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1. High school graduation requirement; civics test.**

11 (1) For purposes of this section, "civics test" means the one
 12 hundred (100) questions that, as of January 1, 2015, officers of
 13 the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) use
 14 as the basis for selecting the questions posed to applicants for
 15 naturalization, in order that the applicants can demonstrate a
 16 knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of United States
 17 History and the principles and form of United States government,
 18 as required by 8 USC 1423.

19 (2) Before a student may be awarded a high school diploma,
 20 the student must correctly answer at least eighty percent (80%) of
 21 the questions on the civics test.



22 (a) This requirement applies to each student:
23 (i) Enrolled in a public school district; or
24 (ii) Pursuing a General Equivalency Diploma (GED).
25 (b) This requirement does not apply to a student who is
26 exempted in accordance with the student's Individualized Education
27 Plan (IEP).

28 (3) The State Board of Education shall provide that the
29 requirements of this section shall be incorporated into the United
30 States History curriculum required for high school students, as
31 measured by the Mississippi Subject Area Test on United States
32 History. Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, the United
33 States History curriculum and test shall include historical
34 knowledge regarding the United States of America from the
35 settlement of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607 to the present.

36 (4) The State Department of Education shall, upon request,
37 provide to the person administering the civics test the correct
38 answer or acceptable answers to each question as used in
39 determining citizenship.

40 (5) A student may take the test at any time after enrolling
41 in Grade 11 and may repeat the test three (3) times to demonstrate
42 eighty percent (80%) proficiency.

43 (6) Neither the State Department of Education nor a school
44 district may impose or collect any fees or charges in connection
45 with this section.



46 (7) This section is applicable to any student who graduates
47 from high school during or after the 2017-1218 school year.

48 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-16-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
49 amended as follows:

50 37-16-7. (1) Each district school board shall establish
51 standards for graduation from its schools which shall include as a
52 minimum:

53 (a) Mastery of minimum academic skills as measured by
54 assessments developed and administered by the State Board of
55 Education.

56 (b) Completion of a minimum number of academic credits,
57 and all other applicable requirements prescribed by the district
58 school board.

59 (c) Demonstration of proficiency in civics and United
60 States History as prescribed in Section 1 of this act.

61 (* * *d) By school, information on high school
62 graduation rates. High schools with graduation rates lower than
63 eighty percent (80%) must submit a detailed plan to the
64 Mississippi Department of Education to restructure the high school
65 experience to improve graduation rates.

66 (2) A student who meets all requirements prescribed in
67 subsection (1) of this section shall be awarded a standard diploma
68 in a form prescribed by the State Board of Education.



69 (3) The State Board of Education may establish student
70 proficiency standards for promotion to grade levels leading to
71 graduation.

72 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
73 and after July 1, 2023.

