

By: Representative Brown

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 537

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A  
2 CIVICS CURRICULUM TO BE TAUGHT IN THE PUBLIC MIDDLE AND HIGH  
3 SCHOOLS; TO PRESCRIBE THE MINIMUM COMPONENTS OF THE CURRICULUM;  
4 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** The State Board of Education shall develop a  
7 civics curriculum to be incorporated into the existing curriculum  
8 mandated for all public middle and high schools. The civics  
9 curriculum must be designed to provide students with the knowledge  
10 and social skills that are critical to the responsibilities of  
11 citizenship in the constitutional democracy of the United States.  
12 The board shall require each school district to implement the  
13 civics curriculum in the 2025-2026 school year. At a minimum the  
14 curriculum shall focus on the knowledge, understanding and skills  
15 necessary for living as an individual citizen within the sovereign  
16 democracy of the United States, social awareness and personal life  
17 management skills. The objectives must require the teaching of  
18 those skills essential to the National Standards for Civics and  
19 Government and must include instruction in the following:



20           (a) Civic knowledge which embodies the form of five  
21 significant and enduring inquiries that engage the thoughts of  
22 every citizen, including:

23                 (i) Civic life, politics and government;

24                 (ii) The foundations of the American political  
25 system;

26                 (iii) Government as established by the  
27 Constitution and purposes, values and principles of American  
28 democracy it embodies;

29                 (iv) The relationship of the United States to  
30 other nations and to world affairs; and

31                 (v) The roles of citizens in American democracy;

32           (b) Intellectual and participatory civic skills of  
33 citizenship to freely exercise one's rights and discharge of  
34 responsibilities as members of self-governing communities, in  
35 addition to the ability to think critically about a political  
36 issue, its history, its contemporary relevance, as well as command  
37 of a set of intellectual tools or considerations useful in dealing  
38 with such an issue; and

39           (c) Civic dispositions, which are traits of private  
40 and public character essential to the maintenance and improvement  
41 of constitutional democracy, which include:

42                 (i) Becoming an independent member of society,  
43 adhering voluntarily to self-imposed standards of behavior rather  
44 than requiring the imposition of external controls, accepting



45 responsibility for the consequences of one's actions and  
46 fulfilling the moral and legal obligations of membership in a  
47 democratic society;

48 (ii) Assuming the personal, political, and  
49 economic responsibilities of a citizen, including:

50 1. Taking care of one's self, supporting  
51 one's family by caring for, nurturing and educating one's  
52 children;

53 2. Being informed about public issues;

54 3. Voting;

55 4. Paying taxes;

56 5. Serving on juries;

57 6. Performing public service; and

58 7. Serving in leadership positions

59 commensurate with one's talents;

60 (iii) Respecting individual worth and human  
61 dignity by acknowledging the opinions of others, behaving in a  
62 civil manner, considering the rights and interests of fellow  
63 citizens, and adhering to the principle of majority rule but  
64 recognizing the right of the minority to dissent;

65 (iv) Participating in civic affairs in a  
66 thoughtful and effective manner including:

67 1. Becoming informed prior to voting or  
68 participating in public debate;



- 69                   2. Engaging in civil and reflective  
70 discourse;
- 71                   3. Assuming leadership when appropriate;
- 72                   4. Evaluating whether and when one's  
73 obligations as a citizen require that personal desires and  
74 interests be subordinated to the public good; and
- 75                   5. Evaluating whether and when one's  
76 obligations or constitutional principles obligate one to reject  
77 certain civic expectations; and
- 78                   (v) Promoting the healthy functioning of  
79 constitutional democracy, which entails:
- 80                   1. Being informed and attentive to public  
81 affairs;
- 82                   2. Learning about and deliberating on  
83 constitutional values and principles;
- 84                   3. Monitoring the adherence of political  
85 leaders and public agencies to those values and principles; and
- 86                   4. Taking appropriate action if adherence is  
87 lacking.

88           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
89 and after July 1, 2024.

