

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1776
By: Campbell
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

A 2019 study found that only 37 percent of Texans could pass the United States citizenship exam. However, it has been suggested that a fundamental understanding of the founding principles of our nation's government is essential to the ability of its citizens to fully participate in democracy. S.B. 1776 seeks to address this issue by requiring each public school district and open-enrollment charter school that offers a high school program to offer an elective course on America's founding principles. The bill also requires an independent school district board of trustees to permit and encourage the posting of America's founding documents.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1776 amends the Education Code to require each public school district and open-enrollment charter school that offers a high school program to provide an elective course on the founding principles of the United States that meets the requirements for a one-half elective credit under the foundation high school program. The bill requires the course to focus on the principles underlying the United States form of government, the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and the writings of the Founding Fathers of the United States. These provisions apply beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.

S.B. 1776 requires the board of trustees of an independent school district to permit and encourage the posting in a district classroom or school building of a copy of the founding documents of the United States. The bill subjects an open-enrollment charter school to this posting requirement.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.