

H. B. 2972

(By Delegate Overington, Moffatt, Sobonya, Statler, Butler, Frich, Foster and Zatezalo)

[Introduced February 24, 2015; referred to the
Committee on Education then the Judiciary.]

A BILL to amend and reenact §18-2-9 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to required courses of school instruction generally; requiring the accumulation of one and one-half years of instruction in the study of the Declaration of Independence and other founding American historical documents including the Bill of Rights and requiring study of the historical, political and social environments at the time these documents were generated before high school graduation; and removing misdemeanor penalty.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §18-2-9 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted to read as follows:

ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-2-9. Required courses of instruction; violation and penalty.

(a) In all public, private, parochial and denominational schools located within this state, there shall be given prior to the completion of the eighth grade at least one year of instruction in the history

1 of the State of West Virginia. The schools shall require regular for graduation courses of instruction,
2 accumulating to a minimum of one and one-half years of instruction, by the completion of the twelfth
3 grade in the history of the United States, in civics, in the study of the United States' founding
4 documents, specifically, the Declaration of Independence, in the Constitution of the United States,
5 with emphasis on the Bill of Rights and in the government of the State of West Virginia for the
6 purpose of teaching, fostering and perpetuating the ideals, principles and spirit of political and
7 economic democracy in America and increasing the knowledge of the organization and machinery
8 of the government of the United States and of the State of West Virginia. The state board shall, with
9 the advice of the state superintendent, prescribe the courses of study covering these subjects for the
10 public schools. It shall be the duty of the officials or boards having authority over the respective
11 private, parochial and denominational schools to prescribe courses of study for the schools under
12 their control and supervision similar to those required for the public schools. To further such study,
13 every high school student eligible by age for voter registration shall be afforded the opportunity to
14 register to vote pursuant to section twenty-two, article two, chapter three of this code.

15 **(b)** The study of the history of the United States and the United States' founding documents
16 required by subsection (a) of this section by the completion of the twelfth grade shall include the
17 study of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States with an emphasis
18 on the Bill of Rights, using the historical, political and social environments surrounding each
19 document at the time of its initial passage or ratification and shall include the study of historical
20 documents such as the Federalist Papers and the Anti-Federalist Papers to firmly establish the
21 historical background leading to the establishment of the provisions of the Constitution and Bill of
22 Rights by the founding fathers for the purposes of safeguarding our Constitutional republic.

1 **(b) (c)** The state board shall cause to be taught in all of the public schools of this state the
2 subject of health education, including instruction in any of the grades six through twelve as
3 considered appropriate by the county board, on: (1) The prevention, transmission and spread of
4 acquired immune deficiency syndrome and other sexually transmitted diseases; (2) substance abuse,
5 including the nature of alcoholic drinks and narcotics, tobacco products, and other potentially
6 harmful drugs, with special instruction as to their effect upon the human system and upon society
7 in general; (3) the importance of healthy eating and physical activity to maintaining healthy weight;
8 and (4) education concerning CPR and First Aid. The course curriculum requirements and materials
9 for the instruction shall be adopted by the state board by rule in consultation with the Department
10 of Health and Human Resources. The state board shall prescribe a standardized health education
11 assessment to be administered within health education classes to measure student health knowledge
12 and program effectiveness.

13 An opportunity shall be afforded to the parent or guardian of a child subject to instruction
14 in the prevention, transmission and spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome and other
15 sexually transmitted diseases to examine the course curriculum requirements and materials to be
16 used in the instruction. The parent or guardian may exempt the child from participation in the
17 instruction by giving notice to that effect in writing to the school principal.

18 ~~(c) Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and,~~
19 ~~upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not exceeding \$10 for each violation, and each week during~~
20 ~~which there is a violation shall constitute a separate offense. If the person so convicted occupy a~~
21 ~~position in connection with the public schools, that person shall automatically be removed from that~~
22 ~~position and shall be ineligible for reappointment to that or a similar position for the period of one~~

1 year:

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require the accumulation of one and one-half years of instruction in the study of the Declaration of Independence and other founding American historical documents, including the Bill of Rights and that students study the historical, political and social environments at the time these documents were generated, before high school graduation.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.