

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4242

Delegate Hornbuckle

[Introduced January 10, 2024; Referred
to the Committee on Education then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
 2 designated §18-2-9b, relating to establishing the Commission on American History
 3 Enrichment; providing legislative findings relating to evaluating history lessons and
 4 materials for history courses that are more inclusive of the history of historic minorities;
 5 providing for appointment and membership of the commission; requiring commission to
 6 meet and submit reports; and providing for pay and expenses of commission.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-2-9b. American History Enrichment Act.

1 (a) Legislative findings - The West Virginia Legislature finds that African Americans, Native
 2 Americans, women, and other historic minorities have contributed greatly to our communities, the
 3 state of West Virginia, and to our country. Because these citizens have in the past been excluded
 4 from the economic and social opportunities afforded other Americans, their ability to contribute
 5 and their role in our collective history has been diminished and denied, and many of their
 6 contributions have been under recognized. Many Americans have struggled reconciling the
 7 portion of our collective history that was racist and exclusionary with the broader narrative of the
 8 great beacon of democracy we as a country have strived to be and have become closer to realize.
 9 As time passes and our interpretation of our history turns into a longer view, it is appropriate to
 10 review how our collective story is told, particularly to our next generation of West Virginians and
 11 Americans, and to provide them a fair and accurate recounting that respects all the citizens of the
 12 past and honors but also addresses painful truths about our history. Therefore, the purpose of this
 13 section is to establish a Commission on American History Enrichment, comprised of experts in
 14 state and national history and student curriculum, to be coordinated with the State Department of
 15 Education, to review, recommend, and revise lessons taught the students of the state that includes
 16 fair representations of all West Virginians and Americans, and particularly the underrepresented
 17 history of the African Americans, Native Americans, women, and other historic minorities in our

18 communities, state, and nation to allow us to better understand our past so to help us to look to a
19 brighter future.

20 (b) There is hereby created the Commission on American History Enhancement within the
21 West Virginia Department of Education. The Commission shall consist of the following members:

22 (1) A faculty member from Marshall University recommended by the Carter G. Woodson
23 Lyceum as recommended by the president of Marshall University;

24 (2) A faculty member from West Virginia University's Center for Women and Gender
25 Studies as recommended by the president of West Virginia University;

26 (3) A faculty member from West Virginia State University as appointed by the president
27 of West Virginia State University;

28 (4) A representative of the State Board of Education as appointed by the board, who shall
29 serve as chair of the commission;

30 (5) Three public school teachers with an expertise in history or curriculum as appointed by
31 the state board of education; and

32 (6) Three public school teachers representing historic minorities of this state or country
33 appointed by the state board.

34 (c) The commission shall meet periodically at the call of the chair or by request of a majority
35 of the members. The commission shall review existing course materials for any history lesson
36 plans, books and material revisions and determine any appropriate revisions to content and
37 design are appropriate due to a lack of balance and consideration of the role and treatment of
38 historic minorities in the history of West Virginia and the United States. The commission shall
39 develop recommendations for age-appropriate lesson plans for history courses for public schools.
40 The commission shall at least annually provide a report to the state school board of its
41 recommendations for any of these curriculum changes.

42 (d) All actual and necessary travel expenses and per diem pay of the members of the
43 commission shall be reimbursed by the Department of Education. The per diem pay for

- 44 commission members shall be the same as for members of the Legislature pursuant to §4-2A-7 of
45 this code.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish the Commission on American History Enrichment to review public school curriculum to make recommendations for revisions of public school history course material that more accurately reflects the roles of minorities in the history of this state and country.

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