



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Sixth Legislature, Second Regular Session

VETOED
FACT SHEET FOR H.B. 2629

schools; instruction; victims of communism

Purpose

Establishes November 7 of each year as Victims of Communism Day, a non-legal holiday. Requires public high schools to include instruction on the history of communist regimes around the world as outlined.

Background

Statute requires September 25 of each year to be observed as Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Celebration Day and September 11 of each year to be observed as 9/11 Education Day, which are non-legal holidays. If Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Celebration Day or 9/11 Education Day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or other day when a public school is not in session, then the public school must observe the preceding or following school day as the holiday. Public schools must dedicate the majority of the school day to civics education on Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Celebration Day and a portion of the school day to age-appropriate education on the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on 9/11 Education Day. The SBE must develop: 1) a list of recommended resources relating to civics education for the purposes of Sandra Day O'Connor Civics Celebration Day; and 2) a list of age-appropriate education on the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, for the purposes of 9/11 Education Day. (A.R.S. §§ [1-319](#); [1-321](#); [15-203](#); [15-710.01](#); and [15-710.02](#)).

The SBE must prescribe a minimum course of study, academic standards and competency requirements for common schools and high schools. A school district governing board must: 1) prescribe curricula according to the SBE-prescribed minimum course of study and standards; and 2) approve courses of study, units recommended for credit and instructional materials. High school social studies competency requirements must include: 1) receiving a specified score on a test that is identical to the civics portion of the U.S. naturalization test; 2) a requirement that students be taught about the Holocaust and other genocides; and 3) the completion of at least a half-credit course in economics that includes financial literacy and management. (A.R.S. §§ [15-701](#); [15-701.01](#); [15-701.02](#); [15-721](#); and [15-722](#)).

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the state General Fund associated with this legislation.

Provisions

1. Establishes November 7 of each year as Victims of Communism Day.
2. Specifies that Victims of Communism Day is not a legal holiday.

3. Requires, if Victims of Communism Day falls on a day when a public school is not in session, the public school to observe the holiday on the preceding or following school day.
4. Requires, beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, any American government course required for high school graduation to include at least 45 minutes of instruction on the history of communist regimes around the world and the prevalence of poverty, starvation, migration, systemic lethal violence and suppression of speech under communist regimes.
5. Specifies that the required instruction on communist regimes may include:
 - a) Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution;
 - b) Joseph Stalin and the Soviet System;
 - c) Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution;
 - d) Vladimir Lenin and the Russian Revolution;
 - e) Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge; or
 - f) Nicolás Maduro and the Chavismo Movement.
6. Directs the SBE to:
 - a) develop a list of recommended resources relating to education on the history of communist regimes around the world that align with SBE-prescribed social studies academic standards for the purposes of Victims of Communism Day; and
 - b) establish a process that allows public schools to recommend resources for addition to the list.
7. Makes technical changes.
8. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

Governor's Veto Message

The Governor indicates in her [veto message](#) that H.B. 2629 is too prescriptive in dictating instructional requirements to education professionals and therefore urges the SBE to begin the process of updating the social studies academic standards to address the issues covered in H.B. 2629. The Governor indicates that she will proclaim this November 7 as Victims of Communism Day to share in the spirit of H.B. 2629.

House Action

Senate Action

JUD	1/31/24	DP	6-3-0-0	ED	3/6/24	DPA	4-3-0
3 rd Read	2/22/24		33-26-0-0-1	3 rd Read	3/27/24		16-13-1

Vetoed by the Governor on 4/2/2024.

Prepared by Senate Research

April 3, 2024

MH/LB/slp