

SENATE BILL 263

F1, F5
HB 324/16 – W&M

7lr1279

By: **Senators Bates, Ready, and Simonaire**
Introduced and read first time: January 20, 2017
Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education – Maryland High School Diploma – Civics Test Requirement**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring a student to take and achieve a passing score on a certain
4 civics test in order to graduate from a public high school on or after a certain date;
5 requiring the State Board of Education on or before the first day of a certain school
6 year to determine the means of providing certain high school students an opportunity
7 to take a certain civics test; requiring a student to answer correctly at least a certain
8 percentage of the questions on a certain civics test to achieve a passing score;
9 authorizing a student to repeat taking a certain civics test until the student achieves
10 a passing score; requiring certain county boards of education to indicate on the
11 official educational record of certain high school students whether the student has
12 complied with certain requirements; requiring, on or after a certain date, certain
13 alternative requirements provided by the Department of Labor, Licensing, and
14 Regulation for obtaining a Maryland high school diploma to include taking and
15 achieving a certain passing score on a certain civics test; requiring, on or after a
16 certain date, an individual to take and receive a passing score on a certain civics test
17 to qualify for a Maryland high school diploma by examination; and generally relating
18 to the implementation of a civics test requirement for a Maryland high school
19 diploma.

20 BY adding to
21 Article – Education
22 Section 7–205.4
23 Annotated Code of Maryland
24 (2014 Replacement Volume and 2016 Supplement)

25 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
26 Article – Labor and Employment
27 Section 11–807(a)
28 Annotated Code of Maryland
29 (2016 Replacement Volume)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
2 Article – Labor and Employment
3 Section 11–807(b) and 11–808
4 Annotated Code of Maryland
5 (2016 Replacement Volume)

6 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
7 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

8 **Article – Education**

9 **7–205.4.**

10 (A) ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2019, TO GRADUATE FROM A PUBLIC HIGH
11 SCHOOL, A STUDENT SHALL TAKE AND ACHIEVE A PASSING SCORE ON A CIVICS TEST
12 THAT CONSISTS OF THE 100 QUESTIONS USED FOR THE CIVICS PORTION OF THE
13 NATURALIZATION TEST ADMINISTERED BY THE U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND
14 IMMIGRATION SERVICES.

15 (B) ON OR BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF THE 2018–2019 SCHOOL YEAR, THE
16 STATE BOARD SHALL DETERMINE THE MEANS OF PROVIDING EACH HIGH SCHOOL
17 STUDENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THE CIVICS TEST REQUIRED UNDER
18 SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION.

19 (C) (1) A STUDENT SHALL ANSWER CORRECTLY AT LEAST 60% OF THE
20 QUESTIONS ON THE CIVICS TEST TO ACHIEVE A PASSING SCORE.

21 (2) A STUDENT MAY REPEAT TAKING THE CIVICS TEST UNTIL THE
22 STUDENT ACHIEVES A PASSING SCORE.

23 (D) EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL INDICATE ON THE OFFICIAL
24 EDUCATIONAL RECORD OF EACH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WHETHER THE STUDENT
25 HAS COMPLIED WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.

26 **Article – Labor and Employment**

27 11–807.

28 (a) In this section, “Program” means the National External Diploma Program
29 adopted under regulations by the Secretary in consultation with the State Board of
30 Education.

1 (b) (1) The Department and the State Board of Education recognize
2 demonstrated competencies in adults, whether or not those competencies were acquired in
3 a formal school setting.

4 (2) (I) [In] SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS PARAGRAPH,
5 IN response to its recognition of competencies, the Department shall provide alternative
6 requirements and methods of obtaining a Maryland high school diploma.

7 (II) 1. ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2019, THE ALTERNATIVE
8 REQUIREMENTS PROVIDED UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL
9 INCLUDE TAKING AND ACHIEVING A PASSING SCORE ON A CIVICS TEST THAT
10 CONSISTS OF THE 100 QUESTIONS USED FOR THE CIVICS PORTION OF THE
11 NATURALIZATION TEST ADMINISTERED BY THE U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND
12 IMMIGRATION SERVICES.

13 2. AN INDIVIDUAL SHALL ANSWER CORRECTLY AT
14 LEAST 60% OF THE QUESTIONS ON THE CIVICS TEST TO ACHIEVE A PASSING SCORE.

15 3. AN INDIVIDUAL MAY REPEAT TAKING THE CIVICS
16 TEST UNTIL THE INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVES A PASSING SCORE.

17 (3) The Department and the State Board of Education shall award
18 diplomas to the individuals meeting the requirements of this subtitle.

19 11-808.

20 (a) An individual may obtain a high school diploma by examination as provided
21 in this section if the individual:

22 (1) has not obtained a high school diploma;

23 (2) resides in this State;

24 (3) is not subject to compulsory school attendance under § 7-301 of the
25 Education Article; [and]

26 (4) has withdrawn from a regular full-time public or private school
27 program; AND

28 (5) (I) ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2019, HAS TAKEN A CIVICS TEST
29 THAT CONSISTS OF THE 100 QUESTIONS USED FOR THE CIVICS PORTION OF THE
30 NATURALIZATION TEST ADMINISTERED BY THE U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND
31 IMMIGRATION SERVICES; AND

1 **(II) ACHIEVED A PASSING SCORE BY ANSWERING CORRECTLY AT**
2 **LEAST 60% OF THE QUESTIONS ON THE CIVICS TEST.**

3 (b) The Department shall offer examinations to individuals who are pursuing a
4 high school diploma under this subtitle at least twice each year at places throughout the
5 State that are reasonably convenient for the applicants.

6 (c) The examination shall:

7 (1) be offered in appropriate high school subject areas; and

8 (2) be of a comprehensive nature as determined by the State Board of
9 Education.

10 (d) An individual who fails an examination may repeat taking the examination.

11 (e) A current member of the armed forces is exempt from the residency
12 requirement in subsection (a)(2) of this section and may earn a Maryland high school
13 diploma by achieving a passing score on the examination offered under subsection (b) of
14 this section.

15 (f) The diploma shall be awarded in accordance with the regulations adopted by
16 the Secretary and the State Board of Education.

17 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
18 October 1, 2017.