

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 308

Introduced by Brasch, 16.

Read first time January 12, 2017

Committee:

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to schools; to amend section 79-724, Reissue
- 2 Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to change provisions relating to the
- 3 committee on Americanism; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the
- 4 original section.
- 5 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 79-724, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is
2 amended to read:

3 79-724 An informed, loyal, just, and patriotic citizenry is
4 necessary to a strong, stable, just, and prosperous America. Such a
5 citizenry necessitates that every member thereof be fully acquainted with
6 the nation's history and that he or she be in full accord with our form
7 of government and fully aware of the liberties, opportunities, and
8 advantages of which we are possessed and the sacrifices and struggles of
9 those through whose efforts these benefits were gained. Since youth is
10 the time most susceptible to the acceptance of principles and doctrines
11 that will influence men and women throughout their lives, it is one of
12 the first duties of our educational system to conduct its activities,
13 choose its textbooks, and arrange its curriculum in such a way that the
14 love of liberty, justice, democracy, and America will be instilled in the
15 hearts and minds of the youth of the state.

16 (1) Every school board shall, at the beginning of each school year,
17 appoint from its members a committee of three, to be known as the
18 committee on Americanism. The committee on Americanism shall:

19 (a) Hold no fewer than three public meetings annually, at least one
20 where public testimony is accepted;

21 (b) Keep minutes of all meetings showing the time and place of the
22 meeting, which members were present and absent, and the substance and
23 details of all matters discussed;

24 (c) ~~(a)~~ Carefully examine, inspect, and approve all textbooks used
25 in the teaching of American history and civil government in the school.
26 Such textbooks shall adequately stress the services of the men and women
27 who achieved our national independence, established our constitutional
28 government, and preserved our union and shall be so written to include
29 contributions by ethnic groups as to develop a pride and respect for our
30 institutions and not be a mere recital of events and dates;

31 (d) Ensure that any curriculum that is recommended or approved by

1 the committee on Americanism is made readily accessible to the public and
2 contains a reference to this section;

3 (e) ~~(b)~~ Assure themselves as to the character of all teachers
4 employed and their knowledge and acceptance of the American form of
5 government; and

6 (f) ~~(c)~~ Take all such other steps as will assure the carrying out of
7 the provisions of this section.

8 (2) All American history courses approved for grade levels as
9 provided by this section shall include and adequately stress
10 contributions of all ethnic groups (a) to the development and growth of
11 America into a great nation, (b) to art, music, education, medicine,
12 literature, science, politics, and government, and (c) to the war
13 services in all wars of this nation.

14 (3) All grades of all public, private, denominational, and parochial
15 schools, below the sixth grade, shall devote at least one hour per week
16 to exercises or teaching periods for the following purpose:

17 (a) The recital of stories having to do with American history or the
18 deeds and exploits of American heroes;

19 (b) The singing of patriotic songs and the insistence that every
20 pupil memorize the Star-Spangled Banner and America; and

21 (c) The development of reverence for the flag and instruction as to
22 proper conduct in its presentation.

23 (4) In at least two of the three grades from the fifth grade to the
24 eighth grade in all public, private, denominational, and parochial
25 schools, at least three periods per week shall be set aside to be devoted
26 to the teaching of American history from approved textbooks, taught in
27 such a way as to make the course interesting and attractive and to
28 develop a love of country.

29 (5) In at least two grades of every high school, at least three
30 periods per week shall be devoted to the teaching of civics, during which
31 courses specific attention shall be given to the following matters:

1 (a) The United States Constitution and the Constitution of Nebraska;

2 (b) The benefits and advantages of our form of government and the
3 dangers and fallacies of Nazism, Communism, and similar ideologies; and

4 (c) The duties of citizenship, including active participation in the
5 improvement of a citizen's community, state, country, and world and the
6 value and practice of civil discourse between opposing interests.

7 (6) Appropriate patriotic exercises suitable to the occasion shall
8 be held under the direction of the superintendent in every public,
9 private, denominational, and parochial school on Lincoln's birthday,
10 Washington's birthday, Flag Day, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day, or on
11 the day preceding or following such holiday, if the school is in session.

12 (7) Every school board, the State Board of Education, and the
13 superintendent of each school district in the state shall be held
14 directly responsible in the order named for carrying out this section,
15 and neglect thereof by any employee or appointed official shall be
16 considered a dereliction of duty and cause for dismissal.

17 Sec. 2. Original section 79-724, Reissue Revised Statutes of
18 Nebraska, is repealed.