

SENATE BILL 1266

By Niceley

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,  
relative to education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1011(a), is amended by adding the following language as a new subdivision:

( ) The United States Constitution;

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1011, is amended by adding the following language as new subsection (e):

(e) Each student shall be taught the foundational instruments, mechanisms and values of American government.

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-1028, is amended by deleting subsections (b) and (c) in their entirety and by substituting instead the following:

(b)

(1) The course of instruction in all public schools shall include, at some appropriate grade level or levels in high school, as determined by the local board of education, courses and content designed to educate children in the United States government. The goal of the curriculum shall include the three (3) branches of government, the fundamental documents that underpin our form of government, an understanding of how laws are enacted, and ways citizens shape and influence government and governmental actions.

(2) Students shall be informed of the nature of America which makes it an exception differentiated by its behavior, influence and contributions from the other nations of the world; and to show students why it is a positive difference,

that has led the world to improvements in science, agriculture, economics, education, justice, human rights, the standard of living, and liberty not only within our borders, but across the world.

(3) Students shall also be informed of the characteristics of the United States government, to include:

(A) The Declaration of Independence separated our people from our former government. It explains why we were willing to war against our own king, what our values were, and how his tyranny had tried to take those values away;

(B) The Constitution is the "rule book" for how the federal government works. No action is permitted unless permission for it can be found in the Constitution;

(C) The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, with the Bill of Rights are available for all to read today, and still apply in exactly the words they originally contained in simple English; and

(D) The Constitution created a republic, not a democracy. The difference is that we do not directly choose our laws; we choose wise people from among us who will represent our interests, and who will honor the limitations we have put on them, to form our laws. Whatever needs our representatives may see, and whatever urges we as a people may feel from time to time, the government is only empowered to address certain listed issues. It is our duty to use prudence and understanding when we choose these representatives.

(c) The commissioner of education shall advise all school district boards of education of this section. All school district boards shall document and report to the commissioner their compliance with the content of courses as describe in subsection (b). Copies of this documentation shall be retained in each school for access by parents and the public at large.

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-2202(b), is amended by deleting subdivision (4) in its entirety and by substituting instead the following:

(4) In recommending textbooks for use in social studies, Tennessee history, American history or any related subject, the commission shall recommend only textbooks that accurately and comprehensively relate and explain the achievements of citizens of the United States. The text shall describe the factual circumstances of advances in political liberty, economic and technological progress, and the success of the United States as a leader in the age of industry, with emphasis on the political and cultural elements that distinguished America in this era from other nations, past and contemporary. Appropriate commentary shall include descriptions of religious, ethnic and cultural values that took America on a different course from other nations. This shall be presented to enhance the understanding of each student of the role the United States has played in leading to improvements in science, agriculture, economics, education, justice, human rights, the standard of living, government and liberty.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2013, the public welfare requiring it.