

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER DISTRICT 14

House Bill 5 Sponsor Statement

"An Act requiring a standardized statewide history of American constitutionalism curriculum and a secondary school history of American constitutionalism examination in public schools in the state; and providing for an effective date."

The Spanish American philosopher George Santayana once said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."¹ It would be an unthinkable tragedy to repeat the human oppression that existed before our country's greatest gift to humankind: The gift of awareness that we all have fundamental rights that belong to us by virtue of the fact that we are human and that the only valid government is what is allowed by the governed. These and other profound foundational truths need to be understood and preserved.

House Bill 5 presumes we are in danger of forgetting, and requires American History education to include teaching of "**American Constitutionalism**" as defined by six founding documents that established the most prosperous and powerful nation on earth: the Declaration of Independence; Early State Constitutions; the Articles of Confederation; The US Constitution, the Federalist, and the Bill of Rights.

HB 5 requires Alaska School Districts to teach American Constitutionalism and to monitor and report student learning. It also requires the Department of Education to provide a curriculum and a standard student proficiency measurement tool as a resource to be made available to school districts. Presumably, this curriculum, and even the testing process, will be efficiently made available digitally, on-line, in a format that will be usable to students, teachers, and school administrators anywhere in Alaska, any time of the day. School districts would have the option of using these resources as a curriculum or as a supplement to enhance existing district curricula to enable compliance.

Students will be required to demonstrate a level of proficiency as part of their exit exam. The Department will provide a report on the effectiveness of this mandate in its annual communication with the Governor and Legislature.

The goal of House Bill 5 is to keep Alaska and America strong and to preserve the principles that have provided the greatest prosperity and liberty this world has ever known.

¹ *Life of Reason, Reason in Common Sense, Scribner's, 1905, page 284*"