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Senator Gary Stevens

CS for SENATE BILL 29 (EDU)

Civics Education in Alaska Schools

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS (Version U)

- Sec. 1: AS 14.03.076, relating to public schools, adds a new section
- directing the State Board of Education & Early Development (SBOE) to develop curriculum and a related assessment based on the civics portion of the naturalization examination administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for immigrants seeking U.S. citizenship. The curriculum and assessment must also include systems of Alaska Tribal government;
 - requiring students to complete a semester course taught using the curriculum, or to pass the assessment established in (a) above in order to receive a high school diploma, with exceptions for students with a disability and who receive a waiver from their local school board;
 - schools are to document on student transcripts when a student has passed the assessment, with the option for the student to retake the assessment repeatedly;
 - a passing score is defined as correctly answering 70% or more on the civics assessment.
- Sec. 2: AS 14.07.168, relating to existing reporting requirements of the SBOE, to include in their annual report to the legislature:
- (5) the recommendations made by the Alaska Civics Education Commission established under AS 14.07.215 (described below).
- Sec., 3: Applies to Sec. 22, Chapter 40, SLA 2022, wherein 14.07.168(4), relating to reporting a summary and utilization of the AK Virtual Education Consortium established in AS 14.30.800, the required reporting being repealed on June 30, 2034. This section is for legal drafting purposes only and has no bearing on SB 29 itself.

Sec. 4 AS 14.07.200 is created, establishing the Alaska Civics Education Commission (ACEC) and staffed by the Department of Early Education and Early Development.

AS 14.07.205 describes the 12-member composition of Commission, including:

1. the lieutenant governor as the chair;
2. a retired judicial officer or administrative person with judicial experience in Alaska;
3. the Commission of Education & Early Development;
4. two members of the AK State House of Representatives;
5. two members of the AK State Senate;
6. five members appointed by the governor as follows:
 - a. two civics or social studies teachers, one of which teaches via correspondence studies, and one is a member of the National Education Association;
 - b. one member representing a non-profit organization that has civics as a core mission;
 - c. one member representing the Association of Alaska School Boards;
 - d. one member who is a student in good standing.

AS 14.07.210 describes the terms of office for ACEC members as being for 2 years, with vacancies being filled in the same manner as the previous appointment

AS 14.07.215 describes the duties of the Commission to include a review of best practices, pedagogies and policies for civics education, and to make recommendations and provide guidance for the State Board of Education & Early Development in implementing civics education recommendations made by the Commission.

AS 14.07.220 requires at least quarterly meetings of the Commission, which may be done electronically. Legislative Council may assist in the administration of ACEC meetings, such as providing meeting space, equipment, telecommunications and related resources.

AS 14.07.225 is routine reference to voluntary service, there being no compensation but travel expenses and per diem may be claimed for serving on Boards & Commissions.

AS 14.07.295 defines reference to the “Commission” as the Alaska Civics Education Commission.

Sec. 5: Acknowledges the effective date of the repealer (June 30, 2034) described in Section 3 of the bill.

Sec. 6: Provides an effective date for the remainder of the bill of July 1, 2023.