

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 31(FIN)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Offered: 2/7/14

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES KELLER, Thompson, Reinbold, Saddler, Hughes, Lynn, Austerman

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act requiring school districts to develop and require completion of a history of**
2 **American constitutionalism curriculum segment; and providing for an effective date."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 * **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
5 to read:

6 SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as the American Constitutionalism History
7 Literacy Act.

8 * **Sec. 2.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
9 read:

10 LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

11 (1) the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of
12 Confederation, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights were seminal
13 events in the history of the United States of America;

14 (2) American constitutionalism represents this country's greatest gift to human

1 freedom; its ideals, ideas, and institutions have influenced different people in different lands
2 at different times;

3 (3) an early understanding of American constitutionalism empowers students
4 to make rational, evidence-based decisions regarding their civic judgments, rights, and duties;

5 (4) a number of historical written documents that appeared over a span of 15
6 years continue to serve to define our national identity and our constitutional republic form of
7 government: the Declaration of Independence, the first state constitutions, the Articles of
8 Confederation, the Constitution of the United States, the Federalist Papers, and the Bill of
9 Rights; a general understanding of the philosophies and historical contexts that generated
10 those documents is an essential element in the education of Alaska students;

11 (5) the Citizens' Advisory Task Force on Civics Education Policy, in its report
12 dated January 2008, made a strong case for improving civics education; this Act should be
13 applied in the context of school district response to the recommendations in the report.

14 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.14 is amended by adding a new section to read:

15 **Sec. 14.14.095. Secondary school requirement; history of American**
16 **constitutionalism.** (a) The chief school administrator of a school district shall develop
17 and submit to the governing body of a school district for approval a syllabus for a
18 curriculum segment in the history of American constitutionalism to be taught to all
19 students enrolled in the district. An approved syllabus must ensure a student's
20 understanding of the history of American constitutionalism as portrayed in the
21 Declaration of Independence, the first state constitutions, the Articles of
22 Confederation, the Constitution of the United States, the Federalist Papers, the Bill of
23 Rights, and other historical documents produced in the founding of our constitutional
24 republic model of government.

25 (b) A district may not issue a secondary school diploma to a student who does
26 not successfully complete the course in which the curriculum segment described in (a)
27 of this section is contained. A school district may not grant a waiver of this
28 requirement.

29 (c) In this section, "district" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.990.

30 * **Sec. 4.** This Act takes effect July 1, 2014.