

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to support educational programs in civics and history, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to support educational programs in civics and history, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Strengthening Civics
5 Education Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES; RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

7 (a) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

8 (1) to support local educational agencies, ele-
9 mentary schools, and secondary schools in selecting
10 and making available to all students innovative, en-

1 gaging, evidence-based, curricula and programs in
2 civics and history that prepare them to understand
3 American Government and engage in American
4 democratic practices as citizens and residents of the
5 United States; and

6 (2) to encourage participation in the National
7 Assessment of Educational Progress assessments in
8 civics and history in grades 4, 8, and 12, using a
9 methodology sufficient to provide accurate State-
10 level data on student proficiency in civics and his-
11 tory, disaggregated so as to have statistical signifi-
12 cance for every State.

13 (b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act
14 shall be construed to supersede or preempt State or local
15 control over the content, standards, or instruction in civics
16 or history education.

17 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL**
18 **PROGRESS.**

19 Section 303(b) of the Education Sciences Reform Act
20 of 2002 (20 U.S.C. 9622(b)) is amended—

21 (1) in paragraph (2)—

22 (A) by redesignating subparagraphs (D)
23 through (H) as subparagraphs (E) through (I)
24 respectively;

3

1 (B) by inserting after subparagraph (C)
2 the following:

3 “(D) conduct a national assessment, using
4 a methodology sufficient to provide accurate,
5 disaggregated, statistically significant State-
6 level data on student proficiency for every
7 State, on student academic achievement in ele-
8 mentary schools and secondary schools at least
9 once every 2 years, in grades 4, 8, and 12 in
10 civics and history;”; and

11 (C) in subparagraph (E), as so redesign-
12 nated, by striking “history, geography, civics”
13 and inserting “geography”; and

14 (2) in paragraph (3)(A)—

15 (A) in clause (i), by striking “(2)(E)” and
16 inserting “(2)(F)”;

17 (B) by redesignating clauses (iii) and (iv)
18 as clauses (iv) and (v), respectively;

19 (C) by inserting after clause (ii) the fol-
20 lowing:

21 “(iii) shall conduct biennial State aca-
22 demic assessments of student achievement
23 in civics and history in grades 4, 8, and
24 12, as described in paragraph (2)(D);”;
25 and

1 (D) in clause (iv), as so redesignated, by
2 striking “(2)(D)” and inserting “(2)(E)”.

3 **SEC. 4. USA CIVICS ACT.**

4 Section 805 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
5 U.S.C. 1161e) is amended—

6 (1) in the section heading, by striking “**HIS-**
7 **TORY FOR FREEDOM**” and inserting “**CIVICS**
8 **AND HISTORY EDUCATION PROGRAM**”;

9 (2) in subsection (a)—

10 (A) in the matter preceding paragraph

11 (1)—

12 (i) by striking “subsection (f)” and in-
13 serting “subsection (g)”; and

14 (ii) by striking “the Secretary is au-
15 thorized to award three-year grants, on a
16 competitive basis,” and inserting “the Sec-
17 retary is authorized to award grants, at
18 the Secretary’s discretion but not less fre-
19 quently than once every 3 years and on a
20 competitive basis,”;

21 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking “or”
22 after the semicolon;

23 (C) in paragraph (3), by striking the pe-
24 riod at the end and inserting “; or”; and

25 (D) by adding at the end the following:

1 “(4) the history, achievements, and impact of
2 American representative democracy and constitu-
3 tional democracies globally.”;

4 (3) in subsection (b)—

5 (A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “, or a
6 partnership that includes such an institution of
7 higher education and one or more nonprofit or-
8 ganizations whose mission and demonstrated
9 expertise are consistent with the purpose of this
10 section.” after “section 101”; and

11 (B) in paragraph (2)—

12 (i) by inserting “representative” be-
13 fore “democracy”; and

14 (ii) by inserting “freedom of speech,
15 freedom of assembly,” after “market eco-
16 nomics”;

17 (4) in subsection (c)(2)—

18 (A) in subparagraph (A), by inserting
19 “American political thought and history, the
20 impact of American representative democracy
21 and constitutional democracies globally,” after
22 “free institutions,”; and

23 (B) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “,
24 which may include the creation or use of open

6

1 educational resources” after “subsection
2 (e)(1)(B)”;
3 (5) in subsection (d)—

4 (A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “Amer-
5 ican political thought and history, the impact of
6 American representative democracy and con-
7 stitutional democracies globally,” after “free in-
8 stitutions,”; and

9 (B) in paragraph (2), by inserting “Amer-
10 ican political thought and history, the impact of
11 American representative democracy and con-
12 stitutional democracies globally, the means of
13 participation in political and civic life,” after
14 “free institutions,”;
15 (6) in subsection (e)—

16 (A) in paragraph (1)—

17 (i) in subparagraph (A)—

18 (I) by inserting “American polit-
19 ical thought and history, the impact
20 of American representative democracy
21 and constitutional democracies glob-
22 ally,” after “free institutions,”;

23 (II) in clause (iv), by inserting
24 “or” after the semicolon;

1 (III) in clause (v), by striking
2 “or” after the semicolon; and

3 (IV) by striking clause (vi);

4 (ii) in subparagraph (B)(v), by strik-
5 ing the period at the end and inserting a
6 semicolon; and

7 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-
8 lowing:

9 “(C) support teacher preparation initia-
10 tives that stress content mastery regarding tra-
11 ditional American history, free institutions,
12 American political thought and history, the im-
13 pact of American representative democracy and
14 constitutional democracies globally, or Western
15 civilization; and

16 “(D) collaborate with local educational
17 agencies for the purpose of providing elemen-
18 tary school and secondary school teachers an
19 opportunity to enhance their knowledge of tra-
20 ditional American history, Western civilization,
21 American political thought and history, free in-
22 stitutions, or the impact of American represent-
23 ative democracy and constitutional democracies
24 globally.”; and

25 (B) in paragraph (2)—

1 (i) in subparagraph (A)—

2 (I) in clause (i), by striking
3 “and” after the semicolon;

4 (II) in clause (ii), by striking
5 “and” after the semicolon and insert-
6 ing “or”; and

7 (III) by adding at the end the
8 following:

9 “(iii) Federal or State humanities
10 programs, which may include those funded
11 by the National Endowment for the Hu-
12 manities; and”; and

13 (ii) by amending subparagraph (B) to
14 read as follows:

15 “(B) the creation and use of open edu-
16 cational resources on traditional American his-
17 tory, Western civilization, American political
18 thought and history, free institutions, or the
19 impact of American representative democracy
20 and constitutional democracies globally.”;

21 (7) by redesignating subsection (f) as sub-
22 section (g);

23 (8) in subsection (g), as redesignated by para-
24 graph (7), by striking “2009” and inserting “2027”;
25 and

1 (9) by inserting after subsection (e) the fol-
2 lowing:

3 “(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
4 tion shall be construed to authorize the Secretary to pre-
5 scribe an American political thought and history cur-
6 riculum.”.

7 **SEC. 5. AMERICA250 CIVICS CLEARINGHOUSE.**

8 Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment
9 of this Act, the Secretary of Education, in consultation
10 with the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of the Inte-
11 rior, shall establish a publicly available website, to be
12 known as the “America250 Civics Clearinghouse”, that
13 lists and describes Federal scholarship and fellowship op-
14 portunities for students and teachers that have a nexus
15 with civics and are offered by the Department of Edu-
16 cation, the Department of Labor, the Department of the
17 Interior, the National Endowment for the Humanities, or
18 any other Federal agencies.