

State of Arkansas

96th General Assembly

Regular Session, 2027

A Bill

SENATE BILL ____

By: Joshua P. Irby

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO REQUIRE CIVIC EDUCATION IN ALL ARKANSAS ACCREDITED
GOVERNMENT-FUNDED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS; TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS,
CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES.

Subtitle

AN ACT TO REQUIRE CIVIC EDUCATION IN ALL ARKANSAS ACCREDITED
GOVERNMENT-FUNDED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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

SECTION 1. TITLE.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "*Civic Education Act.*"

SECTION 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

1. A well-informed citizenry is essential to the preservation of democracy and the principles of the Constitution of the United States and the State of Arkansas;
2. Civic education fosters an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens, the structure and function of government, and the importance of civic engagement;
3. Many students graduate without a fundamental knowledge of American government, history, and civic responsibilities; and
4. Establishing a standardized civic education curriculum will ensure that all Arkansas students are equipped with the knowledge necessary to participate effectively in the democratic process.

(b) The purpose of this act is to establish and require a comprehensive civic education

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curriculum in all Arkansas accredited government-funded educational institutions.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

(a) As used in this act:

1. "Civic education" means the study of the rights and duties of citizenship, government institutions, the United States Constitution, the Arkansas Constitution, and the democratic principles upon which the state and nation are founded;
2. "Educational institution" means any elementary, secondary, or postsecondary school or institution that receives state funding, in whole or in part, and is accredited by the State Board;
3. "State Board" means the Arkansas State Board of Education.

SECTION 4. CIVIC EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.

(a) The State Board shall develop and implement a civic education curriculum for students in grades K–12 in all educational institutions as defined in Section 3(a)(2), including but not limited to:

1. The foundational principles of American democracy;
2. The structure and functions of federal, state, and local government;
3. The rights and responsibilities of citizens;
4. The importance of voting and civic engagement;
5. The history and principles of the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Arkansas Constitution, and the Bill of Rights;
6. The role of civil discourse in a democratic society; and
7. An emphasis on the role of Arkansas in American history and government.

(b) All students in grades 9–12 at educational institutions shall be required to complete at least three semesters of civic education as a graduation requirement.

(c) Postsecondary educational institutions shall incorporate civic education coursework as part of their general education curriculum requirements.

SECTION 5. IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

(a) The State Board shall oversee the development and implementation of civic education standards in coordination with educational institutions.

(b) Educational institutions shall integrate civic education into their existing social studies curriculum and may use supplemental programs approved by the State Board.

(c) The State Board shall provide teacher training and professional development to ensure the effective delivery of civic education content.

(d) The State Board shall conduct an annual review of civic education programs and provide a report to the General Assembly detailing progress, challenges, and recommendations for improvement.

SECTION 6. CURRICULUM STANDARDS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.

(a) The State Board shall establish rigorous standards for history and social studies curricula to ensure content is grounded in factual accuracy and balanced perspectives.

(b) The curriculum shall:

1. Emphasize the use of primary sources, critical analysis, and comprehensive historical perspectives;
2. Prevent ideological bias and revisionist interpretations by ensuring content reflects verifiable historical facts; and
3. Encourage students to engage with a broad spectrum of perspectives to develop a well-rounded understanding of history and civic responsibility.

(c) Educational content shall remain free from political indoctrination and ideologically motivated narratives, preserving academic integrity and fostering independent critical thinking.

SECTION 7. FUNDING.

(a) The implementation of this act shall be funded through appropriations by the General Assembly and any available federal or private grants designated for civic education.

(b) No additional fees shall be imposed on students or parents for participation in civic education courses required by this act.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This act shall take effect on January 1, 2028.

SECTION 9. SEVERABILITY.

If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this act that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end, the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.