

Date of Hearing: June 19, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
SCR 6 (Nielsen) – As Introduced January 22, 2019

SENATE VOTE: 38-0

SUBJECT: Celebrate Freedom Week

SUMMARY: Recognizes the week of September 15 to September 21, 2019 as Celebrate Freedom Week, and calls upon all public schools to honor Constitution Day. Specifically, **this resolution:**

- 1) States that students should be educated about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values on which this country was founded.
- 2) States that, federally, Constitution Day is observed in recognition of the adoption of the United States Constitution and of those who have become United States citizens, and is normally observed on September 17, the date in 1787 that delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia signed the document.
- 3) States that discussion about the meaning and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution should be promoted, with an emphasis on the Preamble and the Bill of Rights, in light of the documents' historical context.
- 4) States that the relationship between the ideas in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution and subsequent American history should be examined, as well as understanding the intent, meaning, and importance of those documents.
- 5) States that the rich diversity of our people as a nation of immigrants, the American Revolution, the formulation of the United States Constitution, the abolitionist movement and how it led to the adoption of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the women's suffrage movement should be celebrated.
- 6) States that students should be encouraged to study and recite the following language from the Declaration of Independence that sums up the American philosophy of freedom: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."
- 7) Resolves by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, that the Legislature recognizes the week of September 15 to September 21, 2019, inclusive, as Celebrate Freedom Week, and calls upon all public schools maintaining kindergarten or any of grades 1 through 12, inclusive, to honor Constitution Day.
- 8) Resolves, that the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires local educational agencies to adopt a course of study for grades 7-12 which includes English, mathematics, science, history-social studies, and other subjects.
- 2) Establishes the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) and requires, upon request by the State Board of Education, that it make recommendations on courses of study.
- 3) Requires any individual issued a California teaching credential to have passed an examination, or completed two semester units of coursework, on the provisions and principles of the Constitution of the United States.

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

COMMENTS:

Need for the resolution. The author states, “There are currently five states that recognize ‘Celebrate Freedom Week.’ Texas and Oklahoma were the first two states to honor Celebrate Freedom Week by writing it into law in 2001. Since then, Florida, Kansas, and Arkansas have also chosen to observe Celebrate Freedom Week. Some states have decided to recognize it during the week that includes Veterans Day, while others honor it during the week that includes Constitution Day.

It is time for California to join these patriotic states by designating our own Celebrate Freedom Week. Currently in California, 8th grade students are required to study the United States Constitution and related documents to better understand our nation’s founding and the bountiful freedoms that are given to us through said documents. Records of such importance should be shared with all ages in a manner appropriate to each age group.

It is the goal of Senate Concurrent Resolution 6 to promote the teaching of the United States Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and related American historical documents, starting in kindergarten up through grades 1 through 12.

Celebrate Freedom Week will celebrate the rich diversity of our people as a nation of immigrants, through the Emancipation Proclamation, women’s suffrage, and our unalienable rights as designated in the United States Constitution.”

Celebrate Freedom Week in other states. Celebrate Freedom Week is intended to highlight the origins of the United States government with particular emphasis on the role of the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

It is officially recognized in five states, including Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. While specifications differ state to state, Celebrate Freedom Week in these five states is a mandate requiring public school curricula to “educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values on which this country was founded,” with a focus on the founding documents.

Related legislation. AB 1599 (Committee on Education), Chapter 327, Statutes of 2014, allowed the IQC to consider incorporating the following historical documents into the history-

social framework: The Magna Carta, The Articles of Confederation, and the California Constitution.

AB 2525 (Committee on Education), Chapter 896, Statutes of 2003, requires the IQC to revise the history-social science curriculum framework to include the following historical documents: The Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, Federalist Papers, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Gettysburg Address, and George Washington's Farewell Address.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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