

By Mr. Birmingham, petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 202) of Thomas F. Birmingham for legislation to provide for civic literacy in the schools of the Commonwealth. Education, Arts and Humanities.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Ninety-Two.

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AN ACT PROVIDING FOR CIVIC LITERACY IN THE SCHOOLS OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The adoption of the Declaration of Independ-  
2 ence in seventeen hundred and seventy-six and the signing of the  
3 United States Constitution were principal events in the history of  
4 the United States — the Declaration of Independence providing  
5 the philosophical foundation on which this nation rests and the  
6 Constitution of the United States providing its structure of  
7 government;

8 (B) The Federalist Papers embody the most eloquent and  
9 forceful argument made in support of the adoption of our  
10 republican form of government;

11 (C) These documents stand as the foundation of our form of  
12 democracy providing at the same time the touchstone of our  
13 national identity and the vehicle for orderly growth and change;

14 (D) Many Americans lack even the most basic knowledge and  
15 understanding about the history of our nation and the principles  
16 set forth in the Declaration of Independence, codified in the  
17 Constitution and defended in the Federalist Papers; and

18 (E) The survival of the republic requires that our nation's  
19 children — the future guardians of its heritage and participants  
20 in its governance — have a firm knowledge and understanding  
21 of its principles and history.

22 The board of education shall:

23 (A) Require during the high school years the teaching of the  
24 nation's founding and related documents which shall include at  
25 least the major principles in the Declaration of Independence, the  
26 United States Constitution and the most important of the  
27 Federalist Papers.

28 (B) Require that before receiving a certificate or diploma of  
29 graduation from high school a student must have a thorough  
30 knowledge and understanding of these Founding and related  
31 documents.

1 SECTION 2. The Board of Education shall adopt and  
2 promulgate rules and regulations for the administration of this  
3 Act; said rules and regulations to:

4 (A) Include among the requirements for secondary school and  
5 graduation a passing grade in all courses including primary  
6 instruction in the Declaration of Independence, the United States  
7 Constitution and the Federalist Papers; and

8 (B) Include in any standard state testing of high school students  
9 questions related to the Declaration of Independence the United  
10 States Constitution and the Federalist Papers.

11 (C) Specifically provide for curriculum content and teacher  
12 training to ensure that the intent of this legislation is satisfied.

1 SECTION 3. The Board of Education shall submit an annual  
2 report to the legislature describing the specific rules and  
3 regulations issued pursuant to this act and reporting the  
4 effectiveness of these rules and regulations as measured by the  
5 passage of these courses involved pursuant to clause (A) and (B)  
6 of section three.