

HOUSE BILL NO. 5

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE KELLER

Introduced: 1/18/11

Referred: Education, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act requiring a standardized statewide history of American constitutionalism**
2 **curriculum and a secondary school history of American constitutionalism examination**
3 **in public schools in the state; and providing for an effective date."**

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

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

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

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

11 LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

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

1 (2) American constitutionalism represents this country's greatest gift to human
2 freedom; its ideals, ideas, and institutions have influenced different people in different lands
3 at different times;

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

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

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

15 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.03 is amended by adding a new section to read:

16 **Sec. 14.03.072. Statewide history of American constitutionalism**
17 **curriculum and examination; annual report.** (a) The board shall establish by
18 regulation statewide curriculum and examination standards at all grade levels to ensure
19 and test students' understanding of the history of American constitutionalism as
20 portrayed in the Declaration of Independence, the first state constitutions, the Articles
21 of Confederation, the Constitution of the United States, the Federalist Papers, the Bill
22 of Rights, and other historical documents produced in the founding of our
23 constitutional republic model of government.

24 (b) The department shall prepare and submit an annual report to the governor
25 and to the legislature that describes the regulations adopted under this section and
26 measures the success of the curriculum and examination.

27 * **Sec. 4.** AS 14.03.075(a) is amended to read:

28 (a) A student may not be issued a secondary school diploma unless the student
29 passes a competency examination in the areas of reading, English, **history of**
30 **American constitutionalism,** and mathematics or receives a waiver from the
31 governing body. A governing body may not grant a waiver to a student before the

1 student's final semester of attendance. The department shall determine the form and
2 contents of the examination and shall score completed examinations.

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

5 **TRANSITION: REGULATIONS.** The Department of Education and Early
6 Development may proceed to adopt regulations authorized by sec. 3 of this Act. The
7 regulations may not take effect before the effective date of sec. 3 of this Act.

8 * **Sec. 6.** Section 5 of this Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

9 * **Sec. 7.** Except as provided in sec. 6 of this Act, this Act takes effect July 1, 2012.