LC004493

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2018

AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION - CIVIC LITERACY

Introduced By: Senators Paolino, Morgan, Pearson, Raptakis, and Kettle

Date Introduced: February 15, 2018

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1	SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended
2	by adding thereto the following chapter:
3	CHAPTER 22.3
4	THE CIVICS LITERACY ACT
5	<u>16-22.3-1. Short title.</u>
6	This chapter shall be known and may be cited as "The Civics Literacy Act".
7	16-22.3-2. Legislative findings.
8	The legislature finds and declares that:
9	(1) The adoption of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the signing of the
10	United States Constitution were principal events in the history of the United States, the
11	Declaration of Independence providing the philosophical foundation on which this nation rests
12	and the Constitution of the United States providing its structure of government.
13	(2) The Federalist Papers embody the most eloquent and forceful argument made in
14	support of the adoption of our republican form of government.
15	(3) These documents stand as the foundation of our form of democracy providing at the
16	same time the basis of our national identity and the vehicle for orderly growth and change.
17	(4) Many Americans lack even the most basic knowledge and understanding of the
18	history of our nation and the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence, codified in
19	the Constitution and defended in the Federalist Paners

(5) The survival of the republic requires that our nation's children, the future guardians of
its heritage, and participants in its governance, have a firm knowledge and understanding of its
principles and history.
<u>16-22.3-3. Purpose.</u>
The purpose and intent of this chapter is to require, during the high school years, the
teaching of the nation's founding and related documents, which shall include the Declaration of
Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Federalist Papers.
16-22.3-4. Administration.
The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall adopt and promulgate
rules and regulations for the administration of this chapter to:
(1) Participants in the course(s) of study address and answer questions on the contents of
the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Federalist Papers; and
(2) Specifically provide for curriculum content and teacher training to ensure that the
intent of this legislation is satisfied.
16-22.3-5. Reporting and accountability.
The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall submit an annual report
to the governor and the legislature describing the specific rules and regulations issued pursuant to
this chapter and reporting the effectiveness of these rules and regulations as measured by the
passage of the course or courses required by § 16-22.3-3.
<u>16-22.3-6. Severability.</u>
If any provisions of this chapter are declared unconstitutional, or the applicability of any
provisions to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the constitutionality of the remainder of
this chapter and its applicability to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

EXPLANATION

BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

OF

AN ACT

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This act would require the commissioner of elementary and secondary education to adopt
a course of study on the nation's founding and related documents, including the Declaration of
Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Federalist Papers.

This act would take effect upon passage.

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