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H.455

Introduced by Representatives Brumsted of Shelburne, Andriano of Orwell,
Anthony of Barre City, Arrison of Weathersfield, Berbeco of
Winooski, Black of Essex, Bluemle of Burlington, Bos-Lun of
Westminster, Brennan of Colchester, Burke of Brattleboro,
Carroll of Bennington, Chase of Colchester, Chesnut-
Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Cina of Burlington,
Demrow of Corinth, Dodge of Essex, Dolan of Essex Junction,
Farlice-Rubio of Barnet, Galfetti of Barre Town, Garofano of
Essex, Gregoire of Fairfield, Hango of Berkshire, Harrison of
Chittenden, Headrick of Burlington, Hooper of Burlington,
Houghton of Essex Junction, Howard of Rutland City, Hyman
of South Burlington, Jerome of Brandon, Leavitt of Grand Isle,
McCann of Montpelier, McGill of Bridport, Mihaly of Calais,
Minier of South Burlington, Morrissey of Bennington,
Mrowicki of Putney, Mulvaney-Stanak of Burlington, Nicoll of
Ludlow, Noyes of Wolcott, Nugent of South Burlington,
O'Brien of Tunbridge, Page of Newport City, Pajala of
Londonderry, Pearl of Danville, Rice of Dorset, Satcowitz of
Randolph, Scheu of Middlebury, Sabilia of Dover, Sims of
Craftsbury, Small of Winooski, Squirrel of Underhill, Stebbins

1 of Burlington, Stone of Burlington, Taylor of Colchester,
2 Templeman of Brownington, Toof of St. Albans Town, Torre of
3 Moretown, Walker of Swanton, White of Bethel, and Whitman
4 of Bennington

5 Referred to Committee on

6 Date:

7 Subject: Education; secondary education; course of study; civics

8 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require public
9 high school students to pass a civics test as a condition of graduation.

10 An act relating to the requirement to pass a civics test for high school
11 graduation

12 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

13 Sec. 1. GOALS

14 In order to ensure that Vermont public school students who are awarded a
15 high school diploma have a basic understanding of U.S. civics and history and
16 to promote and encourage active and engaged citizenship, Vermont students
17 shall pass, as a condition of being awarded a high school diploma, the basic
18 civics test produced by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and
19 administered to all applicants for U.S. citizenship.

1 Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 914 is added to read:

2 § 914. HIGH SCHOOL CIVICS EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

3 (a) Vermont students shall, as a condition of being awarded a high school
4 diploma, successfully complete one of the following options related to civics
5 education:

6 (1) Take and receive a passing grade on the U.S. citizenship civics test,
7 produced by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and administered
8 to all applicants for U.S. citizenship, subject to the following terms and
9 conditions:

10 (A) students shall be tested on all questions on the civics test, with a
11 minimum score of 60 percent required for passage; and

12 (B) students may take the civics test as many times as may be
13 necessary for passage.

14 (2) Complete one semester of community service by volunteering with a
15 local government office, subject to the following terms and conditions:

16 (A) Students shall work with a local government mentor, who shall
17 be an official or employee of the student's chosen local government
18 organization.

19 (B) Students shall submit proof of completion on a form developed
20 by the school district and signed by the student's local government mentor.

1 The school district may require additional written updates regarding the status
2 of the student’s volunteer experience.

3 (b) This section shall apply to all students who are awarded a high school
4 diploma who attend a State public school or career technical center. This
5 section shall not apply to students who have an individualized education
6 program (IEP), but such students may participate in this requirement at the
7 discretion of the student’s IEP team.

8 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

9 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2023 and shall apply to high school
10 students who graduate in or after the 2025–2026 academic year.