

STATE OF NEW YORK

6218

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

May 11, 2017

Introduced by Sen. SAVINO -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to requiring that civic education courses be provided in all schools

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Subdivisions 1 and 3 of section 801 of the education law,
2 as amended by chapter 574 of the laws of 1997, are amended to read as
3 follows:

4 1. In order to promote a spirit of patriotic and civic service and
5 obligation and to foster in the children of the state moral and intel-
6 lectual qualities which are essential in preparing to meet the obli-
7 gations of citizenship in peace or in war, the regents of The University
8 of the State of New York shall prescribe courses of instruction in
9 patriotism, citizenship, civic education including the roles of federal,
10 state, and local government, the structures and functions of the legis-
11 lative, executive, and judicial branches of government, and democratic
12 participation, and human rights issues, with particular attention to the
13 study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery (including the freedom
14 trail and underground railroad), the Holocaust, and the mass starvation
15 in Ireland from 1845 to 1850, to be maintained and followed in all the
16 schools of the state. The boards of education and trustees of the
17 several cities and school districts of the state shall require instruc-
18 tion to be given in such courses, by the teachers employed in the
19 schools therein. All pupils attending such schools, over the age of
20 eight years, shall attend upon such instruction.

21 Similar courses of instruction shall be prescribed and maintained in
22 private schools in the state, and all pupils in such schools over eight
23 years of age shall attend upon such courses. If such courses are not so
24 established and maintained in a private school, attendance upon instruc-
25 tion in such school shall not be deemed substantially equivalent to

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 instruction given to pupils of like age in the public schools of the
2 city or district in which such pupils reside.

3 3. The regents shall determine the subjects to be included in such
4 courses of instruction in patriotism, citizenship, civic education
5 including the roles of federal, state, and local government, the struc-
6 tures and functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches
7 of government, and democratic participation, and human rights issues,
8 with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide,
9 slavery (including the freedom trail and underground railroad), the
10 Holocaust, and the mass starvation in Ireland from 1845 to 1850, and in
11 the history, meaning, significance and effect of the provisions of the
12 constitution of the United States, the amendments thereto, the declara-
13 tion of independence, the constitution of the state of New York and the
14 amendments thereto, and the period of instruction in each of the grades
15 in such subjects. They shall adopt rules providing for attendance upon
16 such instruction and for such other matters as are required for carrying
17 into effect the objects and purposes of this section. The commissioner
18 shall be responsible for the enforcement of such section and shall cause
19 to be inspected and supervise the instruction to be given in such
20 subjects. The commissioner may, in his discretion, cause all or a
21 portion of the public school money to be apportioned to a district or
22 city to be withheld for failure of the school authorities of such
23 district or city to provide instruction in such courses and to compel
24 attendance upon such instruction, as herein prescribed, and for a non-
25 compliance with the rules of the regents adopted as herein provided.

26 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.