



[HF 2544](#) – Iowa History Initiative (LSB5263HV)
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Fiscal Note Version – As amended and passed by the House

Description

[House File 2544](#) relates to the instruction of social studies and civics in school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools. The Bill creates requirements for social studies curricula at various grades. Students in grades 9 through 12 will be required to take one civics course prior to graduating, for which the Bill provides subjects to be included and requires the students to be examined at the end of the course on certain topics. School districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and the instructor of the course are prohibited from developing the examination. The Bill establishes curriculum and reporting requirements related to education on the Holocaust for middle school and high school students.

The Bill also creates a new examination, course requirements, and prohibitions related to civics education for baccalaureate students at the institutions governed by the Board of Regents (BOR). New baccalaureate students will be required to pass a civics examination prior to graduating or progressing to more advanced civics courses.

Background

Iowa Code section [256.11](#) establishes PK-12 educational standards for public and nonpublic schools. Currently, in grades one through eight, schools are required to provide instruction in social studies. In grades 9 through 12, schools must offer and teach five units of social studies, and courses must include information related to elections, including how to register and vote, the United States government, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. There are no specific curriculum requirements related to the Holocaust.

Regents institutions do not currently have a required civics exam for all students.

Assumptions

- A third party will provide the high school civics exam for school districts to administer, and school districts are prohibited from making substantive edits to the exam.
- It is unknown how school districts will implement the social studies curriculum.
- If school districts choose to use a test from a private testing company, the estimated cost per student would be \$150.
- There are currently 55,172 undergraduate students at Regents institutions.
- Regents institutions will need to purchase civics examinations for undergraduate students, which are estimated to cost \$50,000. It is unclear whether the universities will be able to purchase an exam together.
- The cost of civics examinations for Regents students is estimated to be \$140 per student.
- There are approximately 16,000 new undergraduate students each year at Regents institutions.
- The one-time cost of developing a remedial course is \$10,000.

- Iowa State University will need to redevelop seven courses, and the University of Iowa will need to redevelop two courses at the cost of \$10,000 per course. The University of Northern Iowa will need to make curriculum adjustments to seven courses and hire new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. The adjustments are estimated to be a one-time cost of \$3,000 per course.
- The University of Northern Iowa will need to hire 2.0 new FTE positions with expertise in U.S. history. The cost of these positions is estimated to be \$152,000.
- The retake rate for examinations is estimated to be 2.0% to 8.0%.

Fiscal Impact

The costs to the BOR will range from \$8.3 million to \$8.8 million in the first year and \$2.4 million to \$2.6 million in subsequent years. **Figure 1** details the cost to the BOR.

There may be a cost to school districts; however, this cost cannot be estimated at this time.

Figure 1 — Total Cost to Board of Regents by Institution

| <u>Board of Regents</u> | <u>FY 2025</u> | <u>Subsequent Years</u> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Iowa State University | | |
| Administering the Civics Exam | \$ 3,542,000 | \$ 1,004,000 |
| Exam Retakes* | 283,000 | 80,000 |
| Purchasing the Civics Exam* | 50,000 | 0 |
| Redeveloping/Adjusting Courses | 70,000 | 0 |
| Creating Remedial Exams | 10,000 | 0 |
| Total Iowa State University | 3,955,000 | 1,084,000 |
| University of Iowa | | |
| Administering the Civics Exam | \$ 3,098,000 | \$ 889,000 |
| Exam Retakes* | 248,000 | 71,000 |
| Purchasing the Civics Exam* | 50,000 | 0 |
| Redeveloping/Adjusting Courses | 20,000 | 0 |
| Creating Remedial Exams | 10,000 | 0 |
| Total University of Iowa | 3,426,000 | 960,000 |
| University of Northern Iowa | | |
| Administering the Civics Exam | \$ 1,083,000 | \$ 337,000 |
| Exam Retakes* | 87,000 | 27,000 |
| Staff Requirements | 152,000 | 152,000 |
| Purchasing the Civics Exam* | 50,000 | 0 |
| Redeveloping/Adjusting Courses | 21,000 | 0 |
| Creating Remedial Exams | 10,000 | 0 |
| Total University of Northern Iowa | 1,403,000 | 516,000 |
| Total Board of Regents** | \$ 8,784,000 | \$ 2,560,000 |

*These numbers are based on the maximum of the assumed 2.0% to 8.0% range.
 **These numbers assume no shared purchase between the universities.

Sources

Iowa Association of School Boards
Board of Regents
Department of Education
Legislative Services Agency

/s/ Jennifer Acton

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The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to [Joint Rule 17](#) and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.

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