

Comment Report

HF 2053

A bill for an act relating to the curriculum provided by school districts.

Subcommittee Members: Salmon-CH, Steckman, Thompson

Date: 02/01/2022

Time: 08:00 AM

Location: RM 304

Name: Margaret Buckton

Comment: RSAI and UEN are both registered opposed to this bill. First, current events and student engagement in their government bring issues alive for students and make learning about the constitution and civil rights relevant. This kind of content often awakens a sense of democracy for our high school students and encourages them to vote and get involved. We believe this bill would stifle civic engagement and relevance for our students. We also have concerns about difficulty in implementation and competing requirements in law. For example, voting rights are required as part of US government and civics standards in Iowa Code, but are currently in the news. Which mandate would apply? A teacher must teach it or a teacher can not be compelled to teach it? We already expect our classrooms to offer diverse and disparate backgrounds of current event information. We have some government classes that give students credit for attending a local government (city council or school board meeting.) The class may encourage students to share their opinion about something on the agenda and give credit for that engagement. The teacher does not direct the student in what opinion to share. Those entities both participate in lobbying. Would this bill prevent this kind of engagement? Lastly, with continued budget challenges for schools, we oppose the last action of this bill that prevents private donations for textbooks or other materials. A good example, there is free financial literacy curriculum provided to schools from many private and nonprofit entities. That was a selling point in adding the financial literacy graduation requirement to educational standards because schools would not be required to pay for curriculum. This bill would be an unfunded mandated in this and possibly other content areas. We encourage a no vote on this bill.