

House Study Bill 543 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE _____
BY (PROPOSED COMMITTEE ON HIGHER
EDUCATION BILL BY CHAIRPERSON
COLLINS)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to general education requirements, core
2 curricula, other functions of regents institutions, and
3 including applicability provisions.
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 DIVISION I
2 SHORT TITLE

3 Section 1. SHORT TITLE. This Act shall be known and may be
4 cited as the "Increasing Civic Proficiency in Higher Education
5 Act".

6 DIVISION II

7 REGENTS INSTITUTIONS — GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS AND CORE
8 CURRICULA — COURSES ON AMERICAN HISTORY AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

9 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **262.100 General education requirements**
10 **and core curricula — courses on American history and American**
11 **government.**

12 1. The state board of regents shall require each institution
13 of higher education governed by the board to establish as
14 a requirement for the completion of any general education
15 requirements or core curricula that an undergraduate student
16 complete an introductory survey course in American history
17 and an introductory survey course in American government. An
18 institution shall assign a value of at least three semester hours
19 of credit to each course. A course required by this section
20 shall not be exclusively or primarily devoted to the study of
21 subgroups of Americans or other nationalities.

22 2. A course required by this section shall fulfill the
23 general education or core curriculum requirement for social
24 sciences or humanities, as designated by the institution, that a
25 student is required to complete as a condition of graduation.

26 3. An institution shall provide equivalent credit toward the
27 courses required by this section to a student transferring to the
28 institution for previous coursework completed by the student that
29 is substantially similar to a required course.

30 4. This section does not apply to a student completing a
31 degree program designated by an institution as a degree program
32 of three years or less in duration.

33 5. Annually, the center for intellectual freedom at the
34 state university of Iowa, the center for cyclone civics at the
35 Iowa state university of science and technology, and the center

1 for civic education at the university of northern Iowa shall
2 designate courses at their respective institutions that satisfy
3 the requirements of this section.

4 Sec. 3. REVIEW OF GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS AND CORE
5 CURRICULA. No later than December 31, 2026, the board of
6 regents shall conduct a review of all undergraduate general
7 education requirements and core curricula at institutions of
8 higher education governed by the board.

9 Sec. 4. APPLICABILITY. The section of this Act enacting
10 section 262.100 applies to undergraduate students beginning
11 enrollment at institutions of higher education governed by the
12 board of regents in academic years beginning on or after July 1,
13 2028.

14 DIVISION III

15 CENTER FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM — COURSES

16 Sec. 5. Section 263C.3, subsection 5, Code 2026, is amended
17 to read as follows:

18 5. The center shall offer at least one three-semester credit
19 hour course in American history and ~~civil~~ one three-semester
20 credit hour course in American government. If a regents
21 institution has established general education requirements
22 for undergraduate students that include an American heritage
23 history course requirement or an American government course
24 requirement, the center shall ensure that the ~~course satisfies~~
25 ~~that requirement~~ courses satisfy those requirements. The center
26 ~~shall coordinate with the center for cyclone civics at Iowa state~~
27 ~~university and the center for civic education at the university~~
28 ~~of northern Iowa to ensure that the course is offered to students~~
29 ~~at each regents institution either in person or online.~~

30 Sec. 6. APPLICABILITY. This division of this Act applies to
31 academic years beginning on or after July 1, 2027.

32 DIVISION IV

33 LECTURE AND DEBATE SERIES

34 Sec. 7. NEW SECTION. **262.105 Lecture and debate series.**

35 By December 31, 2026, the center for intellectual freedom at

1 the state university of Iowa, the center for cyclone civics at
2 the Iowa state university of science and technology, and the
3 center for civic education at the university of northern Iowa
4 shall each establish an ongoing lecture and debate series. The
5 series must promote civil dialogue and debate on the issues most
6 important to the American republic.

7 DIVISION V

8 CENTERS — ANNUAL REPORTS

9 Sec. 8. NEW SECTION. **266.8 Annual report — center for**
10 **cyclone civics.**

11 The director of the center for cyclone civics at the Iowa
12 state university of science and technology shall submit an annual
13 report to the governor, the general assembly, and the state
14 board of regents by December 31. The report must provide a
15 full account of the center's achievements and must identify any
16 opportunities, challenges, and obstacles in the development of
17 the center.

18 Sec. 9. NEW SECTION. **268.6 Annual report — center for**
19 **civic education.**

20 The director of the center for civic education at the
21 university of northern Iowa shall submit an annual report to the
22 governor, the general assembly, and the state board of regents
23 by December 31. The report must provide a full account of
24 the center's achievements and must identify any opportunities,
25 challenges, and obstacles in the development of the center.

26 EXPLANATION

27 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
28 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

29 This bill relates to general education requirements, core
30 curricula, and other functions of regents institutions.

31 REGENTS INSTITUTIONS — GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS AND
32 CORE CURRICULA — COURSES ON AMERICAN HISTORY AND AMERICAN
33 GOVERNMENT. This division provides that the state board of
34 regents (board) must require each institution to establish
35 as a requirement for the completion of any general education

1 requirements or core curricula that an undergraduate student
2 complete introductory survey courses in American history and
3 American government. The requirement applies to undergraduate
4 students beginning enrollment at institutions in academic years
5 beginning on or after July 1, 2028. An institution shall
6 assign a value of at least three semester hours of credit to
7 each course. A required course shall not be exclusively or
8 primarily devoted to the study of subgroups of Americans or other
9 nationalities.

10 A required course shall fulfill the general education or core
11 curriculum requirement for social sciences or humanities, as
12 designated by the institution, that a student is required to
13 complete as a condition of graduation.

14 The division requires an institution to provide equivalent
15 credit toward the required courses to a student transferring to
16 the institution for previous substantially similar coursework.

17 The division does not apply to a student completing a degree
18 program designated by an institution as a degree program of three
19 years or less in duration.

20 The division requires the center for intellectual freedom at
21 the university of Iowa, the center for cyclone civics at Iowa
22 state university, and the center for civic education at the
23 university of northern Iowa to annually designate courses at
24 their respective institutions that satisfy these requirements.

25 The division requires the board to conduct a review of all
26 undergraduate general education requirements and core curricula
27 at institutions no later than December 31, 2026.

28 CENTER FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM — COURSES. This division
29 requires the center for intellectual freedom at the university
30 of Iowa to offer at least one three-semester credit hour course
31 in American history and one three-semester credit hour course in
32 American government. Under current law, the center is required
33 to offer at least one three-semester credit hour course in
34 American history and civil government. The bill provides that if
35 an institution has established general education requirements for

1 undergraduate students that include an American history course
2 requirement or an American government course requirement, the
3 center shall ensure that the courses satisfy those requirements.
4 The bill strikes a requirement that the center coordinate with
5 the center for cyclone civics at Iowa state university and the
6 center for civic education at the university of northern Iowa
7 to ensure that such a course is offered to students at each
8 institution either in person or online.

9 The division applies to academic years beginning on or after
10 July 1, 2027.

11 LECTURE AND DEBATE SERIES. This division requires the center
12 for intellectual freedom at the university of Iowa, the center
13 for cyclone civics at Iowa state university, and the center
14 for civic education at the university of northern Iowa to each
15 establish an ongoing lecture and debate series by December 31,
16 2026. The series must promote civil dialogue and debate on the
17 issues most important to the American republic.

18 CENTERS — ANNUAL REPORTS. This division requires the
19 directors of the center for cyclone civics at Iowa state
20 university and the center for civic education at the university
21 of northern Iowa to each submit an annual report to the governor,
22 the general assembly, and the board of regents by December
23 31. The report must provide a full account of the respective
24 center's achievements and identify any opportunities, challenges,
25 and obstacles in the development of the center.