HOUSE FILE 2544
BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

(SUCCESSOR TO HF 2330)

(As Amended and Passed by the House February 28, 2024)
[= New Language by the House

A BILL FOR

An Act relating to education, including by modifying provisions related to the social studies instruction provided to students enrolled in grades one through twelve and the educational programs provided by the institutions of higher education under the control of the state board of regents[,] and requiring education related to the holocaust for students and teachers in school districts[].

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

Section 1. Section 256.11, subsections 3 and 4, Code 2024, are amended to read as follows:

3. *a.* The following areas shall be taught in grades one through six: English-language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, health, physical education, traffic safety, music, visual art, and, subject to section 279.80, age-appropriate and research-based human growth and development. Computer science instruction incorporating the standards established under section 256.7, subsection 26, paragraph "*a*", subparagraph (4), shall be offered in at least one grade level commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2023. The health curriculum shall include the characteristics of communicable diseases. The state board as part of accreditation standards shall adopt curriculum definitions for implementing the elementary program.

b. The social studies curriculum shall include instruction related to all of the following:

(1) The workings of the federal, state, and local levels of government.

(2) The rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States and the state of Iowa.

(3) The history of the secular and religious ideals and institutions of liberty, including political, religious, economic, social, and cultural liberty, in western civilization, the United States, and the state of Iowa, which emphasizes the good, worthwhile, and best achievements of these ideals and institutions of liberty.

(4) Exemplary figures in western civilization, the United States, and the state of Iowa who have fought to secure liberty.

(5) The cultural heritage of western civilization, the United States, and the state of Iowa.

(6) The geography of the United States and the state of Iowa.

(7) The history and meaning of the United States flag and

the national anthem.

(8) Admirable Americans, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Abraham Lincoln.

c. During grades five and six, the instruction provided as part of the social studies curriculum shall incorporate the study of documents that are important to the history of the United States, including all of the following:

(1) The Mayflower compact.

(2) Common Sense, written by Thomas Paine.

(3) The Declaration of Independence.

(4) The Articles of Confederation.

(5) The Pennsylvania Act for the gradual abolition of slavery.

(6) The Virginia statute for religious freedom.

(7) The northwest ordinance.

(8) The Constitution of the United States.

(9) The federalist papers, including federalist number ten and federalist number fifty-one.

(10) A transcript of George Washington's farewell address.

(11) Relevant excerpts from Democracy in America written by Alexis de Tocqueville.

(12) A transcript of the first debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas.

(13) The Emancipation Proclamation.

(14) The writings of the founding fathers.

4. *a.* The following shall be taught in grades seven and eight: English-language arts; social studies; mathematics; science; health; age-appropriate and research-based human growth and development; career exploration and development; physical education; music; and visual art. Computer science instruction incorporating the standards established under section 256.7, subsection 26, paragraph "*a*", subparagraph (4), shall be offered in at least one grade level commencing with the school year beginning July 1, 2023. Career exploration

and development shall be designed so that students are appropriately prepared to create an individual career and academic plan pursuant to section 279.61, incorporate foundational career and technical education concepts aligned with the six career and technical education service areas as defined in subsection 5, paragraph "h", incorporate relevant twenty-first century skills to facilitate career readiness, and introduce students to career opportunities within the local community and across this state. The health curriculum shall include age-appropriate and research-based information regarding the characteristics of sexually transmitted diseases. The state board as part of accreditation standards shall adopt curriculum definitions for implementing the program in grades seven and eight. However, this subsection shall not apply to the teaching of career exploration and development in nonpublic schools.

b. (1) The social studies curriculum shall require at least one semester of instruction, or the trimester or quarter equivalent, in each of the following areas:

(a) Civics, which shall include instruction related to all of the following:

(i) The intellectual sources of the United States' founding documents.

(ii) The political and military narrative of the causes and progress of the American Revolution.

(iii) The United States' founding documents and the original intent of such documents.

(iv) The Constitution of the United States, with emphasis on the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution of the State of Iowa.

(v) The basic principles of the United States' republican form of government.

(vi) The historical development of the United States' republican form of government.

(vii) The United States' republican form of government compared with different forms of government including

dictatorship, monarchy, oligarchy, theocracy, communism, and autocracy.

(viii) The structure, function, and processes of government institutions at the federal, state, and local levels.

(ix) The civic virtues exemplified in the lives of famous Americans.

(b) United States history, which shall include instruction related to all of the following:

(i) The study of and devotion to the United States' exceptional and praiseworthy history.

(ii) The basic political, diplomatic, and military history of the United States, which shall include the period of discovery, early colonies, the War of Independence, the Civil War, the expansion of the United States to its present boundaries, World War I, World War II, the Cold War, the civil rights movement, and the period of time from the September 11 attacks to the present day, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(iii) The basic history of business and technology in the United States, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(iv) The basic history of the religious and secular aspects of the United States' common culture, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(v) The concept that United States history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable, and shall be defined as the creation of a new nation based largely on the universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence.

(c) The history of western civilization, which shall include instruction that constitutes an extended, coherent account of western civilization, from Athens, Jerusalem, and Rome to the present day, to understand the nature of the nation's ideals and institutions of liberty, how such ideals and institutions of liberty came into existence, and what

actions the nation's forefathers took to preserve them.

(d) Iowa history, to be taught during grade eight, which shall include instruction related to all of the following:

(i) The history of the founding of Iowa.

(ii) The history of famous Iowans and their involvement in important events in history.

(iii) How Iowans have impacted government, policies, issues, and procedures over the years.

(iv) The history of the state motto, bird, tree, and rock.

(e) Economics, to be taught during grade eight. The economics instruction shall focus on the free enterprise system and its benefits. The economics curriculum shall include instruction related to the failures of economic systems of communist regimes and the difference between capitalist and communist economic systems.

(2) The social studies curriculum shall include instruction related to admirable Americans, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Abraham Lincoln.

(3) The instruction provided as part of the social studies curriculum shall incorporate the study of documents that are important to the history of the United States, including all of the following:

(a) The Mayflower compact.

(b) Common Sense, written by Thomas Paine.

(c) The Declaration of Independence.

(d) The Articles of Confederation.

(e) The Pennsylvania Act for the gradual abolition of slavery.

(f) The Virginia statute for religious freedom.

(g) The northwest ordinance.

(h) The Constitution of the United States.

(i) The federalist papers, including federalist number ten and federalist number fifty-one.

(j) A transcript of George Washington's farewell address.

(k) Relevant excerpts from Democracy in America written by Alexis de Tocqueville.

(l) A transcript of the first debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas.

(m) The Emancipation Proclamation.

(n) The writings of the founding fathers.

Sec. 2. Section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph b, Code 2024, is amended to read as follows:

b. Five units of ~~the~~ social studies ~~including instruction in voting statutes and procedures, voter registration requirements, the use of paper ballots and voting systems in the election process, and the method of acquiring and casting an absentee ballot~~. All students shall complete a minimum of one-half unit of United States government, ~~and~~ one unit of civics, two units of United States history, and one unit of western civilization. The social studies curriculum shall not include any advanced placement course that requires action civics. The social studies curriculum shall incorporate the study of documents that are important to the history of the United States, including the Mayflower compact; Common Sense, written by Thomas Paine; the Declaration of Independence; the Articles of Confederation; the Pennsylvania Act for the gradual abolition of slavery; the Virginia statute for religious freedom; the northwest ordinance; the Constitution of the United States; the federalist papers, including federalist number ten and federalist number fifty-one; a transcript of George Washington's farewell address; relevant excerpts from Democracy in America written by Alexis de Tocqueville; a transcript of the first debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas; the Emancipation Proclamation; and the writings of the founding fathers.

(1) The one-half unit of United States government shall include the voting procedure as described in ~~this lettered paragraph and~~ section 280.9A and other instruction related to voting statutes and procedures, voter registration

requirements, the use of paper ballots and voting systems in the election process, and the method of acquiring and casting an absentee ballot. The government instruction shall also include a study of the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution and an assessment of a student's knowledge of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

(2) The one unit of civics shall include a culminating civic literacy examination that was not developed by the school district or accredited nonpublic school or the teacher providing the civics instruction. The examination shall include an assessment of the student's knowledge of United States government and United States history, shall provide a means of assessing civics instruction in grades nine through twelve, and shall provide information that colleges and universities may use to determine if incoming students possess sufficient civic literacy. The one unit of civics shall not include any requirements related to political activism, service learning, civic engagement, action civics, or any cognate activity. The one unit of civics shall include instruction related to all of the following:

(a) The intellectual sources of the United States' founding documents, including documents that illustrate the Greek, Hebrew, and Roman exemplars of liberty and republican government; the Christian synthesis of Greek, Hebrew, and Roman thought that emphasized the equal dignity of all individual humans in the eyes of God; the medieval English inheritance of common law, jury, local self-government, liberty, and representative government; the early modern English inheritance of Christian liberty, republicanism, the militia, accountable government, mixed government, parliamentary sovereignty, freedom of the press, and the English bill of rights and toleration Act; the colonial American inheritance of Christian liberty, self-government, and local government; and the enlightenment theories of John Locke, Montesquieu, Adam Smith,

and their contemporaries that universalized the European traditions of liberty.

(b) The political and military narrative of the causes and progress of the American revolution.

(c) The original intent of the documents described in unnumbered paragraph 1.

(d) The Constitution of the United States, with an emphasis on the Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution, and the Constitution of the State of Iowa.

(e) The basic principles of the United States' republican form of government and the institutions and principles to preserve liberty and prevent misuse of government power, including balance of power; consent of the governed; the electoral college; federalism and the division of powers between the federal government and the states; individual liberties; rights of life, liberty, and property; popular sovereignty; religious freedom; an educated citizenry; representative government; civilian control of the military; rule of law; control of faction; checks and balances; and separation of powers among the executive, the legislature, and the judiciary.

(f) The historical development of the United States' republican form of government, including the federalist and antifederalist debates; the rise and role of political parties; the rise of Jacksonian democracy; the expansion of the ideals and institutions of liberty and republican self-government to include all Americans, regardless of sex or race; the causes and the constitutional consequences of the Civil War; the thirteenth amendment, fourteenth amendment, fifteenth amendment, and the nineteenth amendment; the rise of the new deal administrative state; and United States Supreme Court cases, including Marbury v. Madison, McCulloch v. Maryland, Dred Scott v. Sandford, Pembina consolidated silver mining co. v. Pennsylvania, Plessy v. Ferguson, and Brown v. Board of Education.

(g) The United States' republican form of government compared with different forms of government including dictatorship, monarchy, oligarchy, theocracy, communism, and autocracy.

(h) The structure, function, and processes of governmental institutions at the federal, state, and local levels.

(i) Civic virtues exemplified in the lives of famous Americans, including George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Abigail Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Ely Parker, Thomas Edison, Andrew Carnegie, Walter Reed, Theodore Roosevelt, Charles Curtis, Will Rogers, Jim Thorpe, Jackie Robinson, George Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jr., Richard Feynman, Neil Armstrong, and Ronald Reagan.

(3) The two units of United States history shall include an assessment of the student's knowledge of important historical documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Emancipation Proclamation, and excerpts from the federalist papers. One unit of United States history shall focus on the period of time beginning when the Mayflower landed on Cape Cod to the conclusion of the Civil War. The other unit of United States history shall focus on the period of time beginning at the conclusion of the Civil War to the present day, which unit shall include instruction related to the Holocaust and crimes against humanity that have occurred under communist regimes. The two units of United States history shall include significant material related to the War of Independence and the creation of the Constitution of the United States. The two units of United States history shall be designed to include significant biographical material related to exemplary Americans to provide both the nation's shared constitutional history and historical context. The two units of United States history shall include instruction related to all of the following:

(a) The United States' exceptional and praiseworthy history.

(b) The basic political, diplomatic, and military history of the United States, which shall include the period of discovery, early colonies, the War of Independence, the Civil War, the expansion of the United States to its present boundaries, World War I, World War II, the Cold War, the civil rights movement, and the period of time from the September 11 attacks to the present day, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(c) The basic history of business and technology in the United States, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(d) The basic history of the religious and secular aspects of the United States' common culture, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(e) The concept that United States history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable, and shall be defined as the creation of a new nation based largely on the universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence.

(4) The one unit of western civilization shall include instruction related to all of the following:

(a) Western civilization's exceptional and praiseworthy history.

(b) The basic political outline of western civilization, which shall include the history of ancient Israel, the free Greek city states, the Roman republic, the Roman empire, the Carolingian empire, the medieval Papacy, medieval England, absolutist France, parliamentary England, the Napoleonic wars, World War I, World War II, the communist and fascist challenges to the European order, and the survival and triumph of political and economic liberty, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(c) The basic intellectual history of western civilization,

which shall include its Greek, Hebrew, and Roman sources; the Christian synthesis of those Greek, Hebrew, and Roman sources that emphasized the equal dignity of all individual humans in the eyes of God; the renaissance rediscovery of republican liberty; the reformation; the medieval and early modern English ideals and institutions of common law, jury, the militia, local self-government, political and religious liberty, representative government, accountable government, and parliamentary sovereignty; the scientific revolution; the enlightenment ideals of political and economic liberty; the nineteenth-century formulation of the scientific and humanist disciplines; the emergence of modern conservatism and liberalism; and the challenges to liberty of socialism and fascism, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(d) The basic history of science and technology in western civilization, which shall emphasize Europe's unique role as the matrix of the modern scientific and industrial world, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(e) The basic economic history of western civilization, which shall emphasize Europe's unique role as the matrix of modern mass prosperity, which emerged from the interplay of the ideals and institutions of economic liberty, secure property rights, entrepreneurial innovation, and the industrial revolution, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(f) The basic history of the religious and secular aspects of western civilization's cultures, which shall emphasize the protective aspects of liberty and incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(g) The basic history of the fruitful and enduring attachment of western civilization's free peoples to their nations and faiths, which shall incorporate the study of primary source documents.

(h) The concept that western civilization's history shall

be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable, and shall be defined as the creation of a civilization based largely on the ideals and institutions of liberty.

Sec. 3. Section 256E.7, subsection 2, paragraph g, Code 2024, is amended to read as follows:

g. Be subject to and comply with the requirements of section 256.7, subsection 21, and the educational standards of section 256.11, unless specifically waived by the state board during the application process; provided, however, that the state board shall not waive the educational standards related to social studies instruction established in section 256.11, subsections 3 and 4, and in section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph *"b"*.

Sec. 4. Section 256F.4, subsection 2, Code 2024, is amended by adding the following new paragraph:

NEW PARAGRAPH. *p.* Be subject to and comply with the requirements of section 256.11, subsections 3 and 4, and section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph *"b"*, relating to educational standards related to social studies instruction in the same manner as a school district.

Sec. 5. Section 262.9, Code 2024, is amended by adding the following new subsections:

NEW SUBSECTION. 39. *a.* (1) Direct the institutions of higher education under its control to adopt policies that require all students admitted to the baccalaureate degree program provided by the institution to take a civic literacy examination.

(2) Subparagraph (1) shall not apply to a student who has taken and passed the civic literacy examination described in section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph *"b"*, subparagraph (2).

b. If a student does not pass the civic literacy examination described in paragraph *"a"*, the institution shall require the student to take a remedial civics course. The remedial civics course shall include a culminating civic literacy

examination. The remedial civics course shall not contain any requirements related to political activism, service learning, civic engagement, action civics, or any cognate activity.

c. If a student does not pass the civic literacy examination described in paragraph "*b*", the student shall be allowed to retake the examination as many times as is necessary for the student to pass the examination; provided, however, that the student shall not be allowed to graduate from the institution, or progress to more advanced civics courses, until the student passes the examination.

NEW SUBSECTION. 40. Prohibit the institutions of higher education under its control from awarding students any semester hours of credit for courses that require action civics or political activism.

Sec. 6. NEW SECTION. **280.36 Education on the holocaust.**

1. The general assembly finds all of the following:

a. Recent studies have shown there to be a severe lack of awareness in the state of Iowa regarding historical facts about the holocaust and antisemitism, and the causes and ramifications thereof.

b. Antisemitism remains a persistent, pervasive, and disturbing problem in contemporary American society.

c. In order to provide students with an understanding of the importance of the protection of human rights and the potential consequences of discrimination against and persecution of Jewish people, it is a matter of high priority that students in this state be educated concerning the holocaust.

d. Sources of free curricula and instructional materials for education on the holocaust include but are not limited to the United States holocaust memorial museum; yad vashem: the world holocaust remembrance center; the Illinois holocaust museum and education center; and echoes and reflections, a partnership of the anti-defamation league, yad vashem, and the university of southern California shoah foundation.

2. For purposes of this section, unless the context

otherwise requires:

a. "*Antisemitism*" means the same as defined in section 216F.1.

b. "*Holocaust*" means the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators.

c. "*Nazi*" means the abbreviation for the national socialist German workers' party, a political party of the mass movement known as national socialism under which its leader, Adolf Hitler, came to power in 1933 and governed by totalitarian methods until 1945.

d. "*Organization*" means one or more of the following organizations:

(1) The United States holocaust memorial museum.

(2) Yad vashem: the world holocaust remembrance center.

(3) The Illinois holocaust museum and education center.

(4) Echoes and reflections, a partnership of the anti-defamation league, yad vashem, and the university of southern California shoah foundation.

(5) Any other entity approved for education on the holocaust by the department of education.

3. *a.* No later than the school year beginning July 1, 2024, the board of directors of a school district shall incorporate age-appropriate and grade-appropriate instruction regarding the holocaust for students in middle and high school into the school district's educational program. Such instruction shall be incorporated into existing required courses and include, at minimum, the following:

(1) The causes and ramifications of the holocaust.

(2) The breadth of the history of antisemitism and the holocaust, including the third reich dictatorship, concentration camp system, persecution of Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and non-Jewish resistance, and post-World War II trials.

(3) The impact of personal responsibility, civic

engagement, and societal response in the context of the holocaust.

(4) The connection between national, ethnic, racial, or religious intolerance and the subjects described in subparagraphs (1) and (2).

(5) The leading role played by the United States and the United States armed forces, including African American soldiers, including but not limited to the Tuskegee airmen, as well as Native American and Asian American soldiers, in defeating the third reich and its allies and liberating Nazi concentration camps.

(6) The definition, history, and actions taken in the face of the holocaust.

b. School districts shall utilize appropriate public or private materials, personnel, and other resources in developing and implementing education on the holocaust in accordance with this section.

4. No later than the school year beginning July 1, 2024, the board of directors of a school district shall incorporate education on the holocaust for teachers into the district professional development plan developed pursuant to section 284.6 for teachers who provide instruction in courses into which student instruction in accordance with subsection 3 is incorporated. Such training shall cover the topics required by subsection 3. School districts shall utilize appropriate programs provided by an organization for such training. Education on the holocaust provided to teachers in accordance with this section shall be credited toward a teacher's individual professional development plan under section 284.6.

5. Annually by October 1, the department of education shall submit a report to the governor and the general assembly addressing the number of school districts offering education on the holocaust to students and teachers in accordance with this section. The department shall publish the report on the department's internet site.

6. This section shall not be construed to diminish or infringe upon any right protected under the Constitution of the State of Iowa or the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This section shall not be construed to conflict with any local, state, or federal law relating to discrimination.]

Sec. 7. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACT. Section 25B.2, subsection 3, shall not apply to this Act.

Sec. 8. NO IMPACT ON GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS. The section of this Act amending section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph "b", shall not affect the graduation requirements applicable to a student enrolled in grades nine through twelve as of the effective date of this Act.