Initiative Measure No. 1058

FILED

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SECRETARY OF STATE
STATE OF WASHINGTON

AN ACT Relating to requiring the teaching of the relationship of the Declaration of Independence to the Constitutions of the United States and Washington state; amending RCW 28A.230.170; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The Declaration of Independence makes it clear "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed ...."

The Washington state Constitution echoes the Declaration of Independence. The preamble states: "We, the people of the state of Washington, grateful to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for our liberties, do ordain this constitution." **Then Article I, section 1 of the state Constitution states: "All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and are established to protect and maintain individual rights."**

We the People want to bestow upon our children and their children the blessings of liberty. Schools must more effectively teach the relationship of the Declaration of Independence to the United States Constitution and the Washington state Constitution for this to happen.

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** Prior to the effective date of this section, RCW 28A.230.170 stated: "The study of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Washington shall be a condition prerequisite to graduation from the public and private high schools of this state." However, most citizens have never seen the Washington state Constitution, yet elected officials must swear an oath to uphold it. Our schools are teaching the mechanics of government more adequately than they are teaching the foundation and purpose of government. They teach about human rights, but most students do not comprehend the source of human rights and the purpose of government as identified in the Declaration of Independence and the Washington state Constitution. Schools are placing less emphasis on social studies and there are no WASL questions on civics, government, or history.

Sec. 3. RCW 28A.230.170 and 2006 c 263 s 403 are each amended to read as follows:

((~~The study of~~)) (1) Schools shall teach the relationship of the Declaration of Independence to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Washington ((~~shall be~~)) as a condition prerequisite to graduation from the public and private high schools of this state.

The superintendent of public instruction shall provide by rule for the implementation of this section into fifth grade, eighth grade, and two years of high school. Local school boards shall ensure that each school conspicuously display copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the United States Constitution, and the Washington state Constitution.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1) of this section, the word "teach" requires:

(a) Teaching the relationship of the Preamble to the Washington state Constitution to the heritage and meaning of this statement from the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness";

(b) Teaching how Article I, section 1 and Article II of the state Constitution implement this statement in the Declaration of Independence: "That to secure these rights Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." **Students shall be taught the inherent right of the people to elect government officials, and to enact or reject, at the polls, legislation independent of the legislature, and to approve or reject, at the polls, any law passed by the legislature;**

(c) Relating the declaration of rights in the Washington state Constitution to statements made in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, and the Northwest Ordinance, which sets the requirements for states to join the union of states;

(d) Teaching the heritage and meaning of the religious freedom statement of Article I, section 11 of the Washington state Constitution. Suggested student readings include: Thomas Jefferson's "Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom" (1786), and James Madison's "Memorial and Remonstrance." The purpose of this instruction is to illustrate the struggle for obtaining "absolute freedom of conscience in all matters of religious sentiment..." as stated in Article I, section 11 of the Washington state Constitution;

(e) Encouraging but not requiring students to memorize the preamble of the United States Constitution along with the preamble and Article I, section 1 of the Washington state Constitution;

(f) Requiring that students read George Washington's first inaugural address and his farewell address and Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural address, and Gettysburg address. The purpose of this study is to identify Washington's and Lincoln's advice in supporting and defending the United States Constitution;

(g) Illustrating, with teacher instruction, the relationship of the "Pledge of Allegiance to the United States" to the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, including the preamble and the First Amendment, and the Washington state Constitution, including the preamble, and Article I, sections 1 and 11;

(h) Testing, including state standardized testing, on the meanings of the founders' intent when writing the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights and the Washington state Constitution. Testing will also include the meanings and intent of the inaugural and farewell addresses given by Washington and the inagural and Gettysburg addresses given by Lincoln. Sources for this instruction are to be taken from the Federalist Papers, the founders' letters, and speeches when writing these documents or administrating the affairs of government. This testing will include the meaning of words found in these documents such as: Initiative, referendum, tyrant, despotism, providence, consanguinity, rectitude, endowed, unalienable, created equal, tranquility, posterity, ordain, blessings, licentiousness, and "law of nature" as defined in the 1828 edition of Webster's Dictionary.

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