

1 State of Arkansas
2 91st General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2017
4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1995

5 By: Representative Della Rosa
6

For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS; TO REFINE THE
9 TEACHING OF HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM; TO SPECIFY
10 DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND UNITS
11 REGARDING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.; TO ELIMINATE
12 THE DUAL STATUS OF THE JOINT HOLIDAY COMMEMORATING
13 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AND ROBERT E. LEE; TO
14 SPECIFY THE TEACHING OF CONTENT RELATED TO DR. MARTIN
15 LUTHER KING JR. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CORRESPONDING
16 HOLIDAY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.
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Subtitle

19 TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL HOLIDAYS; TO REFINE
20 THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM;
21 TO SPECIFY THE TEACHING OF CONTENT
22 RELATED TO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. IN
23 CONJUNCTION WITH THE CORRESPONDING
24 HOLIDAY.
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28 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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30 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 1-5-101(a)(2) and (3), concerning official
31 holidays, are amended to read as follows:

32 (2) ~~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday and Robert E. Lee's~~
33 ~~Birthday~~ Daisy Gatson Bates Day and the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King,
34 Jr. – the third Monday in January;

35 (3) ~~George Washington's Birthday and Daisy Gatson Bates Day~~ The
36 birthday of George Washington and Robert E. Lee Day – the third Monday in



1 February;

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3 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-16-107(a), concerning education and
 4 patriotic observances, is amended to read as follows:

5 (a) February 22, as the birthday of George Washington, ~~and January 19,~~
 6 ~~as the birthday of Robert E. Lee,~~ and such other days as may be designated by
 7 the State Board of Education for patriotic observance shall be observed with
 8 appropriate exercises.

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10 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-16-121 is amended to read as follows:

11 6-16-121. African-American history – Teaching materials.

12 (a)~~(1)~~ The Commissioner of Education shall develop the materials or
 13 units for the teaching of historical contributions made by African-Americans
 14 in the United States and in other countries prior to the establishment of the
 15 United States for inclusion in the appropriate curricula of all kindergarten
 16 through grade twelve (K-12) of all public schools in the State of Arkansas,
 17 ~~beginning with the 1994-1995 school year.~~

18 (2) Emphasis shall be placed on the historic work of American
 19 civil rights leaders, including without limitation Dr. Martin Luther King
 20 Jr., and his pursuit of justice in civil society.

21 (3) The requirement under this subsection shall be taught as
 22 appropriate in the classroom and shall specifically be taught in conjunction
 23 with corresponding state and federal holidays.

24 (b) The commissioner shall ensure that these materials or units are
 25 reproduced and sent to all school districts in the state.

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27 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-16-124 is amended to read as follows:

28 6-16-124. Arkansas history – Required social studies course.

29 (a)~~(1) Beginning with the 1997-1998 school year:~~

30 ~~(1)~~ A unit of Arkansas history shall be taught as a social
 31 studies subject at each elementary grade level in every public elementary
 32 school in this state, with greater emphasis at the fourth and fifth grade
 33 levels; and

34 (2) At least one (1) full semester of Arkansas history shall be
 35 taught to all students at the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, or
 36 twelfth grade level in every public secondary school in this state.

1 (b)(1) Course guidelines shall ensure that the courses represent the
2 most accurate and historically sound account of the prehistory, history, and
3 culture of Arkansas, including the significant contributions and achievements
4 of all segments of the population.

5 (2) Any revisions in the Arkansas history course content
6 guidelines shall be reported to the public schools and the House Committee on
7 Education and the Senate Committee on Education no later than July 1 of the
8 year the course guidelines are to be implemented.

9 (3)(A) The Department of Education shall, in advance of the
10 2018-2019 school year, develop materials or units relating to Arkansas and
11 the American Civil War.

12 (B) The emphasis of the curriculum under this subdivision
13 (b)(3) shall be placed upon civilian and military leadership during the
14 period and how the lessons of that era can inform contemporary society.

15 (C) The course content under this subdivision (b)(3) is
16 not exempt from the reporting requirements under subdivision (b)(2) of this
17 section.

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19 SECTION 5. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings – Intent.

20 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

21 (1) The State of Arkansas has a very proud and distinguished
22 culture and heritage;

23 (2) Robust recognition of history in the classroom is a priority;
24 and

25 (3) The state should maintain and celebrate its culture and
26 heritage, including our state and national military leaders who are connected
27 to Arkansas or have impacted the course of our state's history.

28 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly by the enactment of this
29 act to maintain an awareness of and celebrate the unique cultural heritage of
30 Arkansas by educating Arkansas youth regarding:

31 (1) Historical events of state and national significance;

32 (2) The contributions made to the history of this state by
33 military and civilian leaders; and

34 (3) The reasons for honoring such historical events and figures
35 through the observance of days designated for their commemoration.

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