

**THE CIVICS ALLIANCE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS
MODEL CIVICS LEGISLATION**

WESTERN CIVILIZATION ACT

Introduction

No state, to our knowledge, now mandates a course in Western Civilization. Many now mandate a high-school course in World History. The removal of the historical narrative of Western Civilization from the high school curriculum has removed the vast majority of the history of the growth of liberty's ideals and institutions. Students cannot understand America's own ideals and institutions of liberty if they do not learn about their origins in an extended, coherent account of Western Civilization, from Athens, Jerusalem, and Rome to the present. This account should narrate how those ideals and institutions of liberty came into existence, and what actions our forefathers took to preserve them. Extended instruction in the history of Western Civilization is an essential component of civics instruction. Our model legislation mandates a year-long Western Civilization course.

Curriculum Specifics

We have not provided as many details to guide the content of our model Western Civilization course as we did for our model Civics course. We believe that it is more appropriate for state legislators to provide their own list of required topics for inclusion. We make the following general notes:

- 1) The [Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework \(2003\)](#) provides an excellent series of Western Civilization standards to guide legislative intent.
- 2) Legislators should ensure that the Western Civilization History course focuses on the intellectual and political history of the growth of the ideals and institutions of history.
- 3) Legislators should continue to exercise oversight, to ensure that the public schools fulfil legislative intent.

Western Civilization vs. European History

The Western Civilization course largely would duplicate a European History course. We use the phrase "Western Civilization" because the course should start with Sumer, Egypt, and Israel, and should also emphasize America's roots in Western Civilization, above all in England.

Documents

We have keyed our model bill to include a mandate to study primary-source documents. Good history instruction ought to include study of documents—and it is harder for action civics proponents to subvert a history course that mandates study of documents.

Devotion

A legislature cannot prescribe in detail how a class should be taught, but it can suggest legislative intent as to the general spirit. We include the phrases “study of and devotion to” to suggest the spirit in which the Western Civilization course should be taught.

Forbidding Action Civics

SECTION B repeats much of the language from our Partisanship Out of Civics Act (POCA) that forbids action civics. We also include the Partisanship Out of Civics Act as a separate chapter in our model civics legislation. If a POCA bill has not yet been passed, however, this language is necessary as a way to prevent a required Western Civilization class from providing instruction in action civics.

Forbidding Critical Race Theory

SECTION C repeats much of the language from our Partisanship Out of Civics Act (POCA) that forbids the intellectual components of Critical Race Theory. We also include the Partisanship Out of Civics Act as a separate chapter in our model civics legislation. If a POCA bill has not yet been passed, however, this language is necessary as a way to prevent a required Western Civilization class from promoting Critical Race Theory.

Liberty

Our model bill specifies that schools cannot prevent instruction in or citation of documents because of any religious or cultural references in a writing, document, or record pertaining to this course of instruction.

Localism

Our model bill directs each school district to craft its own Western Civilization curriculum. It also forbids state education departments from providing supplemental readings, textbooks, teacher trainings, lists of instructional resources, and curriculums for the Western Civilization course. Any formally optional resources provided by state education departments will act as

informal Western Civilization curricula. We believe that the most reliable version of a state mandate for a Western Civilization course will delegate the mandate to the school districts rather than to the state education department.

Accountability

Public schools should be directly accountable to state legislators, not to the state education department. Any power delegated to a state education department to demand accountability will also give it power to subvert the intent of this bill. We therefore require in **SECTION E** that the state education department transmit annually to state legislators an account of how each school district has put the Western Civilization course into practice—and leave any disciplinary response to the state legislators, not to the state education department. The requirement that schools make their curricula and teacher training public will by itself deter action civics proponents from smuggling their material into a Western Civilization course.

Model Legislative Text

SECTION A:

(1) Beginning in the 20XX-20XX school year, all public schools or charter schools located within this state shall require students to complete a regular year-long course of instruction in Western Civilization in grade nine, ten, eleven, or twelve.

(2) This course shall instruct students in, at a minimum,

(A) the study of and devotion to 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;

(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, 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;

(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;

(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;

(F) the basic history of the religious and secular aspects of Western Civilization's cultures, which shall emphasize the thickening cultures of liberty;

(G) the basic history of the fruitful and enduring attachment of Western Civilization's free peoples to their nations and faiths;

(H) primary-source documents that illustrate (B), (C), (D), (E), (F), and (G); and

(I) 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.

(3) Each school district shall craft its own curriculum for this year-long course of instruction in Western Civilization.

SECTION B:

(1) This year-long course of instruction in Western Civilization may not require, make part of such course, or award course grading or credit to, student work for, affiliation with, practicums in, or service learning in association with, any organization engaged in lobbying for legislation at the state or federal level, or in social or public policy advocacy.

(2) This year-long course of instruction in Western Civilization may not require, make part of such course, or award course grading or credit to, lobbying for legislation at the state or federal level, or any practicum, or like activity, involving social or public policy advocacy. (3) This year-long course of instruction in Western Civilization may not compel any teacher to discuss current events or widely debated and currently controversial issues of public policy or social affairs. (4) Teachers who choose to discuss current events or widely debated and currently controversial issues of public policy or social affairs shall, to the best of their ability, strive to explore such issues from diverse and contending perspectives. (5) No private funding shall be accepted by state agencies or school districts for curriculum development, purchase or choice of curricular materials, teacher training, professional development, or continuing teacher education pertaining to this year-long course of instruction in Western Civilization.

SECTION C:

(1) No teacher shall be compelled by a policy of any state agency, school district, or school administration to affirm a belief in the so-called systemic nature of racism, or like ideas, or in the so-called multiplicity or fluidity of gender identities, or like ideas, against his or her sincerely held religious or philosophical convictions. (2) No state agency, school district, or school shall teach, instruct, or train any administrator, teacher, staff member, or employee to adopt or believe any of the following concepts: (a) one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; (b) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously; (c) an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of the individual's race; (d) members of one race cannot or should not attempt to treat others without respect to race; (e) an individual's moral standing or worth is necessarily determined by his or her race or sex; (f) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex; (g) an individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race or sex; (h) meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are racist or sexist, or were created by members of a particular race to oppress members of another race; (i) fault, blame, or bias should be assigned to a race or sex, or to members of a race or sex because of their race or sex. (3) No teacher, administrator, or other employee in any state agency, school district, open enrollment charter school, or school administration shall approve for use, make use of, or carry out, standards, curricula, lesson plans, textbooks, instructional materials, or instructional practices that serve to inculcate the following concepts: (a) one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; (b) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously; (c) an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of the individual's race; (d) members of one race cannot and should not attempt to treat others without respect to race; (e) an individual's moral standing or worth is necessarily determined by his or her race or sex; (f) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex; (g) any individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race or sex; (h) meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are racist or sexist, or were created by a members of a particular race to oppress members of another race; (i) that the advent of slavery in the territory that is now the United States constituted the true founding of the United States; or (j) that, with respect to their relationship to American values, slavery and racism are anything other than deviations from, betrayals of, or failures to live up to, the authentic founding principles of the United States, which include liberty and equality.

SECTION D:

The State Board of Education shall prescribe no list of documents, no supplemental readings, no textbooks, no teacher training, no list of instructional resources, and no curriculum for this year-long course of instruction in Western Civilization.

SECTION E:

The State Board of Education shall report on or before September 1 of each year to the Chairmen of the Education Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives on the specific Western Civilization curriculum content and teacher training used by each school district to implement this legislation.

SECTION F:

(1) No public school or charter school may permit content-based censorship in this course based on religious or cultural references in a writing, document, or record pertaining to this course of instruction.

(2) No public school or charter school may permit a student to be prevented in this course from, or punished in any way, including a reduction in grade, for, using a religious or cultural reference from a writing, document, or record pertaining to this course of instruction.

SECTION G:

If any provision of this chapter, or the application of any provision to any person or circumstance, is held to be invalid, the remainder of this chapter and the application of its provisions to any other person or circumstance shall not be affected thereby.

Existing State Statutes

World History

California: [Cal Ed Code Div. 2 Part 20 Chap. 4 § 33540.2](#) [*Instructional Quality Commission [33530 - 33546]*]; [Cal Ed Code Div. 2 Pat 20 Chap. 4 § 33540.4](#) [*Instructional Quality Commission [33530 - 33546]*]; [Cal Ed Code Div. 4 Part 28, Chap. 2 § 51225.3](#) [*Courses of Study, Grades 7 to 12 [51220 - 51230]*]

District of Columbia: [Rule 5-A2203.3](#) [*Academic Requirements*]

Florida: [Fla. Stat. § 1003.41](#) [*Next Generation Sunshine State Standards*]; [Fla. Stat. § 1003.4282](#) [*Requirements for a standard high school diploma*]

Maryland: [Md. Code Regs. 13A.03.02.03](#) [*Enrollment and Credit Requirements*]

Michigan: [MCL 380.1164b](#) [*African history; course content*]

Nevada: [NV Rev Stat § 389.018](#) [*Designation of core academic subjects; minimum units of credit required in high school; exception; additional subjects to be taught. [Effective July 1, 2022.]*]

New Mexico: [NMSA §22-13-1.1](#) [*Graduation requirements*]

North Dakota: [N.D. Cent. Code § 15.1-21-02](#) [*High schools - Required units*]; [N.D. Cent. Code § 15.1-21-25](#) [*High school graduation - Minimum requirements*]

Texas: [Texas Education Code §28.002](#) [*Required Curriculum*]

Virginia: [Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-208.02](#) [*Culturally Relevant and Inclusive Education Practices Advisory Committee*]

Wisconsin: [Wi. Stat. § 118.01](#) [*Educational goals and expectations*]