

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

**CHARACTER INSTRUCTION ACT**

**Introduction**

Many states make provision for character instruction, frequently with the explicit provision that this character instruction is necessary for civics education. We agree with the judgment that character instruction is an essential component of civics education. We have incorporated a broad variety of virtues catalogued in these state statutes into our model Character Instruction legislation.

Some states have begun to extend the list of desired traits to conflate *good character* with *conformity to diversity ideology*. In practice, many teachers now reinterpret older virtues to align with modern radical ideology. *Fairness*, for example, can be twisted to mean *adherence to the radical definition of 'equity.'* No model law can entirely account for such perversions of the plain meaning of words, but we proffer a lengthy list of traditional virtues not least to limit the ability of activists to distort the intent of this model legislation. The most dedicated activist will find it difficult to distort the meanings of *courage, duty, faith, honesty, moderation, self-control, self-reliance, and trustworthiness.*

**Model Legislative Text**

**SECTION A:**

(1) The governing body of any school district or public charter school shall require all students to take a program of instruction each year in character development.

(2) The program defined in subsection (1) shall include instruction in accountability, altruism, ambition, charity, cheerfulness, cleanliness, compassion, conscience, courage, courtesy, curiosity, dignity, diligence, duty, faith, familial devotion, forbearance, friendliness, gratitude, hardiness, helpfulness, honesty, honor, impartiality, independent judgment, initiative, industry, integrity, justice, kindness, loyalty, moderation, obedience, patience, perseverance, propriety, prudence, punctuality, reliability, responsibility, reverence, self-control, self-reliance, temperance, thrift, tolerance, and trustworthiness.

(3) The program defined in subsection (1) may not define or teach character or character traits in any manner that might promote or encourage students to participate in conduct that would violate any federal, state, or local law.

(4) Assessment of the students' understanding of the character traits taught in the program defined in subsection (1) shall be limited to and must reflect the material taught in the classroom. Students shall not be evaluated in any way as to whether or not the students evidence a specific character trait in their own lives.

## **SECTION B:**

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**

Arizona: [A.R.S. § 15-719](#) [*Character education program instruction; fund*]

California: [Cal Ed Code Div. 4 Part 28, Chap. 3 § 51470 - 51474](#) [*State Seal of Civic Engagement [51470 - 51474]*]

Florida: [Fla. Stat. § 1003.42](#) [*Required instruction*]

Indiana: [IC 20-30-5-6](#) [*Good citizenship instruction*]

Kansas: [K.S.A. 72-3231](#) [*Character development programs*]

Kentucky: [KRS § 158.005](#) [*Definition of "character education."*]

Louisiana: [La. R.S. 17:282.2](#) [*Character education programs; legislative findings; clearinghouse for information; permissive curriculum; dissemination of information; progress reports; rules and regulations*]

Mississippi: [Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-181](#) [*Character education programs in public schools authorized*]; [Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-183](#) [*Assessment of students' understanding of character traits*]

Nebraska: [Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-725](#) [*Character education; principles of instruction; duty of teachers*]; [Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-726](#) [*Character education; outline of instruction; duty of Commissioner of Education*]; [Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-727](#) [*Rules and regulations; State Department of Education; duties*]

New York: [NY CLS Title 1, Article 17, § 801-a](#) [*Instruction in civility, citizenship and character education*]

North Carolina: [N.C. Gen. Stat. §115C.81.60](#) [*Character education*]

Oregon: [ORS 336.067](#) [*Topics given special emphasis in instruction*]

Pennsylvania: [24 P.S. § 15-1502-E](#) [*Character education program*]

South Dakota: [SDCL 13-33-6.1](#) [*Character development instruction*]

Tennessee: [Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-1007](#) [*Character education*]

Texas: [Texas Education Code §29.906](#) [*Character Traits Instruction*]

Utah: [Utah Code Ann. § 53G-10-204](#) [*Civic and character education -- Definitions -- Legislative finding -- Elements -- Reporting requirements*]

Virginia: [Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-208.01](#) [*Character education required*]

Washington: [Rev. Code Wash. § 28A.150.211](#) [*Values and traits recognized*]

West Virginia: [W. Va. Code § 18-2-13](#) [*Character education integration*]