

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2003 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Joint Resolution 5 (Senator Haines, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Rules and Executive Nominations

Celebrate Freedom Week in Public Schools

This joint resolution urges local boards of education to develop and institute a Celebrate Freedom Week curriculum during the month of September for the purpose of instilling a sense of the sacrifices made during the founding of this country and the values upon which this country was founded.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Implementing a Celebrate Freedom Week in public schools would not materially affect local school expenditures.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The Celebrate Freedom Week would include a recitation of an excerpt of the Declaration of Independence at the beginning of each school day by students in grades 3 through 12.

Local boards should provide for the exemption of students from the recitation of excerpts from the Declaration of Independence: (1) on written request from the student's parent or guardian; (2) on the basis of a conscientious objection to the recitation; or (3) by virtue of being the child of a representative of a foreign government to whom the U.S. government extends diplomatic immunity.

Current Law: Public schools are required to devote a part of the school day for appropriate observances on the following days: Washington’s Birthday, Lincoln’s Birthday, Veterans’ Day, Columbus Day, Arbor Day, and any other day of national significance.

Background: The Maryland Social Studies Content Standards require that each student be given the opportunity to participate in the comprehensive social studies program. Several of the State requirements include:

- understanding the basic principles of American government expressed or implied in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, court decisions, and laws;
- understanding the rights and responsibilities of individuals in the United States;
- appreciating the ideas expressed in the documents and symbols of human freedom;
- demonstrating respect and support for the rights and dignity of all individuals; and
- assuming citizenship responsibilities at the local, State, and national levels.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HJ 13 (Delegate Dwyer, *et al.*) – Rules and Executive Nominations.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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