

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Joint Resolution 3 (Senator Haines, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Celebrate Freedom Week in Public Schools

This joint resolution urges each local board 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. The bill is directed at local school systems.

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.

The joint resolution indicates that local boards should provide for the exemption of students from the Declaration of Independence recitation (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: Subject to bylaws, policies, and guidelines established by the State Board of Education, each local board of education establishes curriculum guides and courses of study for the schools under its jurisdiction. 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 State Department of Education advises that the Maryland Social Studies Content Standards, the Social Studies Voluntary State Curriculum, and existing local school system curricula address the content detailed in the joint resolution.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A nearly identical bill, SJ 5 of 2003, was passed by the Senate but the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee took no action on the bill.

Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 5, 2007
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Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510