

HB 1151

Higher Education - Undergraduate Degree Requirement - United States History Course

Delegate Joseph Boteler, III

3/5/20

Good Afternoon Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Jackson, and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Thank you for your time today to discuss House Bill 1151.

- This bill would necessitate each public institution of higher education to require an undergraduate student to pass a United States history course to earn an undergraduate degree.
- An increasing number of Colleges are overlooking and dropping U.S. History classes from their Core Curriculum.
- As of 2016, only four out of the top 25 national universities required a course in U.S. history *in their history majors*.

At the Top 50 colleges and universities, a study found that college students had little knowledge of important U.S. historical facts.

- Only 23% could name James Madison as the Father of the Constitution.
- And only 22% could match the phrase “government of the people, by the people, for the people” with the Gettysburg Address.

- Over one-third of the college graduates surveyed could not place the American Civil War in its correct 20-year time frame.

History brings Americans together to honor their collective national historical base. History is the foundation for learning and understanding the previous actions, choices, and narratives, including racial, economic, anthropological, and political underpinnings of our country. By understanding their gravity, we may learn and we may avoid repeating costly mistakes and therefore choose options for growth that benefit all Americans. Our America's Founding Fathers understood that the success of their new nation depended on an educated and informed citizenry. This bill requires Maryland educate and inform their college students to better serve their community and country.

- States the Texas, Georgia, Oklahoma, and Nevada—that have similar laws mandating the study of U.S. government or history.

There is little that is more important for an American citizen to know than the history and traditions of his country. Without such knowledge, he stands uncertain and defenseless before the world, knowing neither where he has come from nor where he is going.

—President John F. Kennedy, 1962

Thank you and I sincerely urge a favorable report.