

Council Substitute for House Bill No. 885

An act relating to recitation of the Declaration of Independence; creating s. 233.0659, F.S.; requiring Celebrate Freedom Week to be recognized in the public schools each September; requiring a portion of the Declaration of Independence to be recited daily by students during that week; providing for excusal of a student from performing the required recitation; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 233.0659, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

233.0659 Recitation of the Declaration of Independence.—

(1) To educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values on which this country was founded, the last full week of classes in September shall be recognized in public schools as Celebrate Freedom Week. Celebrate Freedom Week must include at least 3 hours of appropriate instruction in each social studies class, as determined by each school district, which instruction shall include an in-depth study of the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence.

(2) To emphasize the importance of this week, at the beginning of each school day or in homeroom, during the last full week of September, public school principals and teachers shall conduct an oral recitation by students of the following words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

(3) Student recitation of this statement shall serve to reaffirm the American ideals of individual liberty.

(4) Upon written request by a student's parent, the student must be excused from the recitation of the Declaration of Independence.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2002.

Approved by the Governor April 30, 2002.

Filed in Office Secretary of State April 30, 2002.