



March 30, 2015

SUMMARY OF ORIGINAL BILL: Requires students to pass the civics portion of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services' naturalization test before they graduate high school. Requires the Department of Education (DOE) to compose and disseminate this test to each local education agency (LEA). Each student shall be given the opportunity to take the test until they pass. Students must receive a grade of at least 60 percent to pass the test. Prohibits students from receiving a regular high school diploma until a passing grade is achieved.

FISCAL IMPACT OF ORIGINAL BILL

NOT SIGNIFICANT

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENT (005490): Deletes all language of the original bill. Requires students to pass a civics test composed of questions from the federal immigration naturalization test before they graduate high school, beginning in January 2017. Requires local education agencies (LEAs) to prepare a test of at least 25 and no more than 50 questions. LEAs may prepare multiple versions of the test for use at different schools and at different times. Each student shall be given the opportunity to take the test as many times as necessary to receive a passing grade. Defines a passing grade to be at least 70 percent correct. Students who have an Individual Education Program (IEP) are exempt from this requirement. A school whose seniors all pass the test, excluding those that are exempt, shall be recognized on the Department of Education's website as a United States civics all-star school.

FISCAL IMPACT OF BILL WITH PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

Unchanged from the original fiscal note.

Assumptions for the bill as amended:

- All of the questions and answers for the civics portion of the naturalization test, as well as study materials, are available online through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website.
- Information about the test and study materials may be provided to students electronically. Any increase in state and local expenditures to provide such materials is estimated to be not significant.
- Based on a study done by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the passing rate on the civics portion of the naturalization test is currently 97.5 percent.

- Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-1202 requires each high school student to take at least one year of instruction in American history and government.
- The civics test will be prepared and administered by existing teachers or staff during the year of instruction in American history and government.
- No increase in local expenditures for additional personnel.
- Students who do not pass the test on the first try will have the test re-administered until they pass.
- It is estimated that given the availability of test materials, the current statutory high school course requirements, and the current passage rate for non-U.S. citizens, that each student will pass the civics test and receive a high school diploma.
- No shift in state and local Basic Education Program (BEP) funding as a result of students failing to pass the civics test and failing to receive a high school diploma.

CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Jeffrey L. Spalding, Executive Director

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