

Reinforcing College Education on America's Constitutional Heritage (REACH) Act
Based on South Carolina's S. 38 (2021)

Be it enacted by the [STATE] legislature

Section 1. That [STATE CODE] be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

- a) No public institution of higher education may grant a diploma for any baccalaureate degree program to any student unless the student successfully completes the requirements described in subsection (b).
- b) A public institution of higher learning that offers classes which may fulfill general education or liberal arts requirements must require each undergraduate student, except a student eligible for the exemption provided in subsection (c), to complete no fewer than three semester credit hours or their equivalent in American government or American history. This course must provide a comprehensive overview of the major events and turning points of American history and government and, at a minimum, require each student to:
 - (i) read the United States Constitution in its entirety;
 - (ii) read the Declaration of Independence in its entirety;
 - (iii) read a minimum of five essays in their entirety from the Federalist Papers as selected by the course instructor;
 - (iv) read the Emancipation Proclamation in its entirety;
 - (v) read the Gettysburg Address in its entirety;
 - (vi) read Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail in its entirety;
 - (vii) read one or more additional documents that are foundational to the African American freedom struggle; and
 - (viii) pass a cumulative final examination at the conclusion of the course, testing for proficiency in the provisions and principles of the documents described in this section.
- c) A public institution of higher learning may exempt a student who has completed three semester credit hours, or their equivalent, in an Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit course with a passing grade in the subject of American government or American history, provided the completed three semester credit hours, or their equivalent, in an Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit course satisfy the requirements of subsection (b).
- d) The governing board of each public institution of higher learning shall ensure that the requirements of this section are incorporated into the degree requirements of all undergraduate degree programs in a manner that does not:
 - (i) add to the total number of credit hours for any degree; or
 - (ii) conflict with any school accreditation process.

- e) The governing board of each public institution of higher learning shall ensure the compliance of each constituent institution with all provisions of this act. Each governing board shall collect information necessary to ensure that a public institution of higher learning is in compliance with this section. This information must be annually reported to the Chairman of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, the Chairman of the House of Representatives Education Committee, the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations on Education/Higher Education Committee, and the Chairman of the Senate Education/Higher Education Committee.

Section 2. If the president of any public institution of higher learning fails to enforce the provisions of this act for more than one academic year, the institution's governing board may remove the institution's president from his position.

Section 3. If any section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this act is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, then such holding shall not affect the constitutionality or validity of the remaining portions of this act, the legislature hereby declaring that it would have passed this act and each and every section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, clause, phrase, and word thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more other sections, subsections, paragraphs, subparagraphs, sentences, clauses, phrases, or words hereof may be declared to be unconstitutional, invalid, or otherwise ineffective.

Section 4. This act applies to the first incoming undergraduate freshman class entering a public institution of higher learning after the effective date of this act and each subsequent undergraduate class thereafter. Nothing contained in this act may be construed to prevent an undergraduate student enrolled in a public institution of higher learning on the effective date of this act from receiving a certificate of graduation.

Section 5. This act takes effect one year after it becomes law.