

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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HOUSE BILL 96
Committee Substitute Favorable 3/2/23
Third Edition Engrossed 3/22/23

Short Title: NC REACH Act.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 14, 2023

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REQUIRE AT LEAST THREE CREDIT HOURS OF INSTRUCTION IN AMERICAN HISTORY OR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO GRADUATE FROM A CONSTITUENT INSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WITH A BACCALAUREATE DEGREE OR A COMMUNITY COLLEGE WITH AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. TITLE

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "North Carolina Reclaiming College Education on America's Constitutional Heritage Act" or the "NC REACH Act."

PART II. REQUIRE THREE CREDIT HOURS OF INSTRUCTION IN AMERICAN HISTORY OR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AT CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 116-11(3) reads as rewritten:

"(3) ~~The~~ Except as provided in subdivision (15) of this section, the Board shall determine the functions, educational activities and academic programs of the constituent institutions. The Board shall also determine the types of degrees to be awarded. The powers herein given to the Board shall not be restricted by any provision of law assigning specific functions or responsibilities to designated institutions, the powers herein given superseding any such provisions of law. The Board, after adequate notice and after affording the institutional board of trustees an opportunity to be heard, shall have authority to withdraw approval of any existing program if it appears that the program is unproductive, excessively costly or unnecessarily duplicative. The Board shall review the productivity of academic degree programs every two years, using criteria specifically developed to determine program productivity."

SECTION 2.(b) G.S. 116-11 is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(15) The Board of Governors shall adopt a policy requiring each constituent institution of The University of North Carolina to require at least three credit hours of instruction in American history or American government, in accordance with G.S. 116-11.5, in order to graduate from the institution with a baccalaureate degree."



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1 SECTION 2.(c) Article 1 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes is amended by
2 adding a new section to read:

3 **"§ 116-11.5. American history or American government instruction required for**
4 **graduation with a baccalaureate degree.**

5 (a) Each constituent institution of The University of North Carolina that offers a
6 baccalaureate degree shall require as a condition of graduation with a baccalaureate degree that
7 all students complete at least three credit hours of instruction in American history or American
8 government that provides a comprehensive overview of the major events and turning points of
9 American history and government. A course required pursuant to this section shall meet the
10 following criteria:

11 (1) Require each student to read at least the following documents in their entirety:

12 a. The Constitution of the United States of America.

13 b. The Declaration of Independence.

14 c. The Emancipation Proclamation.

15 d. At least five essays from the Federalist Papers, as determined by the
16 instructor.

17 e. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail.

18 f. The Gettysburg Address.

19 g. The North Carolina State Constitution.

20 (2) Include a cumulative final exam on the principles in the documents listed in
21 subdivision (1) of this subsection. The final exam shall meet the following
22 criteria:

23 a. Comprise at least twenty percent (20%) of the student's total course
24 grade.

25 b. Focus substantially on the provisions and principles of the documents
26 listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the perspectives of the
27 authors of the documents, and the relevant historic contexts at the time
28 the documents were written.

29 (b) The chancellor of each constituent institution, or his or her designee, may exempt a
30 student from the requirements of this section if the student has successfully completed at least
31 three credit hours of instruction in American history or American government in a
32 postsecondary-level course provided outside the constituent institution that satisfies the
33 requirements of this section, including credit based on the following:

34 (1) A passing score on an Advanced Placement exam.

35 (2) A passing score on an International Baccalaureate exam.

36 (3) A passing score on an AS-Level or A-Level Cambridge Advanced
37 International Certificate of Education (AICE) course.

38 (4) A passing grade in a dual enrollment course.

39 (c) The Board of Governors shall ensure that the requirements of this section are
40 incorporated into the degree requirements of all baccalaureate programs and do not do any of the
41 following:

42 (1) Add to the total number of credit hours required for a degree.

43 (2) Conflict with the accreditation process for any constituent institution.

44 (d) The Board of Governors shall ensure that each constituent institution complies with
45 the requirements of this section. No later than November 15, 2024, and annually thereafter, the
46 Board shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on compliance with
47 this section by each constituent institution. The report shall include, at a minimum, a copy of the
48 syllabus for each course that is offered to comply with this section.

49 (e) The Board of Governors, in its discretion, may remove the chancellor of a constituent
50 institution for failure to comply with this section over more than one academic year."

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1 **PART III. REQUIRE THREE CREDIT HOURS OF INSTRUCTION IN AMERICAN**
2 **HISTORY OR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AT NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY**
3 **COLLEGES**

4 **SECTION 3.(a)** G.S. 115D-5 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

5 "(z) The State Board of Community Colleges shall adopt a policy requiring each
6 community college to require at least three credit hours of instruction in American history or
7 American government, in accordance with G.S. 115D-10, in order to graduate from the
8 community college with an associate degree."

9 **SECTION 3.(b)** Article 1 of Chapter 115D of the General Statutes is amended by
10 adding a new section to read:

11 **"§ 115D-10. American history or American government instruction required for**
12 **graduation with an associate degree.**

13 (a) Each community college shall require as a condition of graduation with an associate
14 degree that all students complete at least three credit hours of instruction in American history or
15 American government that provides a comprehensive overview of the major events and turning
16 points of American history and government. A course required pursuant to this section shall meet
17 the following criteria:

18 (1) Require each student to read at least the following documents in their entirety:

19 a. The Constitution of the United States of America.

20 b. The Declaration of Independence.

21 c. The Emancipation Proclamation.

22 d. At least five essays from the Federalist Papers, as determined by the
23 instructor.

24 e. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail.

25 f. The Gettysburg Address.

26 g. The North Carolina State Constitution.

27 (2) Include a cumulative final exam on the principles in the documents listed in
28 subdivision (1) of this subsection. The final exam shall meet the following
29 criteria:

30 a. Comprise at least twenty percent (20%) of the student's total course
31 grade.

32 b. Focus substantially on the provisions and principles of the documents
33 listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the perspectives of the
34 authors of the documents, and the relevant historic contexts at the time
35 the documents were written.

36 (b) The president of a community college, or his or her designee, may exempt a student
37 from the requirements of this section if the student has successfully completed at least three credit
38 hours of instruction in American history or American government in a postsecondary-level
39 course provided outside the community college that satisfies the requirements of this section,
40 including credit based on the following:

41 (1) A passing score on an Advanced Placement exam.

42 (2) A passing score on an International Baccalaureate exam.

43 (3) A passing score on an AS-Level or A-Level Cambridge Advanced
44 International Certificate of Education (AICE) course.

45 (4) A passing grade in a dual enrollment course.

46 (c) The State Board of Community Colleges shall ensure that the requirements of this
47 section are incorporated into the degree requirements of all associate degree programs and do not
48 do either of the following:

49 (1) Add to the total number of credit hours required for a degree.

50 (2) Conflict with the accreditation process for any institution.

1 (d) The State Board of Community Colleges shall ensure that each community college
2 complies with the requirements of this section. No later than November 15, 2024, and annually
3 thereafter, the Board shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on
4 compliance with this section by each community college. The report shall include, at a minimum,
5 a copy of the syllabus for each course that is offered to comply with this section.

6 (e) The State Board of Community Colleges, in its discretion, may remove the president
7 of a community college for failure to comply with this section over more than one academic
8 year."

10 **PART IV. ALIGN FOUNDING PRINCIPLES COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

11 **SECTION 4.(a)** G.S. 115C-81.45(d) is amended by adding a new subdivision to
12 read:

13 "(3a) A passing grade in an advanced course, as defined in G.S. 115C-174.26(a), or
14 a dual enrollment course, shall satisfy the Founding Principles of the United
15 States of America and the State of North Carolina course requirement if, in
16 addition to meeting the requirements of this section, the course requires
17 students to read the following documents in their entirety:

18 a. The Constitution of the United States of America.

19 b. The Declaration of Independence.

20 c. The Emancipation Proclamation.

21 d. At least five essays from the Federalist Papers, as determined by the
22 teacher.

23 e. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail.

24 f. The Gettysburg Address.

25 g. The North Carolina State Constitution."

26 **SECTION 4.(b)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning
27 with courses offered in the 2023-2024 school year.

29 **PART V. EFFECTIVE DATE**

30 **SECTION 5.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law
31 and applies beginning in the 2024-2025 academic year to students accepted for initial enrollment
32 in a baccalaureate program at a constituent institution or initial enrollment in an associate degree
33 program at a community college.