



This Bill Analysis reflects the contents of the bill as it was presented in committee.

# SENATE BILL 524: Founding Principles/Graduation Requirement

2015-2016 General Assembly

<b>Committee:</b>	Senate Education/Higher Education	<b>Date:</b>	April 28, 2015
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Sens. Curtis, Soucek, Tillman	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Denise Adams
<b>Analysis of:</b>	First Edition		Legislative Analyst

**SUMMARY:** Senate Bill 524 would make changes to the Founding Principles Act.

**CURRENT LAW:** In 2011, the General Assembly passed House Bill 588 (S.L. 2011-273), The Founding Principles Act, which changed the previous statutory requirements of civic literacy under the Basic Education Program. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the Founding Principles Act requires “during the high school years the teaching of a semester course ‘American History I – The Founding Principles,’” and specifies the course must include instruction in the following Founding Principles:

- a. The Creator-endowed inalienable rights of the people.
- b. Structure of government, separation of powers with checks and balances.
- c. Frequent and free elections in a representative government.
- d. Rule of law.
- e. Equal justice under the law.
- f. Private property rights.
- g. Federalism.
- h. Due process.
- i. Individual rights as set forth in the Bill of Rights.
- j. Individual responsibility.

A passing grade in this course is required for graduation from high school.

The State Board of Education (SBE) is directed to require that any high school level curriculum-based tests for this course that are developed and administered statewide beginning with the 2014-2015 school year include questions related to the founding principles.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** Senate Bill 524 would make the following changes to the Founding Principles Act:

1. Directs the SBE, rather than local boards, to require a course on the founding principles is taught in high schools.
2. Removes the name of the required course, "American History I – The Founding Principles" from statute.
3. Specifies additional instruction that must be taught in the required course, as follows:
  - k. Constitutional limitations on government power to tax and spend and prompt payment of public debt.
  - l. Money with intrinsic value.

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- m. Strong defense and supremacy of civil authority over military.
- n. Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.
- o. Eternal vigilance by "We the People."

4. Makes a clarifying change to the statute on the curriculum-based statewide tests to clarify the statute is referring to tests associated with this required course.

5. Makes a conforming change to the school year in which the required curriculum-based statewide tests would start to align with the effective date of this bill.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This bill would be effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with the 2015-2016 school year.