



HOUSE BILL 96: NC REACH Act.

2023-2024 General Assembly

Committee:	House Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	March 21, 2023
Introduced by:	Reps. Kidwell, Hardister, Pickett	Prepared by:	Kara McCraw*
Analysis of:	Second Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *The 2nd edition of House Bill 96 would require students to earn 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 from a community college with an associate degree.*

CURRENT LAW: State law does not currently set higher education graduation requirements. G.S. 116-11(3) requires the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina to determine the functions, educational activities, and academic programs of constituent institutions. G.S. 115D-5(a) authorizes the State Board of Community Colleges to establish and administer standards for professional personnel, curricula, admissions, and graduation.

In order to graduate from high school, G.S. 115C-81.45(d) requires students to earn a passing grade in a course entitled "Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy" (Founding Principles), which includes instruction on civics and citizenship education.

BILL ANALYSIS: HB 96 would require students to earn 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 from a community college with an associate degree. In order to satisfy this requirement, the course must meet the following requirements:

- Provide a comprehensive overview of the major events and turning points of American history and government.
- Require each student to read at least the following documents in their entirety:
 - The Constitution of the United States of America.
 - The Declaration of Independence.
 - The Emancipation Proclamation.
 - At least five essays from the Federalist Papers, as determined by the instructor.
 - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail.
 - The Gettysburg Address.
- Include a cumulative final exam that makes up at least 20% of the total course grade on the principles, author perspectives, and relevant historic contexts of the required documents.

Students may be exempted from the course requirement if they have successfully completed at least 3 credit hours of instruction in American History or American Government outside of the constituent institution or community college that otherwise satisfies the requirements, including credit based on:

- A passing score on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam.
- A passing score on an International Baccalaureate (IB) exam.

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- A passing score on an AS-Level or A-Level Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) course.
- A passing grade in a dual enrollment course.

The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina and the State Board of Community College must each do the following:

- Ensure that the course requirement does not add to the total number of credit hours required for a degree.
- Ensure that the course requirement does not conflict with the accreditation process for any constituent institution or community college.
- Ensure that each constituent institution or community college complies with the course requirement.
- Beginning November 15, 2024, annually report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on compliance with these requirements by each constituent institution and community college.

The Board of Governors may remove the chancellor of a constituent institution and the State Board of Community Colleges may remove the president of a community college for failure to comply with the course requirement over more than one academic year. for failure to comply with the course requirement over more than one academic year.

Effective with courses offered in the 2023-2024 school year, high school advanced courses (AP, IB, AICE) or dual enrollment courses would also require students to read the same documents required at the higher education level in order to satisfy the Founding Principles high school course requirement.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Except as otherwise provided, HB 96 would be effective when it becomes law and would apply beginning in the 2024-2025 academic year to students accepted for initial enrollment in a baccalaureate program at a constituent institution or initial enrollment in an associate degree program at a community college.

**This summary was substantially contributed to by Brian Gwyn, Staff Attorney.*