



HOUSE BILL 7: NC REACH Act.

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

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	House Higher Education. If favorable, re-refer to Appropriations. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	Date:	April 2, 2025
Introduced by:	Reps. Kidwell, Moss, Cairns, Willis	Prepared by:	Michael Whitfield
Analysis of:	PCS to First Edition H7-CSCW-6		Committee Co-Counsel

OVERVIEW: *The First Edition of House Bill 7 would require students to complete 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.*

The PCS to House Bill 7 changes the corrective action that the State Board of Community Colleges may take in the event of noncompliance with the requirements of House Bill 7.

CURRENT LAW: The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina is required to determine the educational activities and academic programs of constituent institutions by G.S. 116-11(3). The State Board of Community Colleges is authorized to establish and administer standards for curricula and graduation by G.S. 115D-5(a).

To graduate from high school, students are required 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: The PCS would require students to complete 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. To satisfy the 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.
 - Five essays from the Federalist Papers, determined by the instructor.
 - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail.
 - The Gettysburg Address.
 - The North Carolina State Constitution.
- Include a cumulative final exam that makes up at least 20% of the student's course grade on the principles and provisions of the documents, their authors' perspectives, and the relevant historic contexts.

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Students may be exempted from the course requirement if they have successfully completed at least three credit hours in American History or American Government outside of the institution 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.
- 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 Colleges must:

- Ensure that the course requirement is incorporated into degree requirements at each constituent institution and community college.
- 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.
- Annually report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on compliance with these requirements, beginning no later than November 15, 2026.

The Board of Governors may remove the chancellor of a constituent institution and the State Board of Community Colleges may withdraw or withhold State financial and administrative support or take additional action against the local board of trustees for failure to comply with the course requirement over more than one academic year.

Effective beginning with the 2025-2026 academic year, high school advanced courses (AP, IB, AICE) and dual enrollment courses would have to include requiring students to read the documents required at the higher education level to satisfy the Founding Principles high school course requirement.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year to students accepted for initial enrollment at an applicable higher education institution.

BACKGROUND: The Board of Governors adopted Policy 400.1.5 which requires all constituent institutions to, as a condition of awarding a baccalaureate degree, require students entering on or after July 1, 2025, to complete a course or courses covering the foundations of American democracy. The required course or courses must include the following learning outcomes: (i) evaluate key concepts, principles, arguments, and contexts in founding documents of the American republic, including the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and a representative selection of the Federalist papers; and (ii) evaluate key milestones in progress and challenges in the effort to form "a more perfect Union," including the arguments and contexts surrounding the Gettysburg Address, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Letter from Birmingham Jail in addition to other texts.

Drupti Chauhan, Principal Attorney in the Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.