

SESSION OF 2021

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2039

As Amended by Senate Committee of the Whole

Brief*

HB 2039, as amended, would amend law related to civics and financial literacy education.

Civics Education

The bill would require a student enrolled in an accredited public, private, or parochial high school to pass a civics test, or series of tests, as part of the Kansas required courses of instruction for graduation. The bill would require the civics test, or series of tests, be composed of a total of 60 questions selected from the naturalization test administered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. The bill would allow teachers to use 20 multiple choice questions provided online by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website in the civics test or series of tests.

The bill would require each accredited high school to submit to the State Board of Education (State Board) an annual report that provides aggregate student achievement data for the civics test or series of tests. The bill would require the State Board to compile and present such reports for the Legislature on or before January 31 of each year.

The bill would also require accommodations for, or possible exemptions to, the civics test requirement for a student with an individualized education program.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

The bill would authorize the State Board to adopt rules and regulations related to such civics test.

Financial Literacy Education

The bill would amend law regarding personal financial literacy education in state curriculum standards. Current law requires the State Board to develop such curriculum, materials, guidelines and standards for all grades within existing mathematics curriculum or other appropriate subject matter curriculum, for use by local boards of education and governing authorities of accredited nonpublic schools. The bill would maintain existing guidance for kindergarten through grade 10 but provide amended guidance for grades 11 and 12.

The bill would require, for grades 11 and 12, a personal financial literacy course to be at least one semester or two quarters in length. The bill would require the course offered to include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

- Saving and investing;
- Credit and debt;
- Financial responsibility and money management; and
- Insurance, risk management, and income.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Education at the request of Representative Huebert.

[*Note:* HB 2039, as introduced, contains provisions similar to those of 2020 HB 2573.]

House Committee on Education

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Huebert, the Attorney General, and private citizens, stating the bill would enhance civics education in Kansas.

Opponent testimony was offered by representatives of the Kansas Association of School Boards and the Kansas National Education Association, stating the bill would not improve civics education and would unnecessarily impede the authority of local school boards. Written-only **opponent** testimony was provided by representatives of the State Board of Education and the Olathe Public Schools USD 233, and a private citizen.

The House Committee amended the bill to:

- Include a series of whereas clauses stating the purposes of the bill;
- Remove provisions related to a requirement for high school students to pass a 100-question examination on the principles of American civics to complete the requirements necessary for graduation from high school;
- Insert provisions related to a civics test as part of an existing course on the government and institutions of the United States;
- Insert provisions requiring high schools to submit certain aggregate data to the State Board and requiring the State Board to take certain action related to such data; and
- Remove requirements that the State Board provide a model examination for use by school districts or governing bodies of accredited high schools and establish a passing score for such examination.

Senate Committee on Education

In the Senate Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Huebert and the Attorney General. Written-only **proponent** testimony was provided by a private citizen. The proponents generally discussed the value of a civics test to ensure students graduating from high school have the same level of civics knowledge as naturalized citizens.

Opponent testimony was provided by a representative for the Kansas Association of School Boards and the United School Administrators of Kansas, a representative of the Kansas National Education Association, and three private citizens. Written-only **opponent** testimony was provided by representatives of the Kansas Council for the Social Studies and the State Board. The opponents generally discussed the effectiveness of the test and whether the bill infringed on the State Board's authority.

Neutral testimony was provided by a private citizen. The conferee indicated support for the test but expressed the need to provide exemptions for students with individualized education programs (IEPs) and students with special needs.

Senate Committee of the Whole

The Senate Committee of the Whole amended the bill to require the State Board to develop curriculum, materials, and guidelines for the implementation of personal financial literacy education for grades 11 and 12 that covers topics listed in the bill.

Fiscal Information

The fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill as introduced does not apply to the amended bill.

Education; American civics test; graduation requirements; personal financial literacy