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SENATE

{ REPORT  
108-71

AMERICAN HISTORY AND CIVICS EDUCATION ACT OF 2003

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JUNE 13, 2003.—Ordered to be printed  
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Mr. GREGG, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, submitted the following

**R E P O R T**

[To accompany S. 504]

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, to which was referred the bill (S. 504) to establish academies for teachers and students of American history and civics and a national alliance of teachers of American history and civics, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

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I. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF THE BILL

It is the purpose of the American History and Civics Education Act of 2003 to create, as a pilot program, residential academies for teachers and students in the fields of American History and Civics. Up to 12 Presidential Academies for teachers and 12 Congressional Academies for students would be sponsored by educational institutions for 2-year renewable grants. The bill also provides for the establishment of a National Alliance of Teachers of American History and Civics.

## II. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

American children lack sufficient knowledge of U.S. history and civics. By providing for academies to teach both teachers and students, the bill hopes to reverse this alarming trend.

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), three-quarters of the Nation's 4th, 8th and 12th graders are not proficient in civics knowledge and one-third do not have even basic knowledge, making them "civic illiterates."

Children are not learning about American history and civics because they are not being taught it. American history has been watered down, and civics is too often dropped from the curriculum entirely.

Until the 1960's, civics education, which teaches the duties of citizenship, was a regular part of the high school curriculum, but today's college graduates probably have less civics knowledge than high school graduates of 50 years ago. Misguided reform theories in the '60's and '70's resulted in the widespread elimination of required classes and curricula in civics education. Today, more than half the States have no requirement for students to take a course—even for one semester—in American government.

The proposed Presidential and Congressional Academies would help reverse this trend. Participating teachers would gain greater depth in the field as well as garner new ideas for teaching the subjects to their students. Participating students would have the opportunity to concentrate on American history and civics in a challenging environment. The pilot academies are modeled after Governors' Schools that have succeeded across the country. The schools are usually summer residential academies for students and/or teachers in specific fields of study. Today there are more than 100 Governors' Schools in 28 States.

## III. HISTORY OF LEGISLATION AND COMMITTEE ACTION

On March 4, 2003, Senator Alexander proposed S. 504, the American History and Civics Education Act which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. On May 14, 2003, the committee met in executive session to consider the American History and Civics Education Act of 2003. No amendments were offered. The bill was subsequently approved by voice vote.

## IV. EXPLANATION OF LEGISLATION AND COMMITTEE VIEWS

### *Overview*

The American History and Civics Education Act of 2003 authorizes the National Endowment for the Humanities to administer a grant program to establish up to twelve Presidential Academies for Teachers at an annual level of \$7 million for fiscal years 2004–2007, up to 12 Congressional Academies for Students at an annual level of \$14 million for fiscal years 2004–2007, and a National Alliance of Teachers of American History and Civics at an annual level of \$4 million for fiscal years 2004–2007.

### *Program goals*

The purpose of the Academies would be to inspire better teaching and more learning of the key events, documents, persons, and ideas that shaped the institutions and democratic heritage of the United

States. This legislation creates a pilot program. Up to twelve Presidential Academies for teachers and up to 12 Congressional Academies for students would be sponsored by educational institutions. The National Endowment for the Humanities would award 12-year renewable grants to those institutions after a peer review process. Each grant would be subject to rigorous review after 3 years to determine whether the entire Academies program should continue, expand or end. The legislation authorizes \$25 million annually for the 4-year pilot program. This program is authorized through 2007, beginning in fiscal year 2004.

*Eligible grantees*

The committee recognizes that there are a number of educational institutions that are focused on the teaching of American history and civics. The committee recommends that the chairperson administer grants to educational institutions that demonstrate a focus on content knowledge of American History. The National Endowment for the Humanities, if feasible, should try to attain geographic diversity in the selection of grantees. This is to attempt to ensure that Academies are dispersed throughout the United States so that students and teachers nationwide can participate.

The Smithsonian Institution, the National Park Service, the Library of Congress, and public libraries are stewards of millions of objects, historical landmarks, books, and documents that preserve the memories and experiences of the American people. Their work is a valuable asset in the teaching of American history and civics. The committee recognizes the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, the National Park Service, and public libraries as examples of nonprofit educational institutions, which should be considered as eligible potential recipients of grants made by the National Endowment for the Humanities under this act.

The committee recognizes how important it is for citizens to understand the principles that have united all Americans since our Nation's founding. Most countries are united by a common ethnicity, but the United States is united by our commitment to these principles. Therefore, the committee has not referenced particular ethnic groups' roles in American history and civics. However, the committee acknowledges the unique position of Native Americans and their contribution to American history. Although America's variety and diversity is a great strength, Americans' greatest accomplishment is that we found unity amidst that variety and diversity. The three Latin words that were the first motto of our Nation, E Pluribus Unum, are still in the right order—out of many, one. The committee encourages the chairperson to award grants to educational institutions that will enhance students' and teachers' content knowledge of the key ideas, events, persons, and documents defined in section 2 of this act, particularly E Pluribus Unum.

*Teacher and student participant requirements*

It is the committee's intent that teachers and students from across the United States, including those from any public or private school, as well as home-schooled children, would be eligible to apply to the academies. Additionally, the committee recognizes the necessity for educational institutions receiving these grants to ensure that low-income students and teachers teaching at title I

schools are aware of the workshops and know how and when to apply to an academy.

Educational institutions applying for Presidential Academy grants may permit all kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers of American history and civics to apply to the Academy. However, the committee does not intend for every Presidential Academy to serve kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers. A grantee might design an academy with a curriculum that is grade level-specific, such as an academy for kindergarten through third grade teachers of American history and civics. The committee encourages the Chairperson to award grants to a diverse group of educational institutions to ensure that a variety of teachers of American history and civics will have the opportunity to attend an appropriate Presidential Academy.

Teachers applying to a Presidential Academy do not need to be certified history or civics teachers. Selected teachers may be those who plan to use these subjects in their classroom to help increase students' content knowledge of American history and civics. The committee recognizes the potential for these Academies to help teachers meet the highly qualified criteria required by the No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107–110).

*National alliance of teachers of American history and civics*

This legislation authorizes the awarding of a grant or grants for the creation of a national alliance of American history and civics teachers that would facilitate the sharing of ideas. The alliance would serve as a resource for the sharing of best practices in the teaching of American history and civics and would connect teachers by using the Internet. It is the committee's suggestion that this alliance might be modeled after an alliance the National Geographic Society began during the 1980s to put geography back into the American school curriculum. The State of Tennessee and the University of Tennessee were among the first sponsors of that alliance.

It is the committee's intent that this alliance would help to create State chapters of the national alliance and coordinate with other alliances that study subjects related to American history, government, and civics. The committee views the national alliance of teachers of American history and civics as a vital entity needed to restore the teaching of American history and civics to its rightful place the classroom.

V. COST ESTIMATE

U.S. CONGRESS,  
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
*Washington, DC, May 20, 2003.*

Hon. JUDD GREGG,  
*Chairman, Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions,  
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for S. 504, the American History and Civics Education Act of 2003.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Donna Wong.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN, *Director*.

Enclosure.

*S. 504—American History and Civics Education Act of 2003*

Summary: S. 504 would establish three new grant programs within the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The bill would authorize the appropriations of \$100 million over the 2004–2007 period, and CBO estimates that appropriations of the authorized levels would result in additional outlays of \$100 million over the 2004–2008 period. Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues.

S. 504 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

Estimated cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact of S. 504 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 500 (education, training, employment, and social services). The estimate assumes that outlays will follow historical spending rates for similar competitive grant programs.

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—				
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION					
Presidential Academics for Teaching of American History and Civics:					
Authorization Level .....	7	7	7	7	0
Estimated Outlays .....	3	7	7	7	4
Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics:					
Authorization Level .....	14	14	14	14	0
Estimated Outlays .....	6	14	14	14	8
National Alliance of Teachers of American History and Civics:					
Authorization Level .....	4	4	4	4	0
Estimated Outlays .....	2	4	4	4	2
Total Authorizations under S. 504:					
Authorization Level .....	25	25	25	25	0
Estimated Outlays .....	10	25	25	25	15

Note: Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

S. 504 would create three new American history and civics grant programs and authorize funding of \$25 million a year for the next four years. If the authorized amount is appropriated for each year, outlays would increase by \$10 million in 2004, and by \$100 million over the 2004–2008 period.

*Presidential Academies for Teaching of American History and Civics*

S. 504 would authorize the appropriation of \$7 million in each fiscal year from 2004 through 2007 for a new competitive grant program for nonprofit educational institutions to establish Presidential Academies for Teaching of American History and Civics. The academies would offer summer workshops for elementary and secondary school teachers of American history and civics to strengthen their knowledge and preparation for teaching these subjects.

*Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics*

The bill also would authorize the appropriation of \$14 million a year through 2007 for a new competitive grant program for non-profit educational institutions to establish Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics. These academies would offer summer workshops for outstanding students of American history and civics to broaden their understanding of these subjects.

*National Alliance of Teachers of American History and Civics*

S. 504 would authorize the appropriation of \$4 million a year through 2007 and would direct the Chairperson of the NEH to award a grant to an organization for the creation of a national alliance of elementary and secondary school teachers of American history and civics. The purpose of the national alliance would be to facilitate the sharing of ideas among teachers of American history and civics and encourage best practices in teaching through a national Web site, seminars, and other activities.

Intergovernmental and private-sector impact: S. 504 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no cost on state, local, or tribal governments.

Estimates prepared by: Federal Costs; Donna Wong. Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Greg Waring. Impact on the Private Sector: Nabeel Alsalam.

Estimate approved by: Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

VI. REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

*A. Regulatory Impact*

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee has determined that there will be minimal increases in the regulatory burden imposed by this bill.

*B. Unfunded Mandates Statement*

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). It would authorize a \$25 million pilot program to be administered by the National Endowment for the Humanities if such sums are appropriated.

VII. APPLICATION OF LAW TO THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee has determined that there is no legislative impact.

VIII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

*Section 1. Short title*

This Act may be cited as the “American History and Civics Education Act of 2003.”

*Section 2. Definitions*

This Section makes the following definitions:

(1) American History—The term “American history and civics” means the key events, key persons, key ideas, and key documents that shaped the institutions and democratic heritage of the United States.

(2) Chairperson—The term “Chairperson” means the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

(3) Institution of Higher Education—The term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

(4) Key Documents—The term “key documents” means the documents that established or explained the foundational principles of democracy in the United States, including the United States Constitution and the amendments of the Constitution (particularly the Bill of Rights), the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers, and the Emancipation Proclamation.

(5) Key Events—The term “key events” means the critical turning points in the history of the United States (including the American Revolution, the Civil War, the world wars of the twentieth century, the civil rights movement, and the major court decisions and legislation) that contributed to extending the promise of democracy in American life.

(6) Key Ideas—The term “key ideas” means the ideas that shaped the democratic institutions and heritage of the United States, including the notion of equal justice under the law, freedom, individualism, human rights, and a belief in progress.

(7) Key Persons—The term “key persons” means the men and women who led the United States as founding fathers, elected officials, scientists, inventors, pioneers, advocates of equal rights, entrepreneurs, and artists.

(8) Nonprofit Educational Institution—The term “nonprofit educational institution” means (A)(i) an institution of higher education or (ii) a nonprofit educational research center; and (B) includes a consortium of entities described in subparagraph (A).

(9) State—The term “State” means each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

### *Section 3. Presidential Academies for Teaching of American History and Civics*

This section establishes a competitive grant program to be administered by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Grantees will offer an approximately two week long workshop for kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers who teach History and Civics in their classrooms. Workshops shall have the flexibility to select teachers from different regions and public or private schools, including schools in low-income communities. This section authorizes the Chairperson to establish a grant application process in order to award up to twelve two-year renewable grants to educational institutions. After the first two years the NEH may renew a grant for an additional two years. The bill does not, however, require that the NEH do so; it may determine that such a grant is not worthy of renewal and thereby award the grant to another applicant, if the NEH approves the new applicant’s application. Teachers shall not incur costs for attendance at or participation in the Academies. The Chairperson shall evaluate all Academies in their third year of the grant to determine their overall success and

highlight best grantees' practices in order to become models for future grantees. In this section, there is authorized to be appropriated \$7 million for each of the fiscal years 2004 through 2007 for this purpose.

*Section 4. Congressional Academies for Students of American History and Civics*

This section establishes a competitive grant program to be administered by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Educational institutions awarded grants shall offer workshops for approximately 300 outstanding students of American History and Civics going into their junior or senior year for approximately four weeks in the summer (or at another appropriate time when students would be free to attend). The NEH may award up to twelve two-year grants that may be renewed for an additional two years. As in Section 3, the NEH is not obligated by this bill to renew grants, but may choose to renew or award the grants to new applicants. The Primary Professor or scholar who will design a curriculum for the workshop and will select core teachers to lead the workshop, shall be named in the grant application. A student will be eligible to attend the workshop if the student is recommended by the principal, headmaster, or other head of academic program, and will be a junior or senior year in the academic year following the Academy. A student who attends the workshop shall not incur any costs associated with attendance at the program, including meals, lodging and material. Costs associated with travel may be funded with non-Federal dollars. The NEH shall evaluate all workshops in the third year of the grant to determine the overall success and highlight grantees' best practices in order to become models for future grantees. In this section, there is authorized to be appropriated \$14 million for each of the fiscal years 2004 through 2007 for this purpose.

*Section 5. National Alliance of Teachers of American History and Civics*

This section authorizes the Chairperson to award grants to an organization for the creation of a national alliance of elementary school and secondary school teachers of American History and Civics. The purpose of the national alliance is to facilitate the sharing of ideas among American History and Civics teachers and to encourage best practices in the teaching of these subjects. A grant awarded shall be for two years and may be renewed. As in Sections 3 and 4, the NEH is not obligated by this bill to renew the grant, but may choose to renew or award the grant to a new applicant. An organization that receives this grant shall use the funds for the development of a website to facilitate discussions of new ideas, for the creation of in-State chapters of the national alliance, and for seminars, lectures, and other events on American History and Civics oriented towards teachers of those subjects. In this section, there is authorized to be appropriated \$4 million for each of the fiscal years 2004 through 2007 for this purpose.