

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2721

To amend the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act to require State academic assessments of student achievement in United States history, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 22, 2004

Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act to require State academic assessments of student achievement in United States history, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “American History
5 Achievement Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

1 (1) the 2001 National Assessment of Edu-
2 cational Progress assessment in United States his-
3 tory had the largest percentage of students scoring
4 below basic of any subject that was tested, including
5 mathematics, science, and reading; and

6 (2) in the 2001 National Assessment of Edu-
7 cational Progress assessment in United States his-
8 tory—

9 (A) 33 percent of students in grade 4
10 scored below basic, 36 percent of students in
11 grade 8 scored below basic, and 57 percent of
12 students in grade 12 scored below basic;

13 (B) 92 percent of students in grade 12
14 could not explain the most important cause of
15 the Great Depression after reading a paragraph
16 delineating 4 significant reasons;

17 (C) 91 percent of students in grade 8
18 could not “list two issues that were important
19 in causing the Civil War” and “list the North-
20 ern and Southern positions on each of these
21 issues”;

22 (D) 95 percent of students in grade 4
23 could not list “two reasons why the people we
24 call ‘pioneers’ moved west across the United
25 States”;

1 (E) 73 percent of students in grade 4
 2 could not identify the Constitution from among
 3 4 choices as “the document that contains the
 4 basic rules used to run the United States gov-
 5 ernment”;

6 (F) 75 percent of students in grade 4
 7 could not identify “the three parts of the fed-
 8 eral (national) government of the United
 9 States” out of 4 possible choices;

10 (G) 94 percent of students in grade 8
 11 could not “give two reasons why it can be use-
 12 ful for a country to have a constitution”; and

13 (H) 91 percent of students in grade 12
 14 were unable to “explain two ways that demo-
 15 cratic society benefits from citizens actively par-
 16 ticipating in the political process”.

17 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENT TO THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF**
 18 **EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AUTHORIZATION**
 19 **ACT.**

20 Section 303(b) of the National Assessment of Edu-
 21 cational Progress Authorization Act (20 U.S.C. 9622(b))
 22 is amended—

23 (1) in paragraph (2)(D), by inserting “(with a
 24 priority in conducting assessments in history not less

1 frequently than once every 4 years)” after “subject
2 matter”; and

3 (2) in paragraph (3)(A)—

4 (A) in clause (iii)—

5 (i) by inserting “except as provided in
6 clause (v),” before “may conduct”; and

7 (ii) by striking “and” after the semi-
8 colon;

9 (B) in clause (iv), by striking the period at
10 the end and inserting “; and”; and

11 (C) by adding at the end the following:

12 “(v) shall conduct trial State aca-
13 demic assessments of student achievement
14 in United States history in grades 8 and
15 12 in not less than 10 States representing
16 geographically diverse regions of the
17 United States.”.

18 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT GOVERNING BOARD.**

19 Section 302(e)(1) of the National Assessment of
20 Educational Progress Authorization Act (20 U.S.C.
21 9621(e)(1)) is amended—

22 (1) in subparagraph (I), by striking “and” after
23 the semicolon;

24 (2) by redesignating subparagraph (J) as sub-
25 paragraph (K);

1 (3) in the flush matter at the end, by striking
2 “subparagraph (J)” and inserting “subparagraph
3 (K)”; and

4 (4) by inserting after subparagraph (I) the fol-
5 lowing:

6 “(J) in consultation with the Commissioner
7 for Education Statistics, identify and select the
8 States that will participate in the trial State
9 academic assessments described in section
10 303(b)(3)(A)(v); and”.

11 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

12 Section 303(b)(3) of the National Assessment of
13 Educational Progress Authorization Act (20 U.S.C.
14 9622(b)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
15 lowing:

16 “(D) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-
17 TIONS.—There are authorized to be appro-
18 priated to carry out subparagraph (A)(v)
19 \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2005 and
20 2006 and such sums as may be necessary for
21 each succeeding fiscal year.”.

22 **SEC. 6. CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**

23 Section 113(a)(1) of the Education Sciences Reform
24 Act of 2002 (20 U.S.C. 9513(a)(1)) is amended by strik-

1 ing “section 302(e)(1)(J)” and inserting “section
2 302(e)(1)(K)”.

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