

The Senate Education and Youth Committee offered the following substitute to SB 68:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 elementary and secondary education, so as to establish Celebrate Freedom Week; to provide
3 for the posting of historical documents; to require the Department of Education to develop
4 online resources and instructional support; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting
5 laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

7 Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and
8 secondary education, is amended by adding a new article to read as follows:
9

"ARTICLE 19A

10 20-2-1020.

11 (a) To educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this
12 country and the values, principles, and philosophies on which this country was founded,
13 the full week in September which includes Constitution Day, September 17, shall be
14 recognized in public elementary, middle, and high schools in this state as Celebrate
15 Freedom Week. Celebrate Freedom Week shall include approximately three hours of
16 appropriate instruction, as determined by each local school system, in each social studies
17 class. The instruction shall include an age-appropriate study of the intent, meaning, and
18 importance of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution,
19 including the Bill of Rights, in their historical context including the background of the
20 colonial era along with instruction about the Founding Fathers, such as the signers of the
21 Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, the first six Presidents,
22 and particularly George Washington. The religious references in the writings of the
23 Founding Fathers shall not be censored. During Celebrate Freedom Week, a local school
24 system shall suggest that students in grades three through 12 read at least one book during
25

26 the school year that focuses on the Founding Era, either the times and events or the people
 27 who made significant contributions to independence or toward establishing the new federal
 28 or state governments. In addition, a local school system shall require students in grades
 29 three through 12 to recite at least one of the following three excerpts at least once during
 30 the week, and local school systems are encouraged to require daily recitations from one or
 31 all of these excerpts at the beginning of each school day:

32 (1) From the Declaration of Independence:

33 We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are
 34 endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life,
 35 Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness – That to secure these Rights, Governments are
 36 instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed;

37 (2) From the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution:

38 We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish
 39 Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the
 40 general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do
 41 ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.; or

42 (3) From the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights:

43 Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the
 44 free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of
 45 the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of
 46 grievances.

47 (b) Upon written request from a student's parent or guardian, a local school system shall
 48 excuse the student from the recitation required by this Code section. This Code section
 49 shall not apply to a student who:

50 (1) Has a conscientious objection to the recitation; or

51 (2) Is the child of a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States
 52 government extends diplomatic immunity.

53 (c) This Code section shall apply beginning with the 2014-2015 school year.

54 20-2-1021.

55 (a) To increase student understanding of, and familiarity with, American historical
 56 documents, public schools may display historically important excerpts from, or copies of,
 57 those documents in school classrooms and common areas as appropriate. Local boards of
 58 education and charter schools shall allow and may encourage any public school teacher or
 59 administrator to read or post in a public school building, classroom, or event excerpts or
 60 portions of writings, documents, records, or images that reflect the history of the United
 61 States, including, but not limited to:

