

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3242

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve the American History for Freedom grant program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 14, 2021

Mr. BLUMENAUER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve the American History for Freedom grant program.

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 “Understanding and
5 Studying American Civics Act of 2021” or the “USA
6 Civics Act of 2021”.

7 **SEC. 2. AMERICAN CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM.**

8 Section 805 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
9 U.S.C. 1161e) is amended—

1 (1) in the section heading, by striking “**HIS-**
2 **TORY FOR FREEDOM**” and inserting “**CIVICS**
3 **EDUCATION PROGRAM**”;

4 (2) in subsection (a)—

5 (A) by striking “subsection (f)” and insert-
6 ing “subsection (g)”;

7 (B) by striking “the Secretary is author-
8 ized to award three-year grants, on a competi-
9 tive basis,” and inserting “the Secretary is au-
10 thorized to award grants, once every 3 years
11 and on a competitive basis,”;

12 (C) by striking paragraph (1) and insert-
13 ing the following:

14 “(1) American political thought and history;”;

15 (D) in paragraph (2) by striking “or” after
16 the semicolon;

17 (E) by striking paragraph (3) and insert-
18 ing the following:

19 “(3) the history, achievements, and impact of
20 American representative democracy and constitu-
21 tional democracies globally; or”; and

22 (F) by adding at the end the following:

23 “(4) the means of participation in political and
24 civic life.”;

25 (3) in subsection (b)—

1 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “as de-
2 fined in section 101.” and inserting “, or a
3 partnership that includes an institution of high-
4 er education and one or more nonprofit organi-
5 zations, whose missions and demonstrated ex-
6 pertise are consistent with the purpose of this
7 section.”;

8 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking “that
9 emerged” and all that follows through the pe-
10 riod at the end and inserting “founded on the
11 principles of representative democracy, constitu-
12 tional government, individual rights, market ec-
13 onomics, religious freedom and religious toler-
14 ance, and freedom of thought and inquiry.”;
15 and

16 (C) by striking paragraph (3) and insert-
17 ing the following:

18 “(3) AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT AND HIS-
19 TORY.—The term ‘American political thought and
20 history’ means—

21 “(A) the significant constitutional, polit-
22 ical, intellectual, economic, social, and foreign
23 policy trends and issues that have shaped the
24 course of American history; and

1 “(B) the key episodes, turning points,
2 texts, and figures involved in the constitutional,
3 political, intellectual, diplomatic, social, and
4 economic history of the United States.”;

5 (4) in subsection (c)(2)—

6 (A) in subparagraph (A), by striking “tra-
7 ditional” and all that follows through the semi-
8 colon and inserting “American political thought
9 and history, free institutions, the impact of
10 American representative democracy and con-
11 stitutional democracies globally, or the means of
12 participation in political and civic life;”; and

13 (B) in subparagraph (B), by inserting “,
14 which may include the creation or use of open
15 educational resources” after “subsection
16 (e)(1)(B)”;

17 (5) in subsection (d)—

18 (A) by striking paragraph (1) and insert-
19 ing the following:

20 “(1) increase access to quality programming
21 that expands knowledge of American political
22 thought and history, free institutions, the impact of
23 American representative democracy and constitu-
24 tional democracies globally, or the means of partici-
25 pation in political and civic life;”; and

1 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking “tradi-
2 tional American history, free institutions, or
3 Western civilization” and inserting “American
4 political thought and history, free institutions,
5 the impact of American representative democ-
6 racy and constitutional democracies globally, or
7 the means of participation in political and civic
8 life.”;

9 (6) by striking subsection (e) and inserting the
10 following:

11 “(e) USE OF FUNDS.—

12 “(1) REQUIRED USE OF FUNDS.—Funds pro-
13 vided under this section shall be used—

14 “(A) for collaboration with local edu-
15 cational agencies for the purpose of providing
16 elementary school and secondary school teach-
17 ers an opportunity to enhance their knowledge
18 of American political thought and history, free
19 institutions, the impact of American representa-
20 tive democracy and constitutional democracies
21 globally, or the means of participation in polit-
22 ical and civic life; and

23 “(B) to carry out one or more of the fol-
24 lowing:

1 “(i) Establishing or strengthening
2 academic programs or centers focused on
3 American political thought and history,
4 free institutions, the impact of American
5 representative democracy and constitu-
6 tional democracies globally, or the means
7 of participation in political and civic life,
8 which may include—

9 “(I) design and implementation
10 of programs of study, courses, lecture
11 series, seminars, and symposia;

12 “(II) development, publication,
13 and dissemination of instructional ma-
14 terials;

15 “(III) research;

16 “(IV) support for faculty teach-
17 ing in undergraduate and, if applica-
18 ble, graduate programs; or

19 “(V) support for graduate and
20 postgraduate fellowships, if applicable.

21 “(ii) For teacher preparation initia-
22 tives that stress content mastery regarding
23 American political thought and history,
24 free institutions, the impact of American
25 representative democracy and constitu-

1 tional democracies globally, or the means
2 of participation in political and civic life.

3 “(iii) To conduct outreach activities to
4 ensure that information about the activi-
5 ties funded under this section is widely dis-
6 seminated—

7 “(I) to undergraduate students
8 (including students enrolled in teacher
9 education programs, if applicable);

10 “(II) to graduate students (in-
11 cluding students enrolled in teacher
12 education programs, if applicable);

13 “(III) to faculty;

14 “(IV) to local educational agen-
15 cies; and

16 “(V) within the local community.

17 “(2) ALLOWABLE USES OF FUNDS.—Funds
18 provided under this section may be used to sup-
19 port—

20 “(A) collaboration with entities such as—

21 “(i) nonprofit organizations whose
22 missions and demonstrated expertise are
23 consistent with the purpose of this section,
24 for assistance in carrying out activities de-
25 scribed under subsection (a); and

1 “(ii) Federal or State humanities pro-
2 grams, which may include those funded by
3 the National Endowment for the Human-
4 ities;

5 “(B) the creation and use of open edu-
6 cational resources on American political thought
7 and history, free institutions, or the impact of
8 American representative democracy and con-
9 stitutional democracies globally, or the means of
10 participation in political and civic life; and

11 “(C) other activities that meet the pur-
12 poses of this section.”;

13 (7) by redesignating subsection (f) as sub-
14 section (g);

15 (8) in subsection (g), as redesignated by para-
16 graph (7), by striking “2009” and inserting “2021”;
17 and

18 (9) by inserting after subsection (e) the fol-
19 lowing:

20 “(f) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
21 tion shall be construed to authorize the Secretary to pre-
22 scribe an American political thought and history cur-
23 riculum.”.

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