

SESSION OF 2021

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2039

As Amended by House Committee on Education

Brief*

HB 2039, as amended, would amend law related to civics education. The bill would require students 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.

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

*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>

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, 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.

Fiscal Information

The fiscal note on the bill as introduced does not apply to the amended bill.

.Education; American civics test; graduation requirements