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H.216

Introduced by Representatives Brumsted of Shelburne, Christie of Hartford,
Anthony of Barre City, Batchelor of Derby, Bock of Chester,
Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Coffey of Guilford, Colston of
Winooski, Gannon of Wilmington, Hango of Berkshire,
Harrison of Chittenden, Houghton of Essex, Lefebvre of
Newark, Leffler of Enosburgh, Masland of Thetford, Mrowicki
of Putney, Pajala of Londonderry, Rosenquist of Georgia,
Savage of Swanton, Scheu of Middlebury, Sibia of Dover,
Squirrell of Underhill, Stebbins of Burlington, Townsend of
South Burlington, White of Bethel, White of Hartford, Wood of
Waterbury, and Yantachka of Charlotte

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; secondary education; course of study; civics

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require that
public high school students demonstrate proficiency in civics as a condition of
graduation.

An act relating to the requirement for public high school students to
demonstrate proficiency in civics as a condition of graduation

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 Sec. 1. GOALS

3 In order to ensure that Vermont public school students who are awarded a
4 high school diploma have a basic understanding of U.S. civics and history and
5 to promote and encourage active and engaged citizenship, Vermont students
6 shall, as a condition of being awarded a high school diploma, demonstrate
7 proficiency in civics.

8 Sec. 2. 16 V.S.A. § 914 is added to read:

9 § 914. HIGH SCHOOL CIVICS PROFICIENCY

10 (a) Vermont students shall, as a condition of being awarded a high school
11 diploma, demonstrate proficiency in civics. Proficiency can be demonstrated
12 by any of the following.

13 (1) Receiving a passing grade on the U.S. citizenship civics test,
14 produced by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and administered to all
15 applicants for U.S. citizenship, subject to the following terms and conditions:

16 (A) students shall be tested on all questions on the civics test with a
17 minimum score of 60 percent required for passage; and

18 (B) students may take the civics test as many times as may be
19 necessary for passage.

20 (2) Conducting a civics research project and presenting the results to an
21 academic panel or a group of community volunteers where the high school's

1 teaching or administrative staff approves the project and the panel or group to
2 which it is presented. Civics research projects may include:

3 (A) researching an issue and drafting a bill in a form that would be
4 appropriate for consideration by the Vermont General Assembly or by
5 Congress;

6 (B) conducting a mock trial on an issue of significance to students;

7 (C) conducting a mock rulemaking process regarding a bill that is
8 enacted, but needs implementation; or

9 (D) conducting a mock legislative hearing on an issue of importance,
10 with testimony presented by a number of stakeholders.

11 (3) Participating on a municipal or State board as a student member.

12 (b) This section applies to all students who are awarded a high school
13 diploma who attend a State public school or career technical center but shall
14 not apply to students who are in special education programs. Students who are
15 in special education programs are encouraged to demonstrate proficiency in
16 civics prior to graduation.

17 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

18 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2021 and shall apply to high school
19 students who graduate in the 2022–2023 academic year and thereafter.