

The ND Veterans Legislative Council is in strong support of this legislation.

I am grateful every day for being born in North Dakota and receiving my elementary education in rural schools. Every morning we did three things, we gathered around the flagpole and raised the flag, we said the pledge of allegiance, and I prayed the Our Father. We had a civics class where we learned about the three branches of government, state, and nation, we learned about the Constitution and its Amendments along with our role in being a responsible American. Sadly, this is no longer the case.

Our schools, most of them, do not encourage patriotic feeling. Many of them do not teach the pledge of Allegiance, schools no longer have picture of Lincoln and Washington on their classroom walls, we not longer celebrate their birthdays, rather we lump them all to together on Presidents Day, and our teaching of history has changed. Children are no longer taught about our great history. We do have a history. It's not perfect, but we can learn from the good and not so good aspects of that history. Rather than attempting to erase the not so good we need to teach why for instance slavery and Jim Crow laws are not okay.

Research has shown that today's young people do not have a strong sense of patriotism like their grandparents did. It is hard to ignore the fact, love of country and patriotic values, are not being instilled in children today the way they were years ago. One reason for this is because the abundances of our great nation have distracted us from teaching them how all this abundance became possible. Social Studies classes have been pushed into the backseat to science, math, and technology classes as the importance of S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) has skyrocketed. Civic Classes are largely a thing of the past. But we also need to admit that part of the decline in patriotism comes from the "politically correct" culture within our educational system. A recent study commissioned by Stanford University and the University of Washington-Seattle in 2013. This study noted that American public schools have turned away from promoting patriotism. According to the report and I quote" the concept of

patriotism itself has become contested in U.S. schools for a number of reasons.” It goes on to explain that those reasons include “the belief that the 21st century students’ affiliation should be to global citizenship and worldwide rights.”

That is a real shame!!! Today's young people are tomorrow's leaders. The younger generations have grown up lacking the experiences of struggling and sacrifice like their grandparents. Our grandparents and my generation's parents taught us that nothing is free. It comes with a high price tag and lots of hard work. They need to understand the greatness of America and the sacrifices that so many have made in the of our freedom. Freedom is the hardest thing to attain and the easiest to lose.

The future of our way of life and the many freedoms we enjoy starts with patriotism. According to the Department of Defense the number of American citizens who qualify for service under the current standards is quickly decreasing with roughly 71 of 17-24- year-olds that not qualified for service.

Only 1 percent of Americans answer the call. Studies have shown that there is a severe disconnect between service in the military of the youth of today putting our country at risk. Surveys taken amongst young people that many have no desire or feel no obligation to serve in uniform. This needs to change, and we believe this bill is a good start towards that change.

The United States needs a citizenry that understands such patriotic ideals as the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance, the Constitution and Amendments, what it means to live in a republic and the meaning for liberty and justice for all.

Inspiring a sense of patriotism in our children of all ages and walks of life is the best strategy to ensure a future for our military, national defense, and our country's many freedoms.

Although it would be nice to have this program follow a student into each elementary grade. We are proud to support this legislation and salute the Department of Instruction for seeing the need. Perhaps some-day we will be support a bill resurrecting civic classes

We believe there are 10 things patriotism will teach young people growing up in America today.

- I. Learning about the pledge of Allegiance. We say it but do we know what it means
- II. What to do during the National Anthem. Besides the obvious a discussion can be had regarding the right to assembly and why some people “Take the Knee”
- III. Honoring our Soldiers. Regardless of whether you agree or not with what they are doing, the simple fact is **They’re willing to die for our rights**. It’s important they learn to respect our soldiers and veterans.
- IV. Our basic freedoms. This is the study of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. This is the decree that allows us all our freedoms and exempts no-one
- V. Our core democratic values. They are central to our democracy and include common good, justice, liberty, popular sovereignty, life, equality, diversity, pursuit of happiness, truth, patriotism, and the rule of law
- VI. How our government works. Explaining the three functions of the three branches of Federal, State, and local governments.
- VII. Our responsibilities as citizens. Ours is a government of the people and by the people, and we need to know that our involvement is crucial to the success of our nation.
- VIII. People and places significant to our history. As I have already stated we need to examine the people and places both good and bad in our nation’s history to understand how became the nation we are.
- IX. Appreciating diversity. We are the melting pot of the world. Our ancestors brought to this country their rich cultures and traditions that makes us who we are. A nation of immigrants.
- X. The lesson for the future. Out of all this what are the outstanding values we need to instill in our children so they can make our country great for years to come. The lessons of **Love, responsibility. and community**.

In closing I would like to quote Red Skelton’s reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance on television January 14, 1969.

I—Me; an individual; a committee of one.

Pledge—Dedicate all of my worldly good to give without self-pity.

Allegiance—My love and my devotion.

To the Flag—Our standard, Old Glory, a symbol of freedom. And wherever she waves, there is respect, because our loyalty has given her dignity that shouts Freedom is everybody's job.

Of the United—that means we have all come together.

States—Individual communities that have united into 48 great states, 48 individual communities with pride, dignity and purpose, all divided by imaginary boundaries, yet united by a common cause, that that's love of country.

And to the Republic—A Republic, a sovereign in which power is invested into the representatives chosen by the people to govern, the government is the people, and its from the people to the leaders not the leaders to the people.

For which it stands one Nation—meaning so blessed by God.

Indivisible—Incapable of being divided.

With Liberty—Which is freedom the right of power for one to live his own life without fears, threats, or any form of retaliation.

And Justice—The principle and qualities of dealing fairly with others.

For All—For all. That means boys and girl, it's as much your country as it is mine.

Thank you.

