



**HB1143 – Patriotism Projects**

**NDCEL Testimony in Support with requested amendments**

Chairman Schaible, members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me to be here today to discuss this bill. For the record, my name is Dr. Aimee Copas. I serve as the Executive Director for the ND Council of Educational Leaders.

My personal background argues my support for this bill in the 2000 version amended form as this version makes it more workable for schools. This amendment was arranged with the bill sponsor and was supported by the house education committee.

First of all, let's talk about what is good here. As a former teacher, my degree was in English with a minor in History. In the English courses I taught, in every school I was at, I patterned a method taught to me by my cooperating teacher who was Jody Foy a former (and I might say AMAZING) English teacher at Bismarck High School. She too was just as passionate about our student's need to correctly understand our history so that we might not repeat the mistakes made by those who came before us and we could replicate their good works. Henceforth our method of teaching was to partner with the history department and teach items in a co-curricular fashion. For example, when in History they were learning about the French Revolution, I taught *A Tale of Two Cities*, when learning about WWII, I taught *Farewell to Manzanar*. If I was still teaching today, during the times of early settlement to the US, I would teach *The Salem Witch Trials – A Community Under Siege*, and during the American Revolution we'd defiantly read *1776*, by David McCollough. This method of teaching at the HS level is important. But where the interest in these times in our history really grows is in elementary.

Our ND Elementary teachers, understanding this, appropriately adjusted the Social Studies standards just a couple of years ago and the work outlined in this bill is appropriately adjusted and required within the standard.

Our standards in ND Specifically state for K-5: *To be a responsible and productive member of today's society, a student needs to have a broad, connected, and useful knowledge of social studies and civics education. A consistent, high-quality social studies education program is essential for*

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*all students, providing a foundation for intelligent and precise thinking. Social studies education should also provide every student the opportunity to choose among a full range of future career paths and to contribute to society as an informed and active citizen.*

Below is specifically what in Grades K-5 our teachers are to be focusing on while teaching their coursework in social studies (included below is only one small excerpt from the standard guidance:

#### K-5 Civics & Government Standards

C.K\_2.1 Explain reasons for, and purposes of, rules, laws, and positions of authority.

C.K\_2.2 Explain why people form governments.

C.K\_2.3 Identify services provided by the local government and how they affect the lives of its citizens/residents. C.K\_2.4 Describe the core values represented by symbols of the United States.

C.K\_2.5 Identify ways citizens/residents participate in community decisions.

C.K\_2.6 Describe important rights and responsibilities of citizens/residents.

**C.K\_2.7 Explain and/or participate in a project to help or inform others about an issue.**

C.3\_5.1 Compare and contrast the responsibilities and powers of government officials at various levels and branches of government.

C.3\_5.2 Describe the structure of government and how it functions to serve citizens/residents (e.g., Constitution, Amendments, government leaders). C.3\_5.3 Describe the structure of government in North Dakota and how it functions to serve citizens/residents. ♦

C.3\_5.4 Explain the importance of the basic principles that provide the foundation of the American system of government (e.g., symbols, patriotic

traditions, values of liberty, equality, justice, etc.).

C.3\_5.5 Describe procedures for making decisions in a variety of settings.

C.3\_5.6 Compare and contrast personal and civic responsibilities and explain why they are important in community life. C.3\_5.7 Develop and implement an action plan to address or inform others about an issue.

As you can see C.K\_2.7 requires what this bill is asking for. That is great. Not only does the bill highlight an important activity, but it also highlights an area in the required standards and helps assure teachers are addressing it. In conversations with school leaders, most all of our schools are already doing this, but this would help ensure that all are abiding by this standard.

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1 As you well know, we are very wary of having curriculum dictated in century code – curriculum  
2 is to be adopted by local boards and implemented by local teachers and assured by our  
3 administrators. This bill simply assures what is currently in our standards is being implemented  
4 in each school – an assurance that our administrators can support. However, we would be remiss  
5 if we didn't mention how delicately we should tread in the area of dictating curriculum in law, and  
6 we thank this committee for always being mindful of that. Thank you and I'd stand for any  
7 questions you might have.

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