



2018 New York State YMCA

Youth And Government

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Committee Assignment: Assembly Liberty 4

Bill #: AL-28

1 **Sponsors:** Gabby Abato, Lauren Cassidy, Selma Mrkulic, and Liora Reiken

2

3 **An Act To**

4 Amend § 801 of the New York education law to add civil rights to the U.S. History
5 curriculum in high school.

6

7 ***The People of the State of New York, represented in the Senate and***
8 ***Assembly do enact as follows:***

9

10 **Purpose**

11 The purpose of this bill is to require civil rights to be taught in high school U.S.
12 History classes. These constitutional rights would also be incorporated into the New
13 York State Regents since they will be part of the curriculum. This bill will educate
14 high school students on amendments that protect their natural rights which can be
15 favorable in the long run.

16

17 **Summary of Provisions**

18 **Section 1: Definitions**

19 **Civil Rights:** rights that protect individuals' freedom from infringement by
20 governments, social organizations, and private individual. These include our
21 Miranda Rights and the fourth through ninth Amendments.

22 **Amendments:** changes to the constitution that establish a citizen's natural rights.

23 **Section 2: Provisions**

24 The regents shall determine the subjects to be included in such courses of
25 instruction in patriotism, citizenship, and human rights issues, with particular
26 attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery (including the freedom
27 trail and underground railroad), the Holocaust, and the mass starvation in Ireland
28 from 1845 to 1850, and in the history, meaning, significance and effect of the
29 provisions of the constitution of the United States, the amendments thereto, the
30 declaration of independence, the constitution of the state of New York and the
31 amendments thereto, civil rights, and the period of instruction in each of the grades
32 in such subjects. They shall adopt rules providing for attendance upon such
33 instruction and for such other matters as are required for carrying into effect the
34 objects and purposes of this section. The commissioner shall be responsible for the
35 enforcement of such section and shall cause to be inspected and supervise the
36 instruction to be given in such subjects. The commissioner may, in his discretion,
37 cause all or a portion of the public school money to be apportioned to a district or
38 city to be withheld for failure of the school authorities of such district or city to
39 provide instruction in such courses and to compel attendance upon such instruction,
40 as herein prescribed, and for a non-compliance with the rules of the regents
41 adopted as herein provided.

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44 **Justification**

45 Teaching civil rights is a necessity in the society that we live in today. Students
46 need to be aware of what their rights are because it is an important part of reality
47 that they are entitled to be aware of. In recent times, there are a various number
48 of cases where a victim's rights have been violated by law enforcement. Since these
49 victims were not aware of their rights, they had no choice but to be constrained by
50 these massive violations. In these cases, not knowing one's rights prevented them
51 from anticipating legal troubles and then approaching a lawyer for help. This puts
52 them at a disadvantage when put in front of a court to plead innocent or guilty.
53 These amendments were created in order to protect the rights and freedoms of the
54 people and not knowing them can leave a person feeling helpless and confused in a
55 time of need. Not being aware of these entitlements can be a significant loss to
56 someone when these rights are being infringed upon. Being unaware can leave one
57 feeling intimidated and alienated from the law. It is unjust that what was originally
58 made to protect people is now essentially unknown by most people, therefore
59 becoming detrimental to their access to justice. This lack of awareness can also
60 increase the effect of a legal problem, and lead the victim to hurt their case instead
61 of, by using their civil rights, help their case. In summation, not knowing your civil
62 rights blocks your access to justice and that needs to be changed. This bill will do
63 just that by teaching people their civil rights which will empower them to demand
64 justice. They will be able to use their civil rights the correct way when faced by a
65 police officer, in court, or anywhere else.

66

67 **Fiscal Implications**

68 We are adding to the U.S. History curriculum and not creating a new class, so there
69 will be minimal fiscal implications for this bill. Schools will use resources they
70 already have to introduce the new topic and doing so would not cost them much.
71 School districts can decide to use free resources and create their own resources to
72 teach the additional curriculum. Therefore, there will be very minimal fiscal
73 implications in order for this bill to be implemented.

74

75 **Effective Date**

76 This bill will go into effect July 1 of the year following its passage.