

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2014 SESSION

CHAPTER 562

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 30 a chapter numbered 55, consisting of sections numbered 30-348 through 30-354, relating to the Commission on Civics Education; report.

[H 364]

Approved April 4, 2014

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 30 a chapter numbered 55, consisting of sections numbered 30-348 through 30-354, as follows:

CHAPTER 55.

COMMISSION ON CIVICS EDUCATION.

§ 30-348. Commission on Civics Education; purpose; membership; terms.

The Commission on Civics Education (the Commission) is established in the legislative branch of state government. The purposes of the Commission are to (i) educate students on the importance of citizen involvement in a constitutional republic, (ii) promote the study of state and local government among the Commonwealth's citizenry, and (iii) enhance communication and collaboration among organizations in the Commonwealth that conduct civics education.

The Commission shall have a total membership of 15 members that shall consist of eight legislative members, six nonlegislative citizen members, and one ex officio member. Members shall be appointed as follows: five members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; three members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; three nonlegislative citizen members, one of whom shall have a background in curriculum development, interactive learning, and multimedia technology, one of whom shall be a current or retired school civics teacher, and one of whom shall be a representative of an organization that promotes civic learning, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and three nonlegislative citizen members, one of whom shall be a retired school civics teacher, one of whom shall be a representative of a public policy center of a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth, and one of whom shall be a representative of the Virginia Press Association, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the Commission shall be citizens of the Commonwealth. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the Commission, the Clerk of the House of Delegates, and the Clerk of the Senate, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth for the purpose of attending meetings.

Legislative members and the ex officio member of the Commission shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office. Nonlegislative citizen members shall be appointed for a term of two years. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. Legislative members and nonlegislative citizen members may be reappointed. However, no nonlegislative citizen member shall serve more than four consecutive two-year terms. The remainder of any term to which a member is appointed to fill a vacancy shall not constitute a term in determining the member's eligibility for reappointment. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

The Commission shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

§ 30-349. Quorum; meetings; voting on recommendations.

A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The meetings of the Commission shall be held at the call of the chairman or whenever a majority of the members so request.

No recommendation of the Commission shall be adopted if a majority of the House members or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the Commission (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the Commission.

§ 30-350. Compensation; expenses.

Legislative members of the Commission shall receive such compensation as provided in § 30-19.12, and nonlegislative citizen members shall receive such compensation for the performance of their duties as provided in § 2.2-2813. All members shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825.

§ 30-351. Powers and duties; report.

The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

1. To develop and coordinate outreach programs in collaboration with schools to educate students on the importance of understanding that (i) a constitutional republic is a form of government dependent on reasoned debate and good faith negotiation; (ii) individual involvement is a critical factor in

community success; and (iii) consideration of and respect for others is essential to deliberating, negotiating, and advocating positions on public concerns.

2. To identify civics education projects in the Commonwealth and provide technical assistance as may be needed to such programs.

3. To build a network of civics education professionals to share information and strengthen partnerships.

4. To develop, in consultation with entities represented on the Commission and others as determined by the Commission, a clearinghouse that shall be accessible on the Department of Education's website. The electronic clearinghouse shall include, among other things, (i) a database of civics education resources, lesson plans, and other programs of best practices in civics education; (ii) a bulletin board to promote discussion and exchange of ideas relative to civics education; (iii) an events calendar; and (iv) links to civics education research.

5. To make recommendations to the Board of Education regarding revisions to the Standards of Learning for civics and government.

6. To seek, receive, and expend gifts, grants, donations, bequests, or other funds from any source to support the work of the Commission and facilitate the objectives of this chapter.

7. To submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual report. The chairman shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Commission no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted for publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

§ 30-352. Commission on Civics Education Fund.

There is hereby created in the state treasury a special nonreverting fund to be known as the Commission on Civics Education Fund, referred to in this section as "the Fund." The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller and shall consist of gifts, grants, donations, bequests, or other funds from any source as may be received by the Commission for its work. Moneys shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Fund. Interest earned on moneys in the Fund shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Any moneys remaining in the Fund, including interest thereon, at the end of each fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. Moneys in the Fund shall be used for the purpose of enabling the Commission to perform its duties. Expenditures and disbursements from the Fund shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request signed by the chairman of the Commission.

§ 30-353. Staffing.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the chairman of the Commission. The Division of Legislative Services shall provide legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the Commission. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of Education. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.

§ 30-354. Sunset.

This chapter shall expire on July 1, 2017.

2. That, with the exception of funds provided by the appropriation act funding staff as provided in § 30-353 as created by this act, no general funds shall be used to support the work of the Commission on Civics Education, as created in this act.

3. That the provisions of this act shall not become effective until nongeneral funds sufficient to support the work of the Commission on Civics Education, as created by this act, have been received by the Commission. If the Commission fails to receive nongeneral funds sufficient to support the work of the Commission by July 1, 2015, the provisions of this act shall expire on July 1 of the fiscal year following the fiscal year that the Commission fails to receive such funding.