

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT: No

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: Yes

VETO MESSAGE: No

GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING: Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

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REPORTS: No

HEARINGS: No

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: No

RH/CL

Title 18A.
Subtitle 6.
Part 2.
Chapter 35.
Article 6. (New)
Civics
§§1,3,4-
C.18A:35-40 to
18A:35-42

P.L. 2021, CHAPTER 185, *approved July 23, 2021*
Senate Committee Substitute for
Senate, Nos. 854 and 237

1 AN ACT concerning civics education in public schools and
2 designated as Laura Wooten’s Law, amending P.L.1987, c.425,
3 and supplementing chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
4 Statutes.

5
6 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
7 *of New Jersey:*

- 8
9 1. (New section) The Legislature finds and declares that:
10 a. New Jersey law requires school districts to provide a two-
11 year course of United States history in high school, which is
12 supposed to include curriculum on civics, economics, and the
13 history of the State of New Jersey; however, most school districts’
14 curricula focus solely on a chronology of United States history in
15 meeting this statutory requirement;
16 b. New Jersey law also requires school districts to adopt a
17 course of study about New Jersey history, geography, and
18 community civics in an elementary grade; however, there are no
19 social studies requirements for middle school;
20 c. Civic literacy and engagement are essential to maintaining a
21 representative democracy;
22 d. Unlike 40 other states, New Jersey does not require school
23 districts to provide a specific course in civics;
24 e. By age 10, students possess the higher order thinking skills
25 necessary for a rigorous, reflective course in civics;
26 f. Independent studies conclude that well-designed civics
27 education fosters an understanding and appreciation of democracy
28 and the skills needed for participation in a democratic society;
29 g. Requiring students to complete a civics course in middle
30 school will ensure that all New Jersey students have the opportunity
31 to gain the knowledge and skills for active citizenship;
32 h. Professional development for teachers is critical to ensure
33 effective classroom instruction; and

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 i. The New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The
2 State University has substantial expertise and 30 years of
3 experience providing professional development, sample curricula,
4 and resources for New Jersey teachers.

5
6 2. Section 1 of P.L.1987, c.425 (C.18A:35-2.1) is amended to
7 read as follows:

8 1. The **【State Department of Education】** New Jersey Center for
9 Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University shall prepare
10 curriculum guidelines **【for the teaching of civics which may be used**
11 **by】** and provide professional development for high school social
12 studies teachers to help local school boards in fulfilling the
13 requirements of integrating civics, economics, and the history of
14 New Jersey as part of the required United States history course
15 established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2.

16 (cf: P.L.1987, c.425, s.1)

17
18 3. (New section) Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year,
19 each board of education shall provide a course of study in civics,
20 which shall be taken by all students in an appropriate middle school
21 grade. The course shall address: the values and principles
22 underlying the American system of constitutional democracy; the
23 function and limitations of government; and the role of a citizen in a
24 democratic society. The board shall ensure that the course of study
25 includes a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the
26 equivalent.

27
28 4. (New section) The New Jersey Center for Civic Education
29 at Rutgers, the State University shall provide a clearinghouse of
30 materials, an online resource center, technical assistance,
31 professional development and any other activities to encourage the
32 integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the
33 teaching of United States history pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and
34 N.J.S.18A:35-2 and to enhance the middle school civics course of
35 study as required pursuant to section 3 of this act. The Legislature
36 shall annually appropriate such sums as are necessary to effectuate
37 the purposes of this act to the New Jersey Center for Civic
38 Education at Rutgers, the State University.

39
40 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

41
42
43
44 “Laura Wooten’s Law”; requires civics instruction in middle
45 school; authorizes New Jersey Center for Civic Education to
46 provide curricula, professional development and technical
47 assistance for middle and high school civics.

CHAPTER 185

AN ACT concerning civics education in public schools and designated as Laura Wooten's Law, amending P.L.1987, c.425, and supplementing chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

C.18A:35-40 Findings, declarations relative to civics education in public schools.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:
 - a. New Jersey law requires school districts to provide a two-year course of United States history in high school, which is supposed to include curriculum on civics, economics, and the history of the State of New Jersey; however, most school districts' curricula focus solely on a chronology of United States history in meeting this statutory requirement;
 - b. New Jersey law also requires school districts to adopt a course of study about New Jersey history, geography, and community civics in an elementary grade; however, there are no social studies requirements for middle school;
 - c. Civic literacy and engagement are essential to maintaining a representative democracy;
 - d. Unlike 40 other states, New Jersey does not require school districts to provide a specific course in civics;
 - e. By age 10, students possess the higher order thinking skills necessary for a rigorous, reflective course in civics;
 - f. Independent studies conclude that well-designed civics education fosters an understanding and appreciation of democracy and the skills needed for participation in a democratic society;
 - g. Requiring students to complete a civics course in middle school will ensure that all New Jersey students have the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills for active citizenship;
 - h. Professional development for teachers is critical to ensure effective classroom instruction; and
 - i. The New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University has substantial expertise and 30 years of experience providing professional development, sample curricula, and resources for New Jersey teachers.

2. Section 1 of P.L.1987, c.425 (C.18A:35-2.1) is amended to read as follows:

C.18A:35-2.1 Civics curriculum guidelines.

1. The New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University shall prepare curriculum guidelines and provide professional development for high school social studies teachers to help local school boards in fulfilling the requirements of integrating civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey as part of the required United States history course established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2.

C.18A:35-41 Provision of course of study in civics.

3. Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education shall provide a course of study in civics, which shall be taken by all students in an appropriate middle school grade. The course shall address: the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy; the function and limitations of government; and the role of a

citizen in a democratic society. The board shall ensure that the course of study includes a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

C.18A:35-42. Provision of materials, online resources.

4. The New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, the State University shall provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development and any other activities to encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the teaching of United States history pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2 and to enhance the middle school civics course of study as required pursuant to section 3 of this act. The Legislature shall annually appropriate such sums as are necessary to effectuate the purposes of this act to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, the State University.

5. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved July 23, 2021.

SENATE, No. 854

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Senator THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Rice

SYNOPSIS

“Laura Wooten’s Law”; Requires civics instruction in middle school; authorizes New Jersey Center for Civic Education to provide curricula, professional development and technical assistance for middle and high school civics and provides annual center funding.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/13/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning civics education in public schools and
2 designated as Laura Wooten’s Law, amending P.L.1987, c.425,
3 and supplementing chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
4 Statutes.

5

6 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
7 of New Jersey:

8

9 1. (New section) The Legislature finds and declares that:

10 a. New Jersey law requires school districts to provide a two-
11 year course of United States history in high school, which is
12 supposed to include curriculum on civics, economics, and the
13 history of the State of New Jersey; however, most school districts’
14 curricula focus solely on a chronology of United States history in
15 meeting this statutory requirement;

16 b. New Jersey law also requires school districts to adopt a
17 course of study about New Jersey history, geography, and
18 community civics in an elementary grade; however, there are no
19 social studies requirements for middle school;

20 c. Civic literacy and engagement are essential to maintaining a
21 representative democracy;

22 d. Unlike 40 other states, New Jersey does not require school
23 districts to provide a specific course in civics;

24 e. By age 10, students possess the higher order thinking skills
25 necessary for a rigorous, reflective course in civics;

26 f. Independent studies conclude that well-designed civics
27 education fosters an understanding and appreciation of democracy
28 and the skills needed for participation in a democratic society;

29 g. Requiring students to complete a civics course in middle
30 school will ensure that all New Jersey students have the opportunity
31 to gain the knowledge and skills for active citizenship;

32 h. Professional development for teachers is critical to ensure
33 effective classroom instruction; and

34 i. The New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The
35 State University has substantial expertise and 30 years of
36 experience providing professional development, sample curricula,
37 and resources for New Jersey teachers.

38

39 2. Section 1 of P.L.1987, c.425 (C.18A:35-2.1) is amended to
40 read as follows:

41 1. The **【State Department of Education】** New Jersey Center for
42 Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University shall prepare
43 curriculum guidelines **【for the teaching of civics which may be used**
44 **by】** and provide professional development for high school social
45 studies teachers to help local school boards in fulfilling the

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 requirements of integrating civics, economics, and the history of
2 New Jersey as part of the required United States history course
3 established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2.
4 (cf: P.L.1987, c.425, s.1)
5

6 3. (New section) Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year,
7 each board of education shall provide a course of study in civics,
8 which shall be taken by all students in an appropriate middle school
9 grade. The course shall address: the values and principles
10 underlying the American system of constitutional democracy; the
11 function and limitations of government; and the role of a citizen in a
12 democratic society. The board shall ensure that the course of study
13 includes a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the
14 equivalent.
15

16 4. (New section) A minimum of \$300,000 shall annually be
17 appropriated to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at
18 Rutgers, the State University. The purpose of the appropriation
19 shall be to enable the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials,
20 an online resource center, technical assistance, professional
21 development and any other activities to encourage the integration of
22 civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the teaching of United
23 States history pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2 and
24 to enhance the middle school civics course of study as required
25 pursuant to section 3 of this act.
26

27 5. This act shall take effect immediately.
28
29

30 STATEMENT
31
32

33 The bill amends current law that requires the State
34 Department of Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the
35 teaching of civics for use by local school boards in implementing
36 the two-year high school course of study in the history of the United
37 States required under N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2. The bill
38 now directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers,
39 The State University to prepare curriculum guidelines and provide
40 professional development for high school social studies teachers in
41 fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the
42 history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

43 This bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle
44 school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of
45 study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be
46 provided to public school elementary students, but no similar
47 requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under this bill,
48 beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is

1 required to provide a course of study about the values and
2 principles underlying the American system of constitutional
3 democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role
4 of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all
5 pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study
6 must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the
7 equivalent.

8 The bill also directs that a minimum of \$300,000 be appropriated
9 annually to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers,
10 the State University. The purpose of the appropriation will be to
11 enable the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online
12 resource center, technical assistance, professional development and
13 any other activities to encourage the integration of civics,
14 economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school
15 course in the history of the United States and to enhance the
16 teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the bill.

17 This bill is named in honor of Mrs. Laura Wooten, a great New
18 Jerseyan who contributed a lifetime of civic service. Mrs. Wooten
19 was born on Dec. 19, 1920, in Goldsboro, North Carolina and was
20 the longest serving poll volunteer in the nation. Mrs. Wooten
21 graduated from Princeton High School in 1939, was an elder of the
22 First Baptist Church of Princeton, and joined Princeton University
23 as a part time staff member after retiring from Princeton Medical
24 Center at the age of 72. Mrs. Wooten passed away on March 24,
25 2019 at the age of 98.

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR **SENATE, Nos. 854 and 237**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 17, 2021

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 854 and 237.

This bill makes revisions to current law that requires the State Department of Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the teaching of civics for use by local school boards in implementing the two-year high school course of study in the history of the United States required under N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2. The bill directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University to prepare curriculum guidelines and provide professional development for high school social studies teachers in fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

The bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be provided to public school elementary students, but no similar requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under the bill, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is required to provide a course of study about the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

The bill also directs that the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, the State University will provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development and any other activities to encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school course in the history of the United States and to enhance the teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the bill.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 3394, which was amended and reported by the committee on this date.

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR **SENATE, Nos. 854 and 237**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 18, 2021

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill Nos. 854 and 237 (SCS).

This bill makes revisions to current law that requires the State Department of Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the teaching of civics for use by local school boards in implementing the two-year high school course of study in the history of the United States required under N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2. The bill directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University to prepare curriculum guidelines and provide professional development for high school social studies teachers in fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

The bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be provided to public school elementary students, but no similar requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under the bill, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is required to provide a course of study about the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

The bill also directs that the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, the State University will provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development and any other activities to encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school course in the history of the United States and to enhance the teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the bill.

As reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 854/237 (SCS) is identical to Assembly Bill No. 3394 (1R), which also was reported by the committee on this date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that there will be an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures to provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to develop curriculum guidelines (currently prepared by the Department of Education) and newly provide professional development to high school social studies teachers to integrate civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course required under current law.

While the bill requires the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, and professional development, the center currently provides many of the resources and services listed in the bill. Any increased costs incurred by the center will depend upon the extent to which its current resources and services address the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history into the current United States high school history course and the middle school civics course required under the bill.

School districts will incur increased annual costs to the extent that additional faculty are needed to meet the educational requirements of the bill, or if existing faculty members require new materials or engage in training offered by the center or another provider. The OLS cannot project what future resources school districts will require to meet the in-class instructional provisions of this bill and therefore cannot estimate the annual local cost impact.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE, Nos. 854 and 237

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 13, 2020

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports a Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 854 and 237.

This committee substitute amends current law that requires the State Department of Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the teaching of civics for use by local school boards in implementing the two-year high school course of study in the history of the United States required under N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2. The substitute now directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University to prepare curriculum guidelines and provide professional development for high school social studies teachers in fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

The substitute requires the provision of civics instruction to middle school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be provided to public school elementary students, but no similar requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under the substitute, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is required to provide a course of study about the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

The substitute also directs that the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, the State University will provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development and any other activities to encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school course in the history of the United States and to enhance the teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the substitute.

The substitute is named in honor of Mrs. Laura Wooten, a great New Jerseyan who contributed a lifetime of civic service. Mrs.

Wooten was born on Dec. 19, 1920, in Goldsboro, North Carolina and was the longest serving poll volunteer in the nation. Mrs. Wooten graduated from Princeton High School in 1939, was an elder of the First Baptist Church of Princeton, and joined Princeton University as a part time staff member after retiring from Princeton Medical Center at the age of 72. Mrs. Wooten passed away on March 24, 2019 at the age of 98.

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR **SENATE, Nos. 854 and 237**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 21, 2021

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill Nos. 854 and 237 SCS.

This bill amends current law that requires the State Department of Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the teaching of civics for use by local school boards in implementing the two-year high school course of study in the history of the United States required under N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2. The substitute now directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University to prepare curriculum guidelines and provide professional development for high school social studies teachers in fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

The bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be provided to public school elementary students, but no similar requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under the substitute, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is required to provide a course of study about the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

The bill also directs that the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, the State University will provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development and any other activities to encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school course in the history of the United States and to enhance the teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the substitute.

The bill is named in honor of Mrs. Laura Wooten, a great New Jerseyan who contributed a lifetime of civic service. Mrs. Wooten was born on Dec. 19, 1920, in Goldsboro, North Carolina and was

the longest serving poll volunteer in the nation. Mrs. Wooten graduated from Princeton High School in 1939, was an elder of the First Baptist Church of Princeton, and joined Princeton University as a part time staff member after retiring from Princeton Medical Center at the age of 72. Mrs. Wooten passed away on March 24, 2019 at the age of 98.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that there will be an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures to provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to develop curriculum guidelines (currently prepared by the Department of Education) and newly provide professional development to high school social studies teachers to integrate civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course required under current law.

While the bill requires the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, and professional development, the center currently provides many of the resources and services listed in the bill. Any increased costs incurred by the center will depend upon the extent to which its current resources and services address the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history into the current United States high school history course and the middle school civics course required under the bill.

School districts will incur increased annual costs to the extent that additional faculty are needed to meet the educational requirements of the bill, or if existing faculty members require new materials or engage in training offered by the center or another provider. The OLS cannot project what future resources school districts will require to meet the in-class instructional provisions of this bill and therefore cannot estimate the annual local cost impact.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE
SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE, Nos. 854 and 237
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JULY 29, 2020

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Laura Wooten’s Law”; requires civics instruction in middle school; authorizes New Jersey Center for Civic Education to provide curricula, professional development and technical assistance for middle and high school civics.
- Type of Impact:** Annual State Cost Increase; Potential Annual Local Cost Increase
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Education; Rutgers University; School districts

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate
Potential Local Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that there will be an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures to provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to develop curriculum guidelines (currently prepared by the Department of Education) and newly provide professional development to high school social studies teachers to integrate civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course required under current law.
- While the bill requires the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, and professional development, the center currently provides many of the resources and services listed in the bill. Any increased costs incurred by the center will depend upon the extent to which its current resources and services address the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history into the current United States high school history course and the middle school civics course required under the bill.
- School districts will incur increased annual costs to the extent that additional faculty are needed to meet the educational requirements of the bill, or if existing faculty members require new materials or engage in training offered by the center or another provider. The OLS cannot



project what future resources school districts will require to meet the in-class instructional provisions of this bill and therefore cannot estimate the annual local cost impact.

BILL DESCRIPTION

The bill amends current law that requires the State Department of Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the teaching of civics for use by local school boards in implementing the required two-year high school course of study in the history of the United States. The bill now directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to prepare curriculum guidelines and also provide professional development for high school social studies teachers in fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

The bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be provided to public school elementary students, but no similar requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under the bill, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is required to provide a course of study about the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

The bill also directs that the New Jersey Center for Civic Education will provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development and any other activities to encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school course in the history of the United States and to enhance the teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the bill.

The Legislature is to annually appropriate funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education to effectuate the bill's purposes.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that there will be an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures to provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to develop curriculum guidelines and provide professional development to high school social studies teachers to integrate civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States high school history course required under current law. The center provides in-service workshops to school districts for \$900 for a half-day workshop or \$1,750 for whole-day workshops. The OLS cannot estimate the number of teachers throughout the State who may take the professional development workshops or require other forms of training or additional instructional materials. The OLS also cannot determine whether additional faculty will be needed to meet the educational requirements of the bill.

The bill also requires the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development, and other activities that encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the teaching of United State history and enhance the middle school civics course of study required in the bill.

The center currently provides many of the resources and services listed in the bill. Any increased costs incurred by the center will depend upon the extent to which its current resources and services address the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history into the current United States high school history course and the middle school civics course required under the bill

Section: Education

*Analyst: William Owens
Assistant Fiscal Analyst*

*Approved: Frank W. Haines III
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

ASSEMBLY, No. 3394

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VERLINA REYNOLDS-JACKSON

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Assemblywoman LINDA S. CARTER

District 22 (Middlesex, Somerset and Union)

Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

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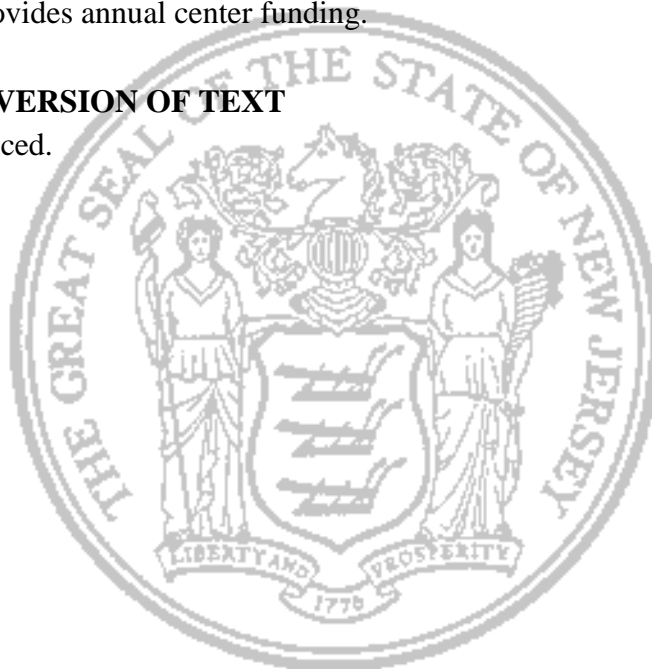
Assemblywomen Timberlake, Vainieri Huttler, Chaparro, Assemblyman Moen, Assemblywoman Dunn and Assemblyman Johnson

SYNOPSIS

“Laura Wooten’s Law”; Requires civics instruction in middle school; authorizes New Jersey Center for Civic Education to provide curricula, professional development and technical assistance for middle and high school civics and provides annual center funding.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/17/2021)

A3394 REYNOLDS-JACKSON, CARTER

2

1 AN ACT concerning civics education in public schools and
2 designated as Laura Wooten's Law, amending P.L.1987, c.425,
3 and supplementing chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
4 Statutes.

5

6 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
7 of New Jersey:

8

9 1. (New section) The Legislature finds and declares that:

10 a. New Jersey law requires school districts to provide a two-
11 year course of United States history in high school, which is
12 supposed to include curriculum on civics, economics, and the
13 history of the State of New Jersey; however, most school districts'
14 curricula focus solely on a chronology of United States history in
15 meeting this statutory requirement;

16 b. New Jersey law also requires school districts to adopt a
17 course of study about New Jersey history, geography, and
18 community civics in an elementary grade; however, there are no
19 social studies requirements for middle school;

20 c. Civic literacy and engagement are essential to maintaining a
21 representative democracy;

22 d. Unlike 40 other states, New Jersey does not require school
23 districts to provide a specific course in civics;

24 e. By age 10, students possess the higher order thinking skills
25 necessary for a rigorous, reflective course in civics;

26 f. Independent studies conclude that well-designed civics
27 education fosters an understanding and appreciation of democracy
28 and the skills needed for participation in a democratic society;

29 g. Requiring students to complete a civics course in middle
30 school will ensure that all New Jersey students have the opportunity
31 to gain the knowledge and skills for active citizenship;

32 h. Professional development for teachers is critical to ensure
33 effective classroom instruction; and

34 i. The New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The
35 State University has substantial expertise and 30 years of
36 experience providing professional development, sample curricula,
37 and resources for New Jersey teachers.

38

39 2. Section 1 of P.L.1987, c.425 (C.18A:35-2.1) is amended to
40 read as follows:

41 1. The **【State Department of Education】** New Jersey Center for
42 Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University shall prepare
43 curriculum guidelines **【for the teaching of civics which may be used**
44 **by】** and provide professional development for high school social
45 studies teachers to help local school boards in fulfilling the

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **【thus】 in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 requirements of integrating civics, economics, and the history of
2 New Jersey as part of the required United States history course
3 established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2.
4 (cf: P.L.1987, c.425, s.1)

5
6 3. (New section) Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year,
7 each board of education shall provide a course of study in civics,
8 which shall be taken by all students in an appropriate middle school
9 grade. The course shall address: the values and principles
10 underlying the American system of constitutional democracy; the
11 function and limitations of government; and the role of a citizen in a
12 democratic society. The board shall ensure that the course of study
13 includes a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the
14 equivalent.

15
16 4. (New section) A minimum of \$300,000 shall annually be
17 appropriated to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at
18 Rutgers, the State University. The purpose of the appropriation
19 shall be to enable the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials,
20 an online resource center, technical assistance, professional
21 development and any other activities to encourage the integration of
22 civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the teaching of United
23 States history pursuant to N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2 and
24 to enhance the middle school civics course of study as required
25 pursuant to section 3 of this act.

26
27 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

28
29

30 STATEMENT

31

32 The bill amends current law that requires the State Department of
33 Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the teaching of
34 civics for use by local school boards in implementing the two-year
35 high school course of study in the history of the United States
36 required under N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2. The bill now
37 directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The
38 State University to prepare curriculum guidelines and provide
39 professional development for high school social studies teachers in
40 fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the
41 history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

42 This bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle
43 school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of
44 study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be
45 provided to public school elementary students, but no similar
46 requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under this bill,
47 beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is
48 required to provide a course of study about the values and

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1 principles underlying the American system of constitutional
2 democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role
3 of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all
4 pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study
5 must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the
6 equivalent.

7 The bill also directs that a minimum of \$300,000 be appropriated
8 annually to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers,
9 the State University. The purpose of the appropriation will be to
10 enable the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online
11 resource center, technical assistance, professional development and
12 any other activities to encourage the integration of civics,
13 economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school
14 course in the history of the United States and to enhance the
15 teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the bill.

16 This bill is named in honor of Mrs. Laura Wooten, a great New
17 Jerseyan who contributed a lifetime of civic service. Mrs. Wooten
18 was born on Dec. 19, 1920, in Goldsboro, North Carolina and was
19 the longest serving poll volunteer in the nation. Mrs. Wooten
20 graduated from Princeton High School in 1939, was an elder of the
21 First Baptist Church of Princeton, and joined Princeton University
22 as a part time staff member after retiring from Princeton Medical
23 Center at the age of 72. Mrs. Wooten passed away on March 24,
24 2019 at the age of 98.

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3394

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 17, 2021

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3394 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill makes revisions to current law that requires the State Department of Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the teaching of civics for use by local school boards in implementing the two-year high school course of study in the history of the United States required under N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2. The bill directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University to prepare curriculum guidelines and provide professional development for high school social studies teachers in fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

The bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be provided to public school elementary students, but no similar requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under the bill, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is required to provide a course of study about the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

The bill also directs that the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, the State University will provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development and any other activities to encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school course in the history of the United States and to enhance the teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the bill.

As amended and reported by the committee, this bill is identical to the Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 854 and 237, which was also reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to remove the requirement that a minimum of \$300,000 be annually appropriated to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University. The committee amended the bill to instead require that the Legislature annually appropriate to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education such sums as are necessary to effectuate the purposes of the bill.

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 3394

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 18, 2021

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3394 (1R).

This bill makes revisions to current law that requires the State Department of Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the teaching of civics for use by local school boards in implementing the two-year high school course of study in the history of the United States required under N.J.S.18A:35-1 and N.J.S.18A:35-2. The bill directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, The State University to prepare curriculum guidelines and provide professional development for high school social studies teachers in fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

The bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be provided to public school elementary students, but no similar requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under the bill, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is required to provide a course of study about the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

The bill also directs that the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers, the State University will provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development and any other activities to encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school course in the history of the United States and to enhance the teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the bill.

As reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 3394 (1R) is identical to Senate Bill No. 854/237 (SCS), which also was reported by the committee on this date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that there will be an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures to provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to develop curriculum guidelines (currently prepared by the Department of Education) and newly provide professional development to high school social studies teachers to integrate civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course required under current law.

While the bill requires the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, and professional development, the center currently provides many of the resources and services listed in the bill. Any increased costs incurred by the center will depend upon the extent to which its current resources and services address the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history into the current United States high school history course and the middle school civics course required under the bill.

School districts will incur increased annual costs to the extent that additional faculty are needed to meet the educational requirements of the bill, or if existing faculty members require new materials or engage in training offered by the center or another provider. The OLS cannot project what future resources school districts will require to meet the in-class instructional provisions of this bill and therefore cannot estimate the annual local cost impact.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 3394

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: MAY 17, 2021

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** “Laura Wooten’s Law”; requires civics instruction in middle school; authorizes New Jersey Center for Civic Education to provide curricula, professional development and technical assistance for middle and high school civics.
- Type of Impact:** Annual State Cost Increase; Potential Annual Local Cost Increase
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Education; Rutgers University; School districts

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate
Potential Local Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that there will be an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures to provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to develop curriculum guidelines (currently prepared by the Department of Education) and newly provide professional development to high school social studies teachers to integrate civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course required under current law.
- While the bill requires the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, and professional development, the center currently provides many of the resources and services listed in the bill. Any increased costs incurred by the center will depend upon the extent to which its current resources and services address the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history into the current United States high school history course and the middle school civics course required under the bill.
- School districts will incur increased annual costs to the extent that additional faculty are needed to meet the educational requirements of the bill, or if existing faculty members require new materials or engage in training offered by the center or another provider. The OLS cannot

project what future resources school districts will require to meet the in-class instructional provisions of this bill and therefore cannot estimate the annual local cost impact.

BILL DESCRIPTION

The bill amends current law that requires the State Department of Education to prepare curriculum guidelines for the teaching of civics for use by local school boards in implementing the required two-year high school course of study in the history of the United States. The bill now directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to prepare curriculum guidelines and also provide professional development for high school social studies teachers in fulfilling the requirement of integrating civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States history course.

The bill requires the provision of civics instruction to middle school pupils in public schools. Current law requires a course of study in civics, geography, and the history of New Jersey to be provided to public school elementary students, but no similar requirement exists for middle school pupils. Under the bill, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is required to provide a course of study about the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function and limitations of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society. The course is to be taken by all pupils in an appropriate middle school grade. The course of study must include a minimum of two quarters of instruction, or the equivalent.

The bill also directs that the New Jersey Center for Civic Education will provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development and any other activities to encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the required high school course in the history of the United States and to enhance the teaching of civics in middle school required pursuant to the bill.

The Legislature is to annually appropriate funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education to effectuate the bill's purposes.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS estimates that there will be an indeterminate increase in annual State expenditures to provide funds to the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to develop curriculum guidelines and provide professional development to high school social studies teachers to integrate civics, economics, and the history of New Jersey into the United States high school history course required under current law. The center provides in-service workshops to school districts for \$900 for a half-day workshop or \$1,750 for whole-day workshops. The OLS cannot estimate the number of teachers throughout the State who may take the professional development workshops or require other forms of training or additional instructional materials. The OLS also cannot determine whether additional faculty will be needed to meet the educational requirements of the bill.

The bill also requires the center to provide a clearinghouse of materials, an online resource center, technical assistance, professional development, and other activities that encourage the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history in the teaching of United State history and enhance the middle school civics course of study required in the bill.

The center currently provides many of the resources and services listed in the bill. Any increased costs incurred by the center will depend upon the extent to which its current resources and services address the integration of civics, economics, and New Jersey history into the current United States high school history course and the middle school civics course required under the bill

Section: Education

*Analyst: Adrian Crook
Lead Research Analyst*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Expand Civics Instruction in Schools

07/23/2021

Civics Instruction Will Now Be Required at the Middle School Level

MIDDLETOWN - Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation (S854) requiring civics instruction at the middle school level. Currently, New Jersey is one of a minority of states which does not require civics instruction for middle school students. Under the legislation, the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University will be directed to prepare civics curriculum guidelines for local school boards, ensuring that middle and high school students study the values and principles underlying the American system of constitutional democracy, the function of government, and the role of a citizen in a democratic society.

The bill also directs the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University to provide professional development and other resources for high school social studies teachers as they fulfill the requirement of integrating civics into the existing United States history course. Under the bill, beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each board of education is required to provide a course of study in civics at the appropriate grade level.

The legislation is also known as “Laura Wooten’s Law” in honor of the longest continuously serving poll worker in American history. Laura Wooten worked polls in New Jersey for 79 years before passing away in 2019.

“By deepening civics instruction in middle school and high school, we are giving students the tools they need to be more engaged and informed citizens,” **said Governor Murphy**. “An understanding of civics strengthens our democracy by ensuring an understanding of the role that everyone plays in the future of their community, our state, and our nation. I am proud to sign this bill into law and honor Laura Wooten’s incredible civic legacy.”

“While civics has been a key element of our state’s learning standards for decades, this new law greatly increases the focus and attention that schools will place on civics instruction,” **said Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. “The additional instruction that students will receive will ultimately lead to a well-informed and well-rounded citizenry.”

“Government leaders have been sounding the alarm about the civics crisis in this country for years, and I am grateful we are finally taking action,” **said Senator Shirley Turner**. “The crisis reached a breaking point after the November election, which culminated in an insurrection at our U.S. Capitol in January. Safeguarding our democracy is now more urgent than ever, and one of the best ways we can do that is by teaching our future generations about the importance of civic skills, engagement, and participation and the value of a democratic process. The lack of civics knowledge creates a challenge to maintaining a perfect union, establishing justice, and ensuring domestic tranquility. We must learn to work together for the good of all of our communities and begin to bridge the deep political divide that exists in this country.”

“A well-rounded education in civics is essential for creating knowledgeable, engaged citizens who understand the sacrifices and hardships made on behalf of our democracy,” **said Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean**. “The law signed today will help provide students with the skills and background necessary for them to actively participate in democratic society. Every student in our public schools will have the opportunity to learn about how our government functions, the rights of citizens, and the values our nation was built on.”

“By definition, civics is the study of the rights and obligations of citizens in society. It is critical that we teach young people to understand their role in their communities and our democracy so that they have the tools they need to be well-informed, active citizens,” **said the measure’s Assembly sponsors**,

Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, Assemblywoman Linda Carter, and Assemblywoman Mila Jasey in a joint statement. “The social studies curriculum in our schools currently focuses on a chronological history of the United States. In a country built on the engagement of ordinary citizens, civics must play a central role in our students’ education. Requiring civics lessons in our schools will inspire the next generation to appreciate and participate in our democracy.”

“I think we all appreciate how critical teaching civics is to the continuation of our democracy,” **said Arlene Gardner, President of the NJ Center for Civic Education at Rutgers.** “This new requirement for a civics course in New Jersey middle schools is a well thought-out and carefully considered effort to address an educational and citizenship need. As president of the New Jersey Center for Civic Education at Rutgers University, I am both humbled and proud to be able to help in the implementation of this new course and in bringing New Jersey to the forefront of reimagining civic learning for the 21st century.”

“My mother would be so honored to know that a bill would be passed recognizing her legacy of civic responsibility,” **said Yvonne Hill, the daughter of Laura Wooten.** “She always felt that the youth should be involved in exercising the hard-fought right to vote and help make change. Her famous words were ‘Don’t say you can’t make a difference. How can you make a difference if you don’t vote?’”

This Week in NJ: July 23rd, 2021

07/23/2021



Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Provide \$135 Million in Small Business Relief

Governor Murphy signed legislation (S-3982) providing additional aid to small businesses as New Jersey continues to provide support to small businesses as they recover from the pandemic. The bill provides \$135 million to small businesses throughout the state and will be administered by the Economic Development Authority as part of its Phase IV Emergency Grant Program and NJ Community Stage Relief Grant Program.

“As small businesses throughout New Jersey continue to struggle from the economic aftermath of COVID-19, we remain committed to providing them with the resources they need to recover,” **said Governor Murphy.**

“Together with our partners at the federal level, the EDA and other departments have provided more than three quarters of a billion dollars to our small business community as we emerge from the pandemic stronger and more resilient.”

[READ MORE](#)

Governor Murphy Signs Package of Bills Advancing New Jersey as National Leader in Lead Poisoning Prevention

Governor Phil Murphy reaffirmed his commitment to address lead exposure in New Jersey and its harmful effects on public health and child development by signing a package of bills aimed protecting New Jersey’s families from lead poisoning.



“In October of 2019, I put forth a multifaceted statewide plan to protect New Jersey’s children and families from the dangers of lead, and today, we are taking a significant step forward in our strategy to reduce lead exposure in our homes,” **said Governor Murphy.** “Modernizing our aging water infrastructure with new lead services lines is critical in ensuring safe drinking water flows through our communities. In addition to replacing service lines, we must also go further to protect those in older homes and apartments where door jambs and window sashes may be coated in decades of layers of lead-based paints, creating fine particulates that are unknowingly inhaled and ingested. Today, we are taking the most aggressive action in the nation to reduce lead-based paint exposure in our homes and communities, which is a critical victory for public health and environmental justice, and advances New Jersey as a national leader in lead poisoning prevention.”

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Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Supporting Veterans and Servicemembers

Governor Murphy signed legislation (S-278, S-956, and S-961) which supports New Jersey veterans and servicemembers and grants them easier access to higher education, expands access to the disabled veterans’ property tax exemption, and establishes an annual grant program within the Troops to College Program to recognize institutions of higher education that offer extensive veteran programs and services.

“Our veterans and servicemembers have put their lives on the line for their state and for their country,” **said Governor Murphy.** “The least we can do for them is to make their lives easier by expanding access to higher education, broadening eligibility for the disabled veterans’ property tax exemption, and encouraging higher education institutions to provide needed services. This legislation will doubtlessly help our veterans and servicemembers in their civilian lives and recognize their service properly.”

[READ MORE](#)

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Expand Civics Instruction in Schools

Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation (S854) requiring civics instruction at the middle school level. Currently, New Jersey is one of a minority of states which does not require civics instruction for middle school students.

“By deepening civics instruction in middle school and high school, we are giving students the tools they need to be more engaged and informed citizens,” **said Governor Murphy**. “An understanding of civics strengthens our democracy by ensuring an understanding of the role that everyone plays in the future of their community, our state, and our nation. I am proud to sign this bill into law and honor Laura Wooten’s incredible civic legacy.”

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Governor Murphy and Lieutenant Governor Oliver Announce Appointment of State Senator Chris A. Brown, Esq. to the Department of Community Affairs' Division of Local Government Services

Governor Phil Murphy and Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver announced that State Senator Chris A. Brown, Esq. will join the Department of Community Affairs' Division of Local Government Services as the Senior Advisor for Atlantic City Affairs, a newly created role in the Department. In this position, Brown will spearhead State initiatives in Atlantic City, including efforts to improve public safety, diversify the economy and create jobs, and improve social services.



“Chris is deeply committed to improving the lives of those who call Atlantic City home, and he will be a tremendous asset for the Administration as we further strengthen the Atlantic City economy and improve quality of life,” **said Governor Murphy.** “I look forward to working together to address issues like economic growth and public safety. With Chris in this new role, and with Sheila at the helm of DCA, the future of Atlantic City has never looked brighter.”

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