

Establishing a Commission on Civic Education in the State of Tennessee:

**An Initiative of the Howard H. Baker, Jr.
Center for Public Policy and the Tennessee
Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools**

April 2006

Report by Bradford A. Vaughan

Consultation from Nissa Dahlin-Brown, Ed.D,
Assistant Director, Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy

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Abstract

Overwhelming statistical evidence points to a dramatic and increasing lack of civic understanding and participation among the American population, particularly among younger generations. This finding is rightly prompting communities and government bodies at the federal, state, and local levels to reevaluate (or, in some cases, initiate) their approaches to promoting civic engagement and providing quality civic education. The purpose of this project is to explore one means of doing so in the state of Tennessee: the establishment of a Commission on Civic Education through the bicameral passage of Senate Bill 2586 and House Bill 2808, currently before the respective houses of the Tennessee General Assembly.

This is not a work of public policy research, per se. Certainly an extensive body of research points to the need for a more focused approach to civic education in our state, but whereas other efforts to address issues relating to civic engagement may focus on the development and incorporation of specific curricula and means of evaluating learning progress, the goal of this project is the successful establishment of a quasi-independent government entity which will be charged with carrying out these activities. Normative judgments as to the proper nature and format of civic education programs have been purposefully reserved in favor of a collaborative approach which empowers experts and stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds and professions to study and recommend a body of proposals that is most sensible for the state of Tennessee.

Three primary products of this effort have been included in this report. First is the original draft of the bill that I researched and completed under consultation from Dr. Nissa Dahlin-Brown of the Baker Center in conjunction with several partners from the Tennessee Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. The bill's language contains allusion to relevant works of education policy research and several sections were drawn from the text of similar bills recently passed in the states of Virginia and Rhode Island. The statute outlines a number of general findings related to civic engagement and education, establishes guidelines under which the proposed Commission may operate, and assigns the power of appointing Commission members to various state officials.

The second product is a copy of sample testimony that I prepared for a possible appearance before relevant committees of the General Assembly. No hearings germane to the creation of the Commission have as yet been held, but the testimony provides a more in-depth statement of the methodology for recommending certain provisions of the bill (including selection of personnel, timeframe, funding, etc.) as well as brief assessments of similar efforts by other state governments. The testimony also provides more historical and social context for the evaluation of our state's civic engagement goals.

The final product is a breakdown of the legislative histories of the bills that will establish the Commission upon passage and signing (the aforementioned SB 2865 and HB 2808). These summaries show the actual text of the bills, as introduced, the fiscal impact report as submitted by the comptroller's office, a sequential breakdown of major legislative actions to date, and an appendix of amendments offered and agreed to by House and Senate Members. Due to the pending status of these bills in the respective houses, the submissions in this report will only show progress toward passage to date.

Draft Resolution
Prepared by Brad Vaughan,
Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy

House/Senate Bill ####

By Xxxxxx

An ACT to establish a joint Commission
on Civic Education in Tennessee

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF
TENNESSEE:

Section 1. Definitions

As used in this title, 'civic education' means the provision of necessary education to each Tennessee schoolchild that includes the endowment of knowledge as well as the development of skills and dispositions necessary for informed, responsible participation in political life as competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of the American republic. Their effective and responsible participation requires the acquisition of a body of knowledge and of intellectual and participatory skills. Effective and responsible participation is also furthered by development of certain dispositions or traits of character that enhance the individual's capacity to participate in the political process and contribute to the healthy functioning of the political system and improvement of society.

Section 2. Findings

- (a) Civic education encourages students to be thoughtful and productive members of their communities and future leaders of the state of Tennessee;
- (b) It is essential to the future health of our Republic that all citizens be knowledgeable about democratic principles and practices, be dedicated to the public good, be engaged members of their communities, and be involved participants in the public discourse;

- (c) Individuals who have a clear and full understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a Republic are more likely to exercise and defend those rights and responsibilities;
- (d) Service learning and project-based civic learning have consistently been shown to engage pupils in learning, improve their attitudes toward school, and have positive effects on their civic skills, knowledge, and abilities;
- (e) Providing civic education and promoting good citizenship should be core missions of Tennessee elementary and secondary schools; and
- (f) Broad civic engagement is vital to the long-term social and political health of Tennessee.

Section 3. Establishment and Membership

There is hereby established a joint commission which shall be known as the Commission on Civic Education in Tennessee. The Commission shall consist of no fewer than thirteen (13) members, and shall be appointed as follows:

- (a) No fewer than eight (8) members shall be appointed by the Governor, including at least one representative each from the Tennessee Education Association, the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy, the Tennessee Department of Education, the Tennessee Council on Social Studies, the Center for Civic Education, and the Tennessee Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals;
- (b) Two (2) members of the House of Representatives, of whom not more than one (1) shall be from the same political party, shall be appointed by the Speaker;
- (c) Two (2) members of the Senate, of whom not more than one (1) shall be from the same political party, shall be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor; and
- (d) One member shall be the Secretary of State or the designee thereof.

Section 4. Powers and Duties of the Commission

- (a) The Commission is hereby directed to:

- (i) Research the current policies and practices in civic education at the state and local level; and to
 - (ii) Recommend to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives any such policies and programs it deems necessary and able to correct deficiencies in and improve the practice of civic education by Tennessee schools
- (b) The Commission shall be authorized to appoint committees, which shall have compulsory power to call witnesses for testimony concerning special and unique areas of concern and which shall report findings and recommendations to the full Commission. All relevant departments and agencies of the State shall furnish advice and information, documentary and otherwise, to the Commission and its agents as may be necessary or desirable to facilitate its purposes.
- (d) The Commission shall convene no more than six (6) months after the passage of this act, and shall meet no fewer than four (4) times in the year thereafter. At its first meeting the Commission shall choose officers, appoint counsels, and establish bylaws with respect to the faithful execution of its mission and duties; however no business shall be conducted and agreed upon unless at least one half of the appointed membership is present.
- (c) The Commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Lieutenant Governor no later than one year following its first meeting.

**Sample Testimony for SB 2586 and HB 2808:
Establishing a Tennessee Commission on Civic Education**

**Committees of the 104th Tennessee General Assembly, 2nd Session
April 2006**

Thank you _____. It is my great honor to appear before the committee today, and it is a distinct privilege to speak on behalf of the Tennessee Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. The Tennessee campaign is a collaborative effort spearheaded by Tennessee Legal Community Foundation, the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools, the Tennessee Department of Education, the Tennessee Education Association, and the University of Tennessee's Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy where I work as a Baker Scholar and student assistant. Honoring the legacy of one of Tennessee's favored sons, we, along with our friends from around the state, have worked tirelessly to see that the extraordinary life, achievements, and legacy of Howard Baker are forever remembered. As you are probably aware, promoting civic engagement and education is at the core of our Center's mission. Today, we are taking an important step in achieving that and other very important goals of our Center by discussing **Senate Bill 2586** and its companion bill **House Bill 2808**.

The topics of today's hearing are civic education and civic engagement, concepts that lie at the very heart of a thriving democracy. Indeed, learned scholars going as far back as Alexis de Tocqueville have known this. But sadly, as I will outline in a moment, overwhelming statistical evidence points to a stunning decline of civic participation and understanding here in the state of

Tennessee and among the American people as a whole. This finding is rightly prompting concerned communities and governments at all levels to reevaluate their approaches to promoting civic education. The goal of my work and that of the Howard Baker Center is to explore and propose new institutional means for doing so in our state, and it is my intention today to discuss with you both the vital necessity of promoting civic engagement as well as the soundness of the approach we recommend for addressing it in Tennessee's public schools.

Democracy in America: Modern Lessons from Tocqueville

I would like to begin my discussion with a little bit of history, and in so doing, talk with you about one of the great books ever written on the strengths, weaknesses, and potential of the American republic—Alexis de Tocqueville's classic treatise *Democracy in America*. A Frenchman, Tocqueville visited America for the first time in the early 1800s and set out to observe the fundamentals driving her early success as a democratic union. Among his more poignant observations, he numbered among our greatest strengths the tendency of Americans to form associations in order to identify and resolve common problems that,

- a) Could not be resolved by individual actions alone and,
- b) Ought not to be entrusted to the established political institutions.

In this way, he said, associations enabled Americans to "combat" the anti-social consequences of extreme individualism while simultaneously ensuring that the people would not become too dependent upon their government. Tocqueville wrote at length about the importance of formal institutions and the rule of law for the preservation of rights and liberties in a democracy, but in the end he concluded that the real guarantee of a democratic people's freedom rested with the capacity and the willingness to form both political and civil associations—in short, to take an active participatory role in the public affairs of their nation. As Tocqueville said,

No countries need associations more—to prevent both despotism of parties or the arbitrary rule of a prince—than those with a democratic state...Better use has been made of associations and this powerful instrument of action has been applied to more varied aims in America than anywhere else in the world.

The place that these associations occupy in our lives has come to be known as “civil society,” and modern sociologists have taken to referring to the product of such associations as “social capital” in order to highlight the fact that through their various activities these associations provide a resource that the broader society can draw upon. At the time Tocqueville was writing, these associations ranged from such relatively minor pursuits as the organization of holiday gatherings or the distribution of books and literature, to more serious endeavors such as the convening of a national convention to oppose an 1831 tariff bill or the formation of a league against gluttony. Moreover, civic associations cross a spectrum in time that is marked by such projects as Jane Addam’s Hull House settlement in the early 20th century to the battered women’s shelters and halfway houses of today.

However, a number of contemporary social commentators—most notably Robert Bellah and Robert Putnam have documented the decline of civil society and a corresponding loss of so-called “social capital” in modern America. Bellah attributes this decline and loss to the increasing tendency of Americans to assign values to those occupations and activities that they find rewarding as **individuals** at the expense of those endeavors that require **social engagement** while providing sometimes intangible and unquantifiable benefits to their respective communities. Putnam, on the other hand, cites the role of television and mass media, suburbanization, workplace pressures on two career families and the reluctance of the baby boomer generation to sustain the pattern of civic involvement that distinguished their parent’s and grandparent’s generations. Putnam’s analysis is particularly telling in its account of how this process has been accompanied by the erosion of trust in America—trust in one another as individuals and groups, and trust in our major public institutions. These specific developments

are most likely related to America's experience in Vietnam in the late 60's and early 70's and the events surrounding and following the Watergate scandal, among other factors.

Declines across all these areas, more or less pronounced, all became evident beginning in the 1960s and have continued ever since. The causes of this change are complex, but appear to be most-closely related to the passing of the very engaged generation born and raised before World War II, which Putnam calls "**America's long civic generation**," and the dramatic transformation of American society after World War II, including the rise of television as the dominant form of entertainment and the spread of suburban sprawl. In this time, voter turnout at nearly all levels has been on the decline. Most polling and statistical analysis indicates a sharp slide in the levels of understanding and participation in political processes by most citizens. Attitudes toward the effectiveness of civic engagement have declined. And performance in school subjects related to public affairs is down—a recent NAEP assessment, for example, found that only 11 percent of high school seniors scored on a proficient level of knowledge in American history.

Not all the news is bad, however. Since 1960, America has, by most indications, become a more open society and one much more tolerant of diversity—great strides toward racial and gender equality have been made; political and civil rights are more secure; and speech and other forms of expression are less restricted. Some preliminary evidence even suggests that civic engagement among the youngest American generations is higher than that of their elders, reflected mainly by the growing number of hours spent each week on volunteer work among other activities. Alternative forms of connectedness have emerged as well, including the rise of evangelical Christian organizations, dramatic increases in membership in national lobbying organizations that represent particular political views and interests (but which rarely build on social capital) as well as local self-help and mutual support groups, (some of which do). The Internet, for better or worse, has begun and will continue to change how Americans connect with

one another in ways that we cannot yet imagine. The early grassroots success of 2004 presidential candidates Howard Dean and Wesley Clark may have given us the first glimpses of the power of online communication in the realm of political mobilization. The rise of "blogs" and personal websites as an alternative source of media certainly proved to be a decisive factor in that same election.

So far, as evidenced by falling voter turnout among other factors, none of these shifts is seemingly large enough, though, to offset the declines created by the passing of the World War II generation, and if nothing changes, the decline in social capital may have devastating social and political ramifications in the years to come. In light of this, the ongoing goal for concerned communities across the country and here in Tennessee must be to enable means for its citizens, particularly the young, to continue to search for new ways of connecting to and influencing their society.

It is extremely important to acknowledge at this point that the drive to rebuild social capital is not merely a nostalgia movement. Our history is important to us and certainly developing an adequate appreciation for it must be one of the goals of our school system. But at the same time, the social structures and institutions that will connect Americans with each other in the next century may be remarkably different from those that were created in the Progressive Era and the New Deal and prevailed during most of the 20th century. However, a basic respect for and understanding of the institutions and cultures that have enabled the growth and vitality of the American Republic is necessary if the United States will continue to prosper in an era marked by unprecedented challenges at home and abroad.

Both of the scholars I discussed earlier, Bellah and Putnam, share Tocqueville's conviction that democracy is much more than a ceremonial and procedural affair--a series of processes through which representatives are selected, legislation passed, and policies

implemented. Rather, the vitality and responsiveness of this procedural democracy requires a vigorous and democratic civil society—one where the democratic values of tolerance, self-reliance, equality and liberty are lived out in the array of associations through which Americans deliberate and act, including their community groups, their churches and their governments.

It is worth noting how this idea of a democracy that is reliant upon a vital civil society is an American original. It has its roots in Thomas Jefferson's insistence that **"if we are to take the principle of self government seriously we must trust an informed people to know best which issues are most significant and enact measures that will enable them to address and resolve those issues close at hand"** [emphasis added]. To this end he called, at the time, for a reform of the Virginia Constitution that would make townships and wards the most important political bodies. As he said, "These . . . have proved themselves the wisest invention ever devised by the wit of man for the perfect exercise of self-government, and for its preservation." Certainly members of a state legislature and those of you have joined us from local school systems can sympathize with his argument.

Tocqueville was right, though. Democracy in America was utterly different from any previous form of governance because in the end, it was a matter of people working together and growing together because they cared for one another. These ideas lie at the heart of why we are here today.

Assessing and Promoting Civic Education in Tennessee: A Collaborative Approach

Having highlighted both the historical necessity of building an informed and engaged public and many of the modern dangers threatening that cause, let me turn now to a few specific points on the proposed commission and the underlying bill.

While other efforts to address the issue of civic education may focus on the development and incorporation of specific curricula and means of evaluating students' learning progress, the focus of our work is the successful establishment of a broad-based government entity to carry out these activities. In studying a number of feasible options, judgments on our part as to the proper nature of civic education have been purposefully reserved in favor of an alternative approach which allows experts from a variety of backgrounds and institutions to debate and establish a system that, in their learned opinions, best serves the needs of Tennesseans.

As the findings of our resolution clearly state, civic education encourages students (and adults for that matter) to be thoughtful and productive members of their communities. Among other factors that do the same, the active promotion of civic engagement and civic understanding encourages children, even at young ages to take part and participate in the affairs of their communities. And for many, as it was for me, the right instruction from a wonderful teacher may even lead them into careers in public service.

With that said, my remarks today have intentionally not addressed many of the specific policy issues that the proposed commission will be called upon to evaluate and act upon, and it is my hope that initial debates within this body will do the same. A panel of experts far more experienced and wise than I should be asked to do that. Instead, I would like to discuss the steps our partnership has taken in contriving the structure and goals of the commission this committee is now reviewing.

Fortunately, the experience of several states have given us working models and proven successes off of which we can build. In 2001, the Rhode Island state legislature enacted a statute that created a permanent commission on civic education consisting of seventeen members drawn from government entities and non-profit organizations in a manner very similar to the proposed bill. The Rhode Island Commission adopted several diverse and important goals. As its mission

statement reads, the Commission is charged with "developing, coordinating and communicating public outreach programs for the Rhode Island Legislature that educate the public about American representative democracy. The Commission will emphasize the explanation of legitimate, diverse, competing ideas and interests in society and emphasize the importance of compromise in the resolution of differences." To support this mission, the Commission, in its early work, has undertaken the following activities on behalf of the legislature:

1. **ASSESSMENT:** With the help of other departments and agencies, the Commission has performed a detailed study of the state of civic education in Rhode Island by surveying every middle and secondary school in the state on the extent and success of their civic education programs, if any.
2. **COORDINATION:** The Commission has worked to reach out to every identified civic education group within state to join in the effort, and has served as an intermediary by developing lines of communication between/among schools and civic education programs.
3. **COMMUNICATION:** The Commission has developed a catalog listing civic education programs and resources within Rhode Island to be made available on line and disseminated to Rhode Island educators and others interested in supporting civic education efforts.
4. **IMPLEMENTATION:** In its ongoing capacity, the Commission works closely with the Rhode Island Department of Education and the state legislature to further enhance state civic education goals.

These four missions, **assessment, coordination, communication, and implementation**, are the same goals we would recommend for the Commission being considered by this committee.

Final Notes

In addition to the ongoing policy benefits that this Commission may provide to the state, its proposed incorporation into the administrative budget of the Department of Education will allow its early work to commence at a minimal expense to the taxpayers, and the Commission's personnel structure will ensure that a variety of stakeholders and experts from the educational, business, policy, and legal communities are heard from. The Commission's relatively small size will ease many of the problems associated with coordination and team management, and the involvement of a bipartisan group of legislators will ensure close contact with the respective houses should the Commission identify the need for new legislation or appropriations.

The efforts of other states have demonstrated the practicality of this common sense approach, and I encourage the committee to endorse the creation of this Commission and support its work over the course of the next year. On behalf of the Tennessee Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, thank you for allowing me to appear today, and thank you for your work to improve civic engagement in Tennessee.

Bill History:
Senate Bill 2586
(Legislative Actions as of 4/27/06)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
2/7/06	Filed for introduction by Senators Woodson and Ketron
2/8/06	Introduced; Passed First Consideration
2/9/06	Passed Second Consideration; Referred to Senate Committee on Government Operations
4/6/06	Placed on Calendar for Senate Government Operations Committee for 4/12/06
4/12/06	Action deferred in committee until 4/19/06
4/13/06	Placed on Calendar for Senate Government Operations Committee for 4/19/06
4/19/06	Recommended for passage with amendments by Senate Government Operations Committee; Referred to Senate Education Committee (Ayes 8, Nays 0, PNV 0)
4/24/06	Rules Suspension #83(8) to be heard in Senate Education Committee on 4/26/06
4/27/06	Placed on Calendar for Senate Education Committee for 5/3/06

Source: Online: <http://www.legislature.state.tn.us>

SENATE BILL 2586
By Woodson

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4 and
Title 49, relative to civic education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. The general assembly finds and declares that:

(1) Effective and responsible participation in political life as competent citizens requires the acquisition of a body of knowledge and of intellectual and participatory skills;

(2) Effective and responsible participation is furthered by development of certain dispositions or traits of character that enhance an individual's capacity to participate in the political process and contribute to the healthy functioning of the political system and improvement of society;

(3) Civic education encourages students to be thoughtful and productive members of their communities and future leaders of the state of Tennessee;

(4) It is essential to the future health of our republic that all citizens be knowledgeable about democratic principles and practices, be dedicated to the public good, be engaged members of their communities, and be involved participants in the public discourse;

(5) Individuals who have a clear and full understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a republic are more likely to exercise and defend those rights and responsibilities;

(6) Service learning and project-based civic learning have consistently been shown to engage pupils in learning, improve their attitudes toward school, and have positive effects on their civic skills, knowledge, and abilities;

(7) Providing civic education and promoting good citizenship should be core missions of Tennessee elementary and secondary schools; and

(8) Broad civic engagement is vital to the long-term social and political health of Tennessee.

SECTION 2. As used in this act, "civic education" means the provision of necessary education to each Tennessee schoolchild that includes the endowment of knowledge, as well as the development of skills and dispositions, necessary for informed, responsible participation in political life as competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of the American republic.

SECTION 3.

(a) There is hereby established a commission that shall be known as the commission on civic education in Tennessee.

(b) The commission shall be composed of no fewer than thirteen (13) members, and shall be appointed as follows:

(1) No fewer than eight (8) members shall be appointed by the governor, who shall appoint at least one (1) member from each of the following:

(A) Tennessee Education Association;

(B) Tennessee Legal Community Foundation;

(C) Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy;

(D) Department of education;

(E) Tennessee Council on Social Studies;

(F) Tennessee Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals; and

(G) Tennessee Association of Secondary School Principals.

(2) Two (2) members of the house of representatives, of whom not more than one (1) shall be from the same political party, shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(3) Two (2) members of the senate, of whom not more than one (1) shall be from the same political party, shall be appointed by the speaker of the senate; and

(4) One (1) member shall be the secretary of state or the secretary of state's designee.

(c) The members shall serve without pay, but may be compensated for travel expenses in accordance with the comprehensive travel regulations as promulgated by the department of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter.

(d) For administrative purposes, the commission shall be attached to the department of education.

SECTION 4.

(a) The commission is hereby directed to:

(1) Research the current policies and practices in civic education at the state and local level; and

(2) Recommend to the governor, the education committee of the senate and the education committee of the house of representatives any policies and programs it deems necessary and able to correct deficiencies in and improve the practice of civic education by Tennessee schools.

(b) The commission is authorized to appoint committees that may call witnesses for testimony concerning special and unique areas of concern and that shall report findings and recommendations to the full commission.

(c) All departments and agencies of state government shall fully cooperate with the commission to accomplish the goals of this act and, to that end, shall furnish such information, assistance and reports to, and shall otherwise cooperate with, the commission in the performance of its functions.

(d) The commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the governor, the education committee of the senate, and the education committee of the house of representatives no later than one (1) year following its first meeting.

SECTION 5. The commission shall be appointed and shall convene no more than six (6) months after the effective date of this act, and shall meet no fewer than four (4) times in the year thereafter. At its first meeting, the commission shall choose its officers. No business shall be conducted and agreed upon unless at least one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the appointed membership is present.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

Amendment No. 1 to SB2586

Harper
Signature of Sponsor

FILED

Date _____

Time _____

Clerk _____

Comm. Amdt. _____

AMEND Senate Bill No. 2586*

House Bill No. 2808

by deleting the amendatory language of subsection (b) of Section 3 of the bill and by substituting instead the following language:

(b) The commission shall be composed of no fewer than fourteen (14) members, and shall be appointed as follows:

(1) No fewer than nine (9) members shall be appointed by the governor, who shall appoint at least one (1) member from each of the following:

- (A) A professional association representing educators;
 - (B) The Tennessee legal community;
 - (C) The Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy;
 - (D) The department of education;
 - (E) The Tennessee Council on Social Studies;
 - (F) The Tennessee Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals;
 - (G) The Tennessee Association of Secondary School Principals;
- and
- (H) The Tennessee business community.

(2) Two (2) members of the house of representatives, of whom not more than one (1) shall be from the same political party, shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(3) Two (2) members of the senate, of whom not more than one (1) shall be from the same political party, shall be appointed by the speaker of the senate; and

(4) One (1) member shall be the secretary of state or the secretary of state's designee.

Bill History:
House Bill 2808
(Legislative Actions as of 4/27/06)

Date	Action
2/14/06	Filed for introduction by Representative Winningham
2/15/06	Introduced; Passed First Consideration
2/16/06	Passed Second Consideration; Referred to House Committee on Education
2/24/06	Assigned to K-12 Subcommittee of the Committee on Education
3/22/06	Placed on Calendar for K-12 Subcommittee for 3/28/06
3/28/06	Action deferred in K-12 Subcommittee to 4/4/06
3/29/06	Placed on Calendar for K-12 Subcommittee for 4/4/06
4/4/06	Action deferred in K-12 Subcommittee to 4/11/06
4/5/06	Placed on Calendar for K-12 Subcommittee for 4/11/06
4/11/06	Action deferred in K-12 Subcommittee to 4/18/06
4/12/06	Placed on Calendar for K-12 Subcommittee for 4/18/06
4/18/06	Action deferred in K-12 Subcommittee to 4/25/06
4/19/06	Placed on Calendar for K-12 Subcommittee for 4/25/06
4/25/06	Recommended for passage if amended by K-12 Subcommittee; Referred to Education Committee
4/26/06	Recommended for passage if amended by House Education Committee; Referred to House Finance, Ways and Means Committee

Source: Online: <http://www.legislature.state.tn.us>

HOUSE BILL 2808
By Winningham

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4 and
Title 49, relative to civic education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. The general assembly finds and declares that:

(1) Effective and responsible participation in political life as competent citizens requires the acquisition of a body of knowledge and of intellectual and participatory skills;

(2) Effective and responsible participation is furthered by development of certain dispositions or traits of character that enhance an individual's capacity to participate in the political process and contribute to the healthy functioning of the political system and improvement of society;

(3) Civic education encourages students to be thoughtful and productive members of their communities and future leaders of the state of Tennessee;

(4) It is essential to the future health of our republic that all citizens be knowledgeable about democratic principles and practices, be dedicated to the public good, be engaged members of their communities, and be involved participants in the public discourse;

(5) Individuals who have a clear and full understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a republic are more likely to exercise and defend those rights and responsibilities;

(6) Service learning and project-based civic learning have consistently been shown to engage pupils in learning, improve their attitudes toward school, and have positive effects on their civic skills, knowledge, and abilities;

(7) Providing civic education and promoting good citizenship should be core missions of Tennessee elementary and secondary schools; and

(8) Broad civic engagement is vital to the long-term social and political health of Tennessee.

SECTION 2. As used in this act, "civic education" means the provision of necessary education to each Tennessee schoolchild that includes the endowment of knowledge, as well as the development of skills and dispositions, necessary for informed, responsible participation in political life as competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of the American republic.

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(A) Tennessee Education Association;

(B) Tennessee Legal Community Foundation;

(C) Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy;

(D) Department of education;

(E) Tennessee Council on Social Studies;

(F) Tennessee Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals; and

(G) Tennessee Association of Secondary School Principals.

(2) Two (2) members of the house of representatives, of whom not more than one (1) shall be from the same political party, shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(3) Two (2) members of the senate, of whom not more than one (1) shall be from the same political party, shall be appointed by the speaker of the senate; and

(4) One (1) member shall be the secretary of state or the secretary of state's designee.

(c) The members shall serve without pay, but may be compensated for travel expenses in accordance with the comprehensive travel regulations as promulgated by the department of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter.

(d) For administrative purposes, the commission shall be attached to the department of education.

SECTION 4.

(a) The commission is hereby directed to:

(1) Research the current policies and practices in civic education at the state and local level; and

(2) Recommend to the governor, the education committee of the senate and the education committee of the house of representatives any policies and programs it deems necessary and able to correct deficiencies in and improve the practice of civic education by Tennessee schools.

(b) The commission is authorized to appoint committees that may call witnesses for testimony concerning special and unique areas of concern and that shall report findings and recommendations to the full commission.

(c) All departments and agencies of state government shall fully cooperate with the commission to accomplish the goals of this act and, to that end, shall furnish such information, assistance and reports to, and shall otherwise cooperate with, the commission in the performance of its functions.

(d) The commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the governor, the education committee of the senate, and the education committee of the house of representatives no later than one (1) year following its first meeting.

SECTION 5. The commission shall be appointed and shall convene no more than six (6) months after the effective date of this act, and shall meet no fewer than four (4) times in the year thereafter. At its first meeting, the commission shall choose its officers. No business shall be conducted and agreed upon unless at least one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the appointed membership is present.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

Amendment No. 1 to HB2808

Winningham
Signature of Sponsor

FILED

Date _____

Time _____

Clerk _____

Comm. Amdt. _____

AMEND Senate Bill No. 2586*

House Bill No. 2808

by deleting the amendatory language of subsection (b) of Section 3 of the bill and by substituting instead the following language:

(b) The commission shall be composed of no fewer than fourteen (14) members, and shall be appointed as follows:

(1) No fewer than nine (9) members shall be appointed by the governor, who shall appoint at least one (1) member from each of the following:

(A) The largest professional association representing educators;

(B) The Tennessee legal community;

(C) The Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy;

(D) The department of education;

(E) The Tennessee Council on Social Studies;

(F) The Tennessee Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals;

(G) The Tennessee Association of Secondary School Principals;

and

(H) The Tennessee business community.

(2) Two (2) members of the house of representatives, of whom not more than one (1) shall be from the same political party, shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(3) Two (2) members of the senate, of whom not more than one (1) shall be from the same political party, shall be appointed by the speaker of the senate; and

(4) One (1) member shall be the secretary of state or the secretary of state's designee.

FISCAL NOTE

SB 2586 - HB 2808

February 14, 2006

SUMMARY OF BILL: Establishes the Commission of Civic Education in Tennessee, composed of at least 13 members, to be administratively attached to the Department of Education. The members shall serve without pay, but may be compensated for travel expenses. The Commission is directed to research the current policies and practices in civic education at the state and local level and recommend programs to correct and improve the practice of civic education by Tennessee schools.

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:

Increase State Expenditures - \$9,400

Assumptions:

- Requires the Commission to meet at least four times a year.
- Travel expenses for 13 members of the Commission are estimated to be approximately \$9,400 if the Commission meets four times a year.
- 4 Legislative members per diem and travel - $\$1,000 \times 4 \text{ meetings} = \$4,000$
9 citizen members travel expenses - $\$1,350 \times 4 \text{ meetings} = \$5,400$

CERTIFICATION:

This is to duly certify that the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



James W. White, Executive Director

SB 2586 - HB 2808