

Testimony as Proponent of Kansas SB381

For the Senate Education Committee
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Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill 381 on behalf of Cicero Action.

Our Founding Fathers charted a bold new course in human history when they established a “government of the People, by the People, and for the People.” However, the American Republic today faces the twin threat of civic and historical illiteracy.

In a study of American civic literacy, a majority of Kansas respondents failed a multiple choice version of the U.S. citizenship test, answering fewer than 60% of questions correctly. The reality is likely much bleaker among Kansas youth. Nationwide, only 19 percent of Americans under age 45 can pass the same test.¹

There is no time to waste. 34 percent of Americans aged 18-29 say they hold a “favorable view” of communism, and 62 percent say the same of socialism.² These numbers mark a significant rise in comparison with older generations, indicating that the memory of countless totalitarian atrocities is rapidly fading.

As a result of these trends, only 63 percent of Gen Z and Millennials believe that the Declaration of Independence guarantees “freedom and equality” better than the Communist Manifesto, compared to 95% of the Silent Generation.³

SB381 provides critical remedies to these challenges. Firstly, the bill establishes a clear accountability mechanism for civic instruction by requiring the passage of an American civics examination as a prerequisite for graduation from high school. Secondly, the bill gives the state board of education a mandate to develop an age-appropriate curriculum on communist and socialist regimes and ideologies. Additionally, the bill requires all school districts to provide instruction on communism and socialism.⁴

¹ <https://citizensandscholars.org/resource/national-survey-finds-just-1-in-3-americans-would-pass-citizenship-test/>

² <https://www.cato.org/blog/young-americans-socialism-too-much-thats-problem-libertarians-must-fix>

³ <https://victimsofcommunism.org/annual-poll/2020-annual-poll/>

⁴ https://www.kslegislature.gov/li/b2025_26/measures/sb381/



When educational systems fail to teach foundational American principles and historical lessons of totalitarian ideologies, we leave youth vulnerable to propaganda and prone to repeating the deadly mistakes of the past. In the words of James Madison, “Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.”⁵

SB381 elevates both civic and historical literacy among Kansas students, strengthening the future of both Kansas and the American Republic. I strongly encourage all of the esteemed senators gathered here to vote in support of this vital education.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration, as well as your stewardship of Kansas schools.

⁵ https://www.loc.gov/resource/mjm.20_0155_0159/?sp=1&st=text