

1 State of Arkansas  
2 91st General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2017  
4

*As Engrossed: S3/6/17*

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 519

5 By: Senator D. Wallace  
6 By: Representative G. Hodges  
7

## For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO REFINE THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN THE  
10 CLASSROOM; TO SPECIFY DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL  
11 MATERIALS AND UNITS REGARDING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING  
12 JR.; TO ELIMINATE THE DUAL STATUS OF THE JOINT  
13 HOLIDAY COMMEMORATING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. AND  
14 ROBERT E. LEE; TO SPECIFY THE TEACHING OF CONTENT  
15 RELATED TO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. IN CONJUNCTION  
16 WITH THE CORRESPONDING HOLIDAY; AND FOR OTHER  
17 PURPOSES.

## Subtitle

21 TO AMEND TITLE 6 OF THE ARKANSAS CODE  
22 CONCERNING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS FOR  
23 HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM; AND TO EFFECT A  
24 SEPARATE HOLIDAY FOR DR. MARTIN LUTHER  
25 KING JR.

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27  
28 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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30 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-16-121 is amended to read as follows:  
31 6-16-121. African-American history – Teaching materials.

32 *(a)(1) The Commissioner of Education shall ~~develop the materials or~~*  
33 *units update the materials and resources for the teaching of historical*  
34 *contributions made by African-Americans in the United States and in other*  
35 *countries prior to the establishment of the United States for inclusion in*  
36 *the appropriate curricula of all kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) of*



1 all public schools in the State of Arkansas, ~~beginning with the 1994-1995~~  
2 ~~school year.~~

3 (2) Emphasis shall be placed on the historic work of American  
4 civil rights leaders, including without limitation Dr. Martin Luther King  
5 Jr., and his pursuit of justice in civil society.

6 (3)(A) The requirement under this subsection shall be taught in  
7 conjunction with corresponding state and federal holidays.

8 (B) Nothing in subdivision (3)(A) of this section shall be  
9 construed to limit the teaching of this history only to the corresponding  
10 state and federal holidays.

11 (b) The commissioner shall ensure that these materials or units are  
12 reproduced and sent to all school districts in the state.

13

14 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-16-107(a), concerning education and  
15 patriotic observances, is amended to read as follows:

16 (a) February 22, as the birthday of George Washington, ~~and January 19,~~  
17 ~~as the birthday of Robert E. Lee,~~ and such other days as may be designated by  
18 the State Board of Education for patriotic observance shall be observed with  
19 appropriate exercises.

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21 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-16-124 is amended to read as follows:

22 6-16-124. Arkansas history – Required social studies course.

23 (a)(1) ~~Beginning with the 1997-1998 school year:~~

24 ~~(1)~~ A unit of Arkansas history shall be taught as a social  
25 studies subject at each elementary grade level in every public elementary  
26 school in this state, with greater emphasis at the fourth and fifth grade  
27 levels; and

28 (2) At least one (1) full semester of Arkansas history shall be  
29 taught to all students at the seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, or  
30 twelfth grade level in every public secondary school in this state.

31 (b)(1) Course guidelines shall ensure that the courses represent the  
32 most accurate and historically sound account of the prehistory, history, and  
33 culture of Arkansas, including the significant contributions and achievements  
34 of all segments of the population.

35 (2) Any revisions in the Arkansas history course content  
36 guidelines shall be reported to the public schools and the House Committee on

1 Education and the Senate Committee on Education no later than July 1 of the  
2 year the course guidelines are to be implemented.

3 (3)(A) The Department of Education shall, in advance of the  
4 2018-2019 school year, develop materials or units relating to Arkansas and  
5 the American Civil War.

6 (B) The emphasis of the curriculum under this subdivision  
7 (b)(3) shall be placed upon civilian and military leadership during the  
8 period and how the lessons of that era can inform contemporary society.

9 (C) The course content under this subdivision (b)(3) is  
10 not exempt from the reporting requirements under subdivision (b)(2) of this  
11 section.

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13 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 1-5-101(a)(2), concerning official state  
14 holidays, is amended to read as follows:

15 (2) Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday ~~and Robert E. Lee's~~  
16 ~~Birthday~~ – the third Monday in January;

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18 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 1-5-106, concerning state memorial days to  
19 be commemorated by gubernatorial proclamation, is amended to add an  
20 additional subdivision to read as follows:

21 (12) Robert E. Lee Day – Second Saturday in October.

22

23 SECTION 6. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings – Intent.

24 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

25 (1) The State of Arkansas has a very proud and distinguished  
26 culture and heritage;

27 (2) Robust recognition of history in the classroom is a priority;  
28 and

29 (3) The state should maintain and celebrate its culture and  
30 heritage, including our state and national military leaders who are connected  
31 to Arkansas or have impacted the course of our state's history.

32 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly by the enactment of this  
33 act to maintain an awareness of and celebrate the unique cultural heritage of  
34 Arkansas by educating Arkansas youth regarding:

35 (1) Historical events of state and national significance;

36 (2) The contributions made to the history of this state by

1 military and civilian leaders; and  
2 (3) The reasons for honoring such historical events and figures  
3 through the observance of days designated for their commemoration.

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5 */s/D. Wallace*  
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