

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 50th Legislature (2005)

SENATE BILL 910

By: Eason McIntyre

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to schools; stating legislative findings and declarations; creating the Multiethnic Historical Education Commission; providing for appointment of members; authorizing travel reimbursement for members; directing State Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene organizational meeting; providing for election of chair and vice-chair; requiring State Department of Education to provide certain assistance; stating duties and responsibilities of Commission; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 11-103.9 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The Legislature finds and declares that:

1. Beginning late in the fifteenth century and continuing into the twentieth century, thousands of Native Americans, persons of African origin, persons of Asian origin, as well as persons of other ethnicities, were denied basic human rights in the Western Hemisphere. However, all of these groups played major roles in the settlement and growth of America. All people should know of and remember the human carnage and dehumanizing atrocities committed against these minorities during this period of United States History. Citizens need to be educated about these events and the sad history of racism and prejudice in this country as in a civilized society, everyone should be informed regarding human rights and dignity;

2. It is the policy of the State of Oklahoma that the history of minorities in America, as well as the significant contributions of these peoples, is the proper concern of all people, particularly students enrolled in the schools of this state; and

3. It is therefore desirable to create a state-level commission, which as an organized body, on a continuous basis, will survey, design, encourage, and promote the implementation of education and awareness programs concerned with the multiethnic minorities, their mistreatment, and especially their contributions in building the United States of America; will develop workshops, institutes, seminars, and other teacher training activities designed to educate teachers on this subject matter; and which will be responsible for the coordination of events on a regular basis throughout the state that provide appropriate memorialization of these events in American history, including, but not limited to, their struggle for rights and dignity, freedom and liberty.

B. 1. There is hereby created in accordance with the Oklahoma Sunset Law, the Multiethnic Historical Education Commission which shall consist of fifteen (15) members, as follows:

a. four ex officio members as follows:

- (1) the Superintendent of Public Instruction, or designee,
- (2) the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society, or designee,
- (3) the Executive Director of the Indian Affairs Commission, or designee, and
- (4) the Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission, or a designee, and

b. eleven appointed members as follows:

- (1) three members, no more than two of whom shall be of the same political party, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate,

- (2) three members, no more than two of whom shall be of the same political party, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and
- (3) five members, no more than three of whom shall be of the same political party, shall be appointed by the Governor.

2. The appointed members shall be residents of this state, chosen with due regard to broad geographic representation and ethnic diversity, who have an interest in the history of multiethnic peoples in America and the contributions of those groups to American society.

3. Each appointed member of the Commission shall serve for a term of three (3) years, except that of the initial members so appointed: one member appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and two members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of one year; one member appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and two members appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of two (2) years; and one member appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one member appointed by the Governor shall serve for terms of three (3) years. Appointed members shall be eligible for reappointment. They shall serve until their successors are appointed and qualified, and the term of the successor of any incumbent shall be calculated from the expiration date of the term of that incumbent. A vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment but for the unexpired term only.

4. The members of the Commission shall not be entitled to compensation for their services, but each member shall be reimbursed for travel expenses as follows:

- a. state agency officers and employees who are members of the Commission shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties by their respective agencies in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act, and
- b. appointed members shall be reimbursed by the State Department of Education for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act.

5. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall convene an organizational meeting of the Commission prior to October 1, 2005, at which time members of the Commission shall elect a chair and vice-chair from among the members. It shall meet upon the call of the chair or of a majority of the Commission members. The presence of a majority of the members of the Commission shall be required for the conduct of official business.

6. The State Department of Education shall provide staff assistance to the Commission.

C. The State Department of Education shall:

1. Assist the Commission in marketing and distributing to educators, administrators and school districts in the state, educational information and other materials on the history of multiethnic peoples;

2. Conduct at least one teacher workshop annually on multiethnic peoples, their history in America and their contributions to American society;

3. Assist the Commission in monitoring the inclusion of such materials and curricula in the state's educational system; and

4. Consult with the Commission to determine ways it may survey, catalog, and extend multiethnic education presently being incorporated into the core curriculum content standards and taught in the state's educational system.

D. The duties and responsibilities of the Commission shall include:

1. To provide, based upon the collective knowledge and experience of its members, assistance and advice to public and nonpublic schools in this state with respect to the implementation of education awareness programs, textbooks, and educational materials concerned with ethnic minorities, their treatment as a result of prejudice and racism in America, and their contributions to the society of the United States;

2. To survey and catalog the extent and breadth of education presently being incorporated into curricula and textbooks and being taught in the school systems of the state concerning ethnic minorities, the vestiges of slavery of all kinds in this country and the contributions of multiethnic peoples to society; to inventory relevant multiethnic history memorials, exhibits and resources which should be incorporated into courses of study at educational institutions and schools throughout the state; and to assist the State Department of Education and other state and educational agencies in the development and implementation of multiethnic history education programs;

3. To act as a liaison with textbook publishers, public and nonpublic schools, public and private nonprofit resource organizations, and members of the Oklahoma State Senate and House of Representatives in order to facilitate the inclusion of the multiethnic peoples in this country in the curricula of public and nonpublic schools;

4. To compile a roster of individual volunteers who are willing to share their knowledge and experience of the history and

contributions to society of any of the multiethnic peoples in classrooms, seminars and workshops with students and teachers;

5. To coordinate events memorializing any of the multiethnic peoples that reflect their histories and will enhance student awareness of the significance of the multiethnic peoples; to also seek volunteers who are willing and able to participate in such commemorative events;

6. To prepare reports for the Governor and the Legislature regarding its findings and recommendations on facilitating the inclusion of the history of multiethnic peoples in the educational system of the state;

7. To develop, in consultation with the Department, curriculum guidelines for the teaching of information regarding multiethnic peoples so that every board of education shall incorporate the information in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary and secondary school students; and

8. To solicit, receive, and accept appropriations, gifts, and donations for the furtherance of multiethnic education in the state.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective September 1, 2005.

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