

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5174

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### As Reported by House Committee On: Education

**Title:** An act relating to encouraging instruction in the history of civil rights.

**Brief Description:** Encouraging instruction in the history of civil rights.

**Sponsors:** Senators Chase, McAuliffe, Prentice, Nelson, Kohl-Welles, Shin and Kline.

#### **Brief History:**

##### **Committee Activity:**

Education: 3/11/11, 3/22/11 [DP].

#### **Brief Summary of Bill**

- Encourages school districts to conduct a program at least annually to commemorate the history of civil rights.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Lytton, Vice Chair; Dammeier, Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Angel, Billig, Dahlquist, Fagan, Finn, Haigh, Hunt, Klippert, Kretz, Ladenburg, Liias, Maxwell, McCoy, Probst and Wilcox.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove.

**Staff:** Barbara McLain (786-7383).

#### **Background:**

Although most decisions about supplemental educational activities are made by local school districts, there are state laws that require schools to conduct educational activities on a particular topic. For example, each January 16 school districts are required to observe Temperance and Good Citizenship Day. Annually during the month of October, each school must conduct educational activities that provide awareness and understanding of disability

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history and people with disabilities. Educational activities must be presented that are suitable for the observation of Veteran's Day.

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**Summary of Bill:**

School districts are encouraged to conduct a program at least once a year to commemorate the history of civil rights, including providing an opportunity for students to learn about the personalities and convictions of heroes of the civil rights movement, and the importance of the promise of equality under the United States Constitution.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) A small group of students led by a wonderful teacher wrote a play about the historical pathway taken by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. toward justice, equality, and civil rights. They met during their lunch hour and formed a club. They were horrified and very concerned to learn that children in neighboring schools did not know about Dr. King or the historical Children's March. They have seen films and read about the historical March on Washington and the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." They have come to ask for an opportunity for more students to learn about these important events as a result of this legislation.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Chase, prime sponsor.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.