

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 571**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*David F. DeCoste*

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to a graduation requirement for U.S. founding principles.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>David F. DeCoste</i>	<i>5th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 571**

By Mr. DeCoste of Norwell, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 571) of David F. DeCoste relative to requiring students to have a satisfactory understanding of the founding principles of the United States prior to high school graduation. Education.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court  
(2021-2022)**

An Act relative to a graduation requirement for U.S. founding principles.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Section 1D of Chapter 69 of the most recent Official Edition of the  
2 Massachusetts General Laws is amended by adding the paragraph:

3 Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, no student may graduate from high school  
4 without demonstrating satisfactory understanding of the founding principles of the United States.  
5 The Board shall direct the commissioner to establish the standards and the assessment for this  
6 requirement. The standards and assessment shall be based on original source materials including  
7 but not limited to the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers,  
8 Mayflower Compact, Magna Carta, John Locke’s Second Treatise of Government, and  
9 Blackstone’s Commentaries on the Laws of England. The principles shall include the source of  
10 the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness found in the Declaration of  
11 Independence, the concept of the Rule of Law, the separation of powers not only between the  
12 three branches of government, but between the federal government and the several states, and

- 13 why such separation is important, and the concept of a constitutional republic on which the U.S.
- 14 Constitution is based. Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the standards for these
- 15 founding principles shall be based on the cultural and historical context of the founding era.