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## TESTIMONY: H. 3002 BEFORE THE K-12 LAWS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

March 9, 2021

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina, a non-partisan organization that supports good government at all levels, appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony on H.3002. The League adopts and advocates for policy positions based on carefully study of issues and consensus of its members.

The League opposes H.3002 because the bill undermines the authority of state and local school boards, discounts the expertise of social studies educators, and fails to allow for public review. By contrast, the current social studies standards were adopted via a carefully regulated process. The 2019 South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards (<https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/social-studies/standards/2019-south-carolina-social-studies-college-and-career-ready-standards/>) comprises a 142-page document that describes the process for development of the current standards as follows:

“The South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards were collaboratively written by a team of South Carolina classroom teachers, instructional coaches, district leaders, representatives of professional organizations, community members, parents, higher education faculty, and educators who specialize in English language learners, special education, career and technology education, and assessment who were selected through an application and rubric process by the South Carolina Department of Education.... The draft of South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards were posted online via the South Carolina Department of Education’s website for public review on December 5, 2017. Feedback gleaned from public review was used to guide the revision process.” The revised standards were then submitted to the State Board of Education and the Education Oversight Committee and approved by both of those groups.

The League of Women Voters has adopted a position that supports the “formulation and publication of educational policy and goals by state and local boards as a basis for selection and evaluation of content, methods and organizational patterns reflecting these goals...”

The content specified in H.3002 was not developed by appropriate groups of South Carolina experts, reviewed by citizens, or approved by state or local boards. The 30 hours per year of redundant content that H.3002 specifies would be equivalent to six weeks of social studies in each of the middle school grades and to four weeks of social studies instruction in each year of high school. The requirement to repeat 30 hours per year displaces full five days of instructional time at each grade level.

Educators may be happy to have the General Assembly fund five additional days of instruction to create a 185-day academic year; however, with the current 180-day schedule, teachers already find it challenging to manage the required content, including content previously specified by the Legislature. In addition, there is no valid reason to believe that requiring 30 hours of highly redundant content year after year would achieve better educational outcomes than the current standards. Furthermore, H.3002 fails to specify what content must be omitted at each grade level in order to substitute the topics that are identified for annual repetition.

We ask that you do not forward this bill with a favorable recommendation.

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