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Schools hurry to display flags in class

State also orders showing of U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights

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The Arizona Republic
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Arizona schools are rushing to get hundreds of American flags and copies of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights in every classroom before July.

Flag companies in North Carolina, Indiana and Florida are churning out the flags as Arizona schools race to meet the July 1 deadline to post the displays.

A state law passed last year requires a flag and copies of the Constitution and Bill of Rights in public school classrooms from seventh grade up.

The law affects colleges and universities the most because many of their classrooms lack the emblems.

The cost to Arizona colleges is less than \$100 per classroom, including labor, but school officials say it's a big task to make sure the work is done correctly and on time.

Arizona community colleges have to convert 2,500 classrooms, while the three state universities must convert more than 1,400 classrooms.

On Wednesday, legislators tweaked the law to give some wiggle room to classrooms with existing flags: As long as the flags are "visible and easily recognized" and not made of paper, a classroom can keep the flag until it needs to be replaced.

The law previously required all flags to be 2 feet by 3 feet. The change will have little impact on colleges.

Across the state, college and university officials are finalizing their flag orders and figuring out the best way to display the Constitution and the Bill of Rights:

- **University of Arizona.** UA officials expect it will cost about \$5,500 to equip 500 classrooms with flags and documents. Spokesman Johnny Cruz said he expects the flags to arrive in the next few weeks.

- **Northern Arizona University.** NAU is teaming up with UA to order their flags from a Hillsboro, N.C., company. NAU expects to spend \$18,750 to outfit 375 classrooms.

- **Arizona State University.** The ASU Foundation is picking up the school's \$40,000 price tag, which is mostly labor costs, to equip 550 classrooms.

- **Community colleges.** About 2,500 classrooms need to be outfitted at community colleges in the state, but the total cost is unclear.

Central Arizona College in Pinal County plans to display a poster in each classroom that contains both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Officials are debating whether to frame or laminate the posters, said Jim Lamb, executive officer for Central Arizona's Aravaipa campus.

"It's going to be a little bit of a pain," he said. "I don't think the cost will be as bad as we thought."

Lamb estimated the cost for flags and posters at \$9,000 to \$18,000 for 225 classrooms.

Many colleges are seeking donations to offset costs.

NAU created an incentive to lure donors. For a \$100 donation, you can get your name on a plaque near a classroom's Constitution and flag.

Workers will install the flags after the spring semester ends.

Some schools are getting free flags from a non-profit.

The Joe Foss Institute, which promotes patriotism among youths, has supplied about 6,000 flags and 4,000 copies of the Bill of Rights and Constitution to more than 600 schools looking to comply with the new law.

Most are K-12 schools, but some flags went to ASU's history department, institute President David Roberts said. Students listen to a 50-minute presentation from a veteran in exchange for the flags.

Reach the reporter at (602) 444-8072.

What do you think?

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Your comments

All of you have the "RIGHT" to voice your opinion. Who gave you that right? I have read a lot of the posting and sat here with my husband and asked myself "are these people that naive that they just don't get it".

Our fore fathers fought for the flag thus giving us the "Bill of Rights" and the "Constitution". Our Fathers fought for the flag and the freedom that it represents. My Son's are fighting for your rights as well. I don't know about you all but I fly a flag outside my home to show my pride for this country. And when I see it flying high outside my place of employment it gives me goose bumps.

Take a look at our children that are in school. What do they look up to? Some of them I'm not sure that they even care that they are there. They would rather be on the streets or playing video games or part of a gang that makes them feel wanting. Remember they are our future. Give them some value and teach them what the flag represents and not just say it is in the way of the board. And if that teacher doesn't want to display the flag in his class room, then maybe he needs to go to another country and teach because I don't want his values bestowed on my children

If putting the flag in each class room is so ridiculous then I agree that maybe this isn't the country for you. If looking at the "Bill of Rights or the Constitution" is so disturbing then maybe this isn't the country for you. We will never all agree with the politicians. If you have something to grip about then run for office or vote. Plain and simply!! but it is the flag that gave you the right to vote!!!! This is America and the flag is our symbol of our county's and freedom. What harm will it be to have then in the class rooms? Is it really the money that is being spent? Our country needs to go back to the basics and stand together. Where were you at 9-11. How long after that did you forget your neighbor?

People fly your flags high and be proud of your country put then in the class rooms to remind our students of their heritage.(Marilyn1521, April 21, 2007 08:48AM)

I value freedom and the people who believed in it so much that they risked/gave their lives for it. But lets reflect for a minute. What is freedom? Is freedom the ability to live how you wish? You cannot have freedom without responsibility. My thought is that freedom is a state of mind in which you have a choice - you can choose how you can cope or act with whatever oppression that is put upon you.

The flag is a symbol of freedom, and as such, has value. The documents are also valuable. Things of value, however, must be weighed with a benefit analysis. We must ask ourselves, "Does the value of these symbols justify the cost of placing them in each classroom?" We must also ask ourselves, "What is the purpose for placing these symbols in our classrooms?" If the purpose is to help people reflect upon our freedoms, this may be a valid reason. However, if the purpose is to maintain or create a sense of patriotism, I am not so sure that is a valid reason.

First of all, patriotism is a conditioned response from our childhood. Curriculum contains stories about the struggles of American heros, but conveniently leaves out true historical accounts of how Americans oppressed and violated the "other." Curriculum contains songs of hope, and children are taught to put their hand over their heart. Children pledge allience to something they don't understand. It is a memorized, repeated act that is associated with the concepts of goodness and pride. When the children get older, they do not question it. You go anywhere and as soon as the Star-Spangled Banner plays, turn and look at a child who was busy playing, and they will automatically respond by stopping what they are doing and they will place their hand on their chest.

Regardless, even if the purpose of hanging these items is filled with the best intent; and even if the purpose of hanging these items is honorable, one must consider cost and pressure that is placed upon already struggling educational systems. If one truly values freedom, which these symbols represent, one should allow schools to have the valued freedom to do what they see fit in each classroom. If one values

freedom, which these symbols represent, more value should be placed on supporting a system which supplies education to our children. Teachers have one of the most important jobs in our country, and yet we do not honor them through their salary. Schools do not have the supplies they need, yet we do not honor them with our tax dollars. Schools focus on AIMS tests, yet we do not honor our children by developing a curriculum that is relevant to give our children truth and tools that they will need in life.

What will become of a nation that refuses to question?

Wendy S.

(Wendy8831, April 20, 2007 07:48PM)

LOL....LOL....LOL...AS A PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER....I CAN TELL THAT I ACTUALLY TAKE THE FLAG DOWN IN MY CLASSROOM. ITS A DISTRACTION...IN THE WAY OF THE BOARD. I DONT REQUIRE THE PLEDGE EITHER. I WOULD RATHER TEACH THAN BE INTERRUPTED BY THESE SILLY LAWS. NOT ONLY WILL I NOT DISPLAY THE FLAG...I DARE THE AUTHORITIES TO MAKE ME. Come on folks....lets get real and actually do constructive things to help out education that pander to idiot laws like this.(John186, April 20, 2007 02:07PM)

I think that every classroom should have the Constitution and all of the amendments. The flag is nice too, at least in public schools.

Mandating the current Pledge goes against the First Amendment, so not all "patriotic" requirements are true to the basis of our nation.(Nate6278, April 20, 2007 12:30PM)

jane1629 - I pity the children you supposedly teach. How is it going to take more time by having a flag in your classroom? Dare away sister. You just might dare your way out of a job for insubordination. Remember, it's not YOUR classroom. It's likely a public classroom, in a public school, paid for with public dollars. And as such, it should have historical symbols of our American heritage. If it's a private school, it's probably still not YOUR classroom. It belongs to the person who owns the company.(Mary2079, April 20, 2007 11:54AM)

by the way jane1629 it is people like you that make this country bad. and you said you are a school teacher well no wonder az. schools suck. if you don't like this country then get the hell out... and let the people that love this country enjoy themselves... (3570, April 20, 2007 11:38AM)

3570,

Nobody deies that they should be in the classrooms. I think the topic here is really wether or not legislators are spending OUR MONEY sitting around worrying about silly things when there are greater issues with what goes on in our classrooms.(Phil5543, April 20, 2007 11:36AM)

this is america , flags should have never been removed for the classroom. and if you don't like it then get out of our country. the bill of rights and the constitution was writtern for our country, so we should all learn about this great country. and quit trying to please people from other countries.(3570, April 20, 2007 11:28AM)

Phil-

Oh...I agree. That is part of the acceptance of mediocrity and lowering of standards. Not everyone is going to be the top of the class. But we need to press every student to get there, while not punishing the students who are ahead.(John3850, April 20, 2007 11:10AM)

John3850,

You're so close with your solution. The 1 flaw is that teachers are no longer allowed to teach the way you were probably taught. Because you cannot "leave a child behind" the teacher is forced to slow down

the class to the pace of the slower kids while the more advanced kids get bored and disinterested. Imagine if herds of animals slowed down to the slowest member. I think if you pay the teachers more, you can recruit the best. Plain and simple.(Phil5543, April 20, 2007 10:41AM)

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Wendy S.

(Wendy8831, April 20, 2007 10:40AM)

Darrell-

Self esteem and pride are not a problem. I remember recently there was a study that kids now are the most narcissistic generation ever.

The problem is the quality of our schools. They are not competitive, their standards seem to be low, they accept mediocrity, etc. People out here seem to have no ambition or drive. Maybe it is a cultural thing, maybe it is the weather, I don't know. But coming out here from the East Coast that is definitely something I have noticed.

If the legislature increased teacher pay and linked pay to their performance as educators this would do more to improve the abysmal education system here than this stupid flag-waving nonsense.
(John3850, April 20, 2007 10:32AM)

This is a ridiculous waste of money! They can't put this money to use more effectively someplace

else???(Dee4678, April 20, 2007 10:29AM)

Darrell,

I see your point. I don't agree with what you are saying because that is not the issue at all. Parenting (or lack of) is the problem facing kids today. There are certainly teachers who care. Teachers have been strapped down with so much red tape and aren't ALLOWED to do the fun stuff anymore because lawyers have ruined our country (that's for another topic someday). "No child left behind" has made it even more difficult to treat the children as #'s. (Phil5543, April 20, 2007 10:24AM)

John: Could it be that the education is just a symptom of a bigger issue. Let's see we tell the kids, you are an animal, there is nothing that separates you from the monkey, you are going to die someday and that is the end, nothing you do is going to affect that. You live in a country full of cowards and thieves and murderers. We stole the country and killed to keep it. You have nothing to look forward to, so just live for today. Hmm could be an issue.(Darrell2274, April 20, 2007 10:14AM)

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