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Legislated Love and Loyalty: An Analysis of State Patriotism Statutes

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We will stop apologizing for America. And we will start celebrating America. We will be united by our common culture, values, and principles, becoming one American nation, one country, under one Constitution, saluting one American flag, and always saluting it. (US President Donald J. Trump, 2016)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe.
(There's never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")
(*Let America Be America Again*, Langston Hughes, 1936)

Current, passionate debate reflects a long history of discourse regarding the natures of patriotism and patriotic display. Embedded in society and its schools, patriotism is a foundational concept in community and personal identities. Addressing this ubiquitous concept, statutes in states across the United States require students to engage in the study and practice of patriotism. While the nature of patriotism and what constitutes "acceptable" demonstration of patriotism are topics of social debate, framing by state legislative statutes of the experience of patriotic exercise or education by students remains underexamined. Understanding how statutes conceptualize patriotism is fundamental to informed debate about its role in schools and society. This text analysis explores state legislative statutes regarding study and demonstration of patriotism in schools. Through textual analysis of state statutes, this study addresses the following questions:

1. Do state statutes regarding patriotism emphasize ceremony, unquestioning loyalty, critically-oriented civic engagement or a combination of these concepts?
2. Do state statutes tie patriotism to concepts of critical analysis or keep these concepts siloed?
3. To what degree do a state's patriotism statutes emphasize or challenge maintenance of societal, governmental, economic, or historical narrative status quos?

As a starting point, this investigation uses Westheimer's (2006; 2009) framework describing patriotic expression as *authoritarian* or *democratically* oriented in nature. Anchored in whether demonstration of love of country encourages or discourages questioning, debate, or protest of that country with the goal of societal improvement, this investigation explores the degrees to which statutes encourage maintenance of—or challenge to—societal, governmental, economic, cultural, and historical status quos.

Analysis focuses on explicit definitions, if available, specific required activities, or nesting of the terms "patriotic" or "patriotism" within lists of character traits as reflective of emphases on orientation toward maintenance or challenge of status quos.

Literature calls for continued study of the role of patriotism and patriotic practices in schools (Altikulaç, 2016; Busey & Walker, 2017; Martin, 2012; Schatz, et al., 1999; Westheimer, 2006). Because of the politically influenced nature of patriotism as a required topic of study, deep analysis of statute language is important to better understand legislative conceptualization of this concept and its intended interpretation by educators (Tran, et al., 2016). This investigation adds to the body of literature by analyzing state statutes' emphasis of patriotism toward uncritical loyalty or critical improvement as foundational components to the manifestation of "love of country". Findings inform the debate on the conceptualization and practice of patriotism in schools.

Discussed are implications for students, teachers, and policy makers and future research possibilities.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Societal Debate Regarding What is “Patriotic”

Recent, intense public debate regarding the action of professional athletes during the playing of the Star-Spangled Banner is only the most recent chapter in a long history of discourse regarding patriotism in society. Patriotism as a concept and a practice have long histories in American schools (Martin, 2012; Mirga, 1998; Mowry, 1888). Reflecting the desire to instill the love of country in students, the State of Nebraska requires that:

Every school board shall, at the beginning of each school year, appoint from its members a committee of three, to be known as the committee on Americanism. The committee on Americanism shall [assure]:

....(4)...at least three periods per week shall be set aside to be devoted to the teaching of American history from approved textbooks, taught in such a way as to make the course interesting and attractive and to develop a love of country. (American citizenship; committee on Americanism; patriotic exercises, 2011)

Layered with the concept of patriotism, competing historical narratives encourage students to either embrace a hegemonic, Eurocentric history or challenge that history with a wider variety of narratives and perspectives. Promoting teaching that addresses: “Americans[‘] yearn[ing] for timeless stories and noble heroes that inspire them to be good, brave, diligent, daring, generous, honest, and compassionate”, (The President’s Advisory 1776 Commission 2021, p. 18), the 1776 Commission ties patriotism to a love of these “timeless stories”:

This includes restoring patriotic education that teaches the truth about America. That doesn’t mean ignoring the faults in our past, but rather viewing our history clearly and wholly, with reverence and love.Above all, we must stand up to the petty tyrants in every sphere who demand that we speak only of America’s sins while denying her greatness. (The President’s Advisory 1776 Commission 2021, p. 16)

Countering this connection between love, loyalty, and patriotism to a narrow, hegemonic narrative, the New York Times’ 1619 Project (2019) challenges students to critique history with the goal of future advancement:

American history cannot be told truthfully without a clear vision of how inhuman and immoral the treatment of black Americans has been. By acknowledging this shameful history, by trying hard to understand its powerful influence on the present, perhaps we can prepare ourselves for a more just future. (The 1619 Project, 2019).

Nested within each of these competing historical narratives is an implicit connection between patriotism and history. For the 1776 Commission, patriotism is, in part, an adherence to a narrative of heroism, great deeds, and America’s struggle to grow in territory and in liberty for the individual (The President’s Advisory 1776 Commission 2021). For the 1619 Project, patriotism

is connected to critique to better understand a wide range of voices, with the goal of being more informed as society works to improve equality for all groups of people, (The 1619 Project, 2019).

Defining “Love of Country”

What often remains poorly described when citing patriotism or “love of country” is the definition and subsequent practice of this concept. While often defined simply as love of country, stopping at this definition of patriotism without further operationalization, explanation, analysis, or critique demonstrates a shallow and blind type of patriotism (Busey & Walker, 2017; Hand & Pearce, 2009; Kodelja, 2011; Martin, 2012; Schatz et al., 1999; Westheimer, 2009).

The broadest and most common definitions frame patriotism as “love of one’s country” (Hand, 2011) and “loyalty toward a group and the land it occupies” (Bar-Tal & Staub, 1997). Working to operationalize these broad conceptualizations, frameworks articulating the manifestation of patriotism often describe it through dichotomously oriented lenses of authoritarian patriotism (bad/shallow patriotism) or democratic patriotism (good/deep patriotism) (Altıkulaç, 2016; Schatz et al., 1999; Staub, 1997; Westheimer, 2006; 2009). *Authoritarian patriotism*, is patriotism described as deep or blind adherence to specific individuals, groups, or social and governmental structures (Busey & Walker, 2017; Westheimer, 2006, 2009, 2014). Demonstrated through actions that do not provide opportunity to question—or actively discourage the questioning of—the leaders, history, policy, or motives of a country, the defining element of authoritarian patriotism is lack of critique of leaders, governmental institutions, or historical narratives. Authoritarian patriotism works to maintain historical, cultural, economic, and political status quos through narratives that a country’s history, system of government, majority culture, or broad value system are superior or above reproach. To maintain status quos, authoritarian patriotism emphasizes a country’s achievements without balanced analysis of a country’s shortcomings in either historic or contemporary contexts. Authoritarian patriotism views questioning, critique, and debate as disruptive, dangerous, and as demonstrating a dislike and disloyalty to a country.

On the opposite side of the ideological dichotomy, *democratic patriotism*, is a process in which patriotic citizens engage in critique, political action, and social change as a demonstration of a commitment to their country and its purported ideals (Becker, 2018; Busey & Walker, 2017; Westheimer, 2014). Activities such as critiquing established laws, authorities, customs, and social norms, protesting to catalyze social justice reform, and engaging in dialogue to directly address the shortcomings of a country or society are associated with democratic patriotism. Often described as not patriotic, but as divisive, agitative, entitled, and counterproductive, these activities challenge legislative, societal, cultural, and economic status quos. With the goal of societal improvement, democratic patriotism balances commitment to idealistic values such as freedom and democracy with critical dialogue needed to improve upon past and current societal issues. Demonstration of love of—and commitment to—a country, democratic patriotism manifests through work to improve upon faults.

Both authoritarian and democratic patriotism frame “love of country” as an ongoing commitment to an individual’s country. A fundamental difference, however, is how each approach demonstrates this commitment. The current study applies an essential element—questioning of status quos—of the authoritarian/democratic dichotomy (Westheimer, 2006; 2009) to investigate the degree to which state statutes frame patriotism as a concept of maintenance of—or challenge to—political, historical, economic, or broad cultural status quos. Moving from this dichotomy

toward a categorical approach, this study explores key words, concepts, and actions associated with patriotism in state statutes to better understand the many conceptualizations of patriotism intended for K-12 classrooms.

State statutes form the legally mandated basis of patriotism education and patriotic exercises, and through them a definition and conceptualization of practices of patriotism. They are, however, just one layer in concept and pedagogical definition and interpretation that ultimately impacts student experience. Also layered into the responsibilities of schools, teachers, and students are academic standards that further inform these definitions and practices. Academic standards in the social studies work to promote critical analysis and viewing civic issues from multiple perspectives (NCSS, 2013). Shifting focus from curricular content to concepts and skills, the College, Career, & Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies framework, for example, encourages state and local decision-making regarding specific teaching and learning content (NCSS, 2013). Employing this framework teachers assist students in crafting essential questions, identify and analyze sources of information, and construct and defend their perspectives, (Hawkman & Van Horn, 2019; NCSS 2013).

Though this deeply analytical approach to understanding the nuances of patriotism may work to bring together state statutes with academic standards, questioned is whether PK-12 students widely experience deep levels of historical thinking in K-12 classrooms, in comparison to memorization and lower-order skills (Maloy & Laroche, 2017; Ozmen, 2015; Russell, 2010; van Hover & Yeager, 2003; Wansink et al., 2016). Reflecting the lack of strong connection between patriotism and deep, critical analysis necessary to improve society, academic learning standards from Michigan and Massachusetts, for example, represent shallow approaches to a complex subject. Michigan's state standard for Grade 2, for example connects patriotism to the Pledge of Allegiance, but does not connect patriotism or civic action:

C2 Democratic Values and Constitutional Principles of American Government

....2 – C2.0.2 Describe how the Pledge of Allegiance reflects the Democratic Value of patriotism. Examples may include but are not limited to: promoting unity and patriotism. (Michigan Department of Education, 2019, p. 23)

Similarly, Massachusetts emphasizes connection between patriotism and knowledge of cultural statements such as music and “words, mottoes, and phrases”, but no connection between patriotism and civic engagement:

Topic 3. History: unity and diversity in the United States [1.T3]

....2. Demonstrate understanding of the ways people show pride in belonging to the United States by recognizing and explaining the meaning of unifying symbols, phrases, and songs:

- a. national symbols (e.g., the United States flag, the bald eagle, the White House, and the Statue of Liberty)
- b. words, mottoes, phrases, and sentences associated with the United States (e.g., “U.S.” or “America” standing for United States of America, the Latin motto, “E pluribus unum,” on coins, currency, and the seal of the United States, translated as “Out of Many, One,” and the” Pledge of Allegiance”)
- c. the melodies and lyrics of patriotic songs (e.g., “America the Beautiful,” “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee,” “God Bless America,” and “The Star-Spangled Banner”) (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2018, p. 41)

Applied to patriotism, state learning standards emphasizing critical analysis and dialogue may provide balance to patriotism statutes that do not emphasize inquiry.

While research focuses on how patriotic actions, such as the stating of the Pledge of Allegiance, are interpreted by teachers and students, (Busey & Walker, 2017; Hand & Pearce, 2009; Martin, 2008; Martin, 2011; Martin, 2012; Schatz et al., 1999; Tonga & Aksoy, 2014; Wellenreiter, 2020; Westheimer, 2006, 2009), little work addresses how state statutes conceptualize or define patriotism or patriotic actions. Because, by definition, statutes require or encourage activity in schools, deep analysis of their contents, intents, and implications are imperative when considering conceptualization and experience of patriotism in schools and society.

Impacting how students experience patriotism in their classroom and school practices, multiple actors interpret and employ concepts and practices of patriotism. State learning standards, state boards of education, school district policies, school building administrators, and classroom teachers serve as interpreters of state statutes. Interpreted by these various actors, exploring how statutes conceptualize patriotism and patriotic practices grows understanding of a foundationally orienting element informing these actors' conceptualizations and practices of patriotism.

A literature review reveals little analysis of how state statutes define or conceptualize patriotism. Though research, policy, and classroom teacher focus may be on academic standards such as the C3 (NCSS, 2013) wider awareness, analysis, and critique of state statutes is important because of their legislated mandate nature. Beyond the scope of this investigation, exploration into administrator and teacher awareness, interpretation, and application of statutes is important in understanding implementation of policy in classroom practice. Because of scant research into state statute interpretation, this investigation serves as a starting point for exploration of the relationship between state mandated curriculum—through statutes requiring specific topics of study—and its interpretation in classrooms. This analysis adds to the scholarship by exploring the framing of this ubiquitous concept by state statutes across the United States. Needed is an understanding of how state statutes approach patriotism to better understand its teaching in schools and the student patriotic experience.

Method

This qualitative text analysis investigates state statutes that focus on patriotism or patriotic exercises. Serving as a starting point is Westheimer's (2006, 2009) conceptualization of (non) questioning of status quos as foundational to both *authoritarian patriotism* and *democratic patriotism*. Acknowledging need for flexibility of coding and thematising, balanced was the use of a priori codes with new codes and themes that emerged from the data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This balance between preexisting frameworks and emerging themes; "...compliment the research questions by allowing the tenets of social phenomenology to be integral to the process of deductive thematic analysis while allowing for themes to emerge directly from the data using inductive coding" (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006, p. 4).

Limited to state statutes, this study does not analyze state board of education guidance or directives or state learning standards that may also address patriotism. Different in genesis, scope, and legislative processes from state learning standards, statutes are often more specific in content and allow for less interpretive flexibility for educators. Analyzed were statutes employing the words "patriotism", "patriotic", "love of country", or "loyalty to the United States" and statutes

that required or allowed recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, a commonly understood patriotic process.

Collected from Thomson Reuters Westlaw databases and publicly available state government websites, state statutes serve as data (see Table 1 for statutes analyzed). Keyword and subject-word based searches identified statutes that address patriotism. Initial coding addressed explicit definitions of patriotism, specific texts (Pledge of Allegiance, Star-Spangled Banner,) or practices (ex. proper flag-folding), and concepts that reflect either adherence to principals or critique of American events, people, processes, or laws.

Compared to Westheimer's (2006, 2009) conceptual framework of *authoritarian* or *democratic patriotism*, analysis of statutes focused on their acknowledgement, reference, or avoidance of current, historical, economic, and social faults of the United States and social justice and humanitarian concepts. Table 2 displays analysis questions used to begin thematising statutes. Analysis resulted in most statutes demonstrating characteristics of both authoritarian and democratic patriotism. Working from a dichotomic framework to one which reflected acknowledgement that statutes had characteristics of both authoritarian and democratic characteristics, further coding and analysis of keywords resulted in the creation of four categories describing how statutes conceptualize patriotism and its relationship to maintenance or challenge to status quos; *active maintenance of status quos*, *ceremonial maintenance of status quos*, *shallow critique of status quos*, and *less-shallow critique of status quos*.

In the first stage of analysis after this coding, grouping of statutes was determined by specific patriotism education requirements, requiring patriotic exercises such as the Pledge of Allegiance, and the embedding of the traditionally-patriotic-viewed texts of the Pledge of Allegiance and Star-Spangled Banner with required historical and political texts such as the Mayflower Compact, the US Constitution, and the Gettysburg Address.

In the second stage of analysis, concepts included in statutes referencing patriotism, patriotic activities such as flag-folding and love of country were thematized based off their implied support or challenge of status quos. For example, categorized as actively maintaining status quos were concepts such as manners, loyalty, obedience, morals, or terms that implied American greatness, uniqueness, or endowment by a creator, when not included in lists with terms implying open-mindedness, tolerance, debate, dissent, or critique. Categorized as *active maintenance of status quos* statutes were statutes requiring patriotism education or patriotic exercises that also required teaching of active maintenance characteristics, without including concepts that challenge status quos,

Categorized as *ceremonial maintenance of status quos* statutes were statutes that required patriotism education or patriotic ceremonies, such as recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, without connection to character traits. Included in this category are statutes requiring or allowing recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance as a proxy for patriotism education. Isolated from concepts such as civic-mindedness, integrity, compassion, debate, tolerance, morals, manners, or integrity, these statutes conceptualize patriotism as a ceremonial function, rather than as a character trait associated with other traits. These statutes encourage association of patriotism with maintenance of status quos because the historical nature of the ceremonial approaches required or encouraged discourage dissent, questioning, and non-participation. For example, while it is generally allowed for individuals to remain silent during recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, it is not widely accepted as a time for student dissent or protest.

Categorized as *shallow critique of status quos* statutes were statutes including terms and concepts implying passive compassion, tolerance, respect for others, citizenship, cooperation, and

courage, when not included in lists with terms that focus on active engagement with societal flaws. Tolerance, for example, may imply avoidance of individuals, situations, or concepts with which a person disagrees. Alone, this concept acknowledges difference, but does not encourage participation in discussion, debate or work to improve upon societal flaws.

Categorized as *less-shallow critique of status quos* statutes were statutes including terms and concepts acknowledging societal faults and or promoting socially-just actions. Included in these statutes were terms such as; “human rights issues”, “civic responsibility”, “community and national welfare”, “community service”, “interracial and multicultural understanding”, “universal benevolence”, and “environmental safety”. Also included in this category were statutes that placed the Pledge of Allegiance or Star-Spangled Banner in lists of required reading that also included counternarrative texts. Focused on issues such as slavery, intolerance, or relationships between the US government and Native Americans, these texts demonstrated acknowledgement of societal and historical flaws.

No category described as *deep critique of status quos* exists because no statute requiring patriotism or patriotic exercise included terms implying or requiring questioning, challenging, debate, protest, dialogue, or dissent. Though state standards, local school boards, and teachers may certainly encourage these skills, analysis of these statute interpreters was beyond the scope of the current investigation.

Results

Nineteen states specifically require or allow teaching of patriotism as a concept (see Table 3). Not requiring the teaching of patriotism as a distinct or specific concept, an additional eleven states require “patriotic observances or exercises” in schools separate from recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Seventeen states do not have statutory language requiring patriotism or patriotic education but do require or allow recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Whether or not they require patriotism education or patriotic exercises, forty-five states have legislative statutes requiring or allowing recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in K-12 schools. Nebraska does not have a statute, but has administrative code requiring schools to set aside time for recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance (Nebraska Administrative Code, Title 92, Ch. 10 § 003.12).

Not found were statutes regarding patriotism, patriotic exercises, or the Pledge of Allegiance for the states of Hawaii, Iowa, and Wyoming, or the District of Columbia.

The nineteen states that explicitly require or allow the teaching of patriotism as a concept approach it in one of two ways. Seventeen states frame patriotism as a character trait, (AL, AR, CA, FL, GA, ME, MS, MT, NE, NY, OH, PA, SC, SD, VT, VA, WA), while 2 states approach patriotism education as a ceremonial function to be included with practices such as flag folding (IL, MN).

No state statute language specifically required unquestioning loyalty to the United States or blind or unconditional support for leaders. Thus, if employing a strict interpretation of Westheimer’s (2006; 2009) framing, no state statutes were, by definition, authoritarian. More subtly, however, several states statutes emphasize the superiority of the United States (Nebraska), loyalty without mention of societal critique or dialogue, (Connecticut), and “the blessed and romantic traditions of our glorious history” without critique of societal flaws (Texas).

Similarly, no state specifically defined patriotism as including acts of civil critique for societal improvement, a fundamental element of Westheimer’s (2006; 2009) democratic patriotism. Indeed, though over 120 character traits and concepts were identified throughout the

statutes that also included patriotism, the terms “dialogue”, “critique”, “analysis”, “questioning” and “protest” were not present. Several state statutes did, however, nest patriotism with concepts of social justice (California), community-mindedness (Virginia), and human rights issues (New York).

Dichotomic classification of state patriotism statutes as either authoritarian or democratic in nature oversimplify statutes that include aspects of both. Though strict classification in this dichotomic framework is not appropriate, identified were four categories framing patriotism’s approach to historic, cultural, economic, and political status quos: *Active maintenance of status quos*; *ceremonial maintenance of status quos*; *shallow critique of status quos*; and *less-shallow critique of status quos*. See Table 4 for categories and example statutes.

Active Maintenance of Status Quos

Statutes from eight states frame patriotism as an active maintenance of status quos, placing emphasis on patriotism as an act of loyalty to history, study of American “heritage” and heroes, and study of documents of the founding fathers without requiring counternarrative works. Emphasized are concepts such as obedience to law, morals, cheerfulness, and respect, without corresponding concepts of justice, human rights, or advocacy for change. Nested with concepts that emphasize conformity, societal calmness, or heroic history, patriotism is tightly associated with heritage without meaningful balance with acknowledgement of societal or historic faults. Keyword emphasis includes concepts such as; “love”, “loyalty”, obedience”, “heritage”, “morals”, “cleanliness”, “established facts” and “courtesy”. Sample statutes come from Arkansas, Connecticut, Mississippi, and Nebraska.

Though not requiring teaching of patriotism as a specific or separate concept, statutes from Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland, and Texas emphasize acts of loyalty or nest love of country within American heritage without acknowledging societal flaws or including democratic principles such as debate, dissent, or protest. Though academic standards of these states may encourage critique, discussion, and protest of societal faults, these states’ statutes do not connect these actions with the study and manifestation of patriotism.

Ceremonial Maintenance of Status Quos

State statutes in twenty-two states frame patriotism as ceremonial maintenance of status quos, isolating patriotic exercises from character traits or concepts of critique, debate, or protest. Ceremonial maintenance statutes do not overtly nest patriotism as a character trait with other concepts such as honesty, civic mindedness, respect, tolerance, or morality. Keyword emphasis include; “Pledge”, “recitation”, “founding documents”, “flags”, without strong link to character traits. Manifested through ceremonies such as stating the Pledge of Allegiance, recitation of founding documents, and flag folding, patriotism is isolated from acknowledgement of need for societal improvement and character traits or actions that work toward rectifying societal faults. Through this isolation, tacit emphasis is on maintenance of the status quos because there is no connection between patriotism as a concept and acknowledgement of societal flaws.

Statutes nesting the Pledge of Allegiance and the Star-Spangled Banner with founding documents, presidential proclamations and speeches, but do not include counternarrative works frame patriotism as a maintenance of status quos. Documents such as the Mayflower Compact, the Gettysburg Address, the Declaration of Independence, and the US Constitution, listed with the

Pledge of Allegiance and Star-Spangled Banner, without counternarrative works by minority, disenfranchised, or oppressed people create imbalance between the lofty goals of liberty and democracy and historical and contemporary societal flaws.

Shallow Critique of Status Quos

Statutes of nine states frame patriotism as a love of country with tacit acknowledgement of need for critique, nesting patriotism with vague acknowledgement of social justice concepts. These statutes place patriotism with concepts such as compassion, generosity, and nondiscrimination, but do not mention specific examples and do not emphasize questioning, dissent, protest, or actions to improve upon societal flaws. Keyword emphases include; “compassion”, “fairness”, “justice”, “nondiscrimination”, “respect for others” and “tolerance”.

Shallow critique of status quos statutes nest patriotism with concern for others, but do not emphasize action. A legislated character trait to be taught in schools, “tolerance”, for example, like “civic-mindedness”, “respect for others”, and “respect for the contributions of minority groups”, does not require action. Indeed, manifestation of these traits may occur without actual civic engagement or dialogue. Tacitly acknowledging difference, these statutes nest patriotism within passive traits.

Less-Shallow Critique of Status Quos

Statutes of eight states weave patriotism with concepts that acknowledge societal faults and encourage work toward social justice concepts. By tying it with active social justice concepts, these statutes frame patriotism as a love of country that manifests through critique and work toward social justice. Different in specificity and passivity versus action from shallow critique, these statutes include patriotism with concepts that emphasize acknowledgement of multiple, specific societal shortcomings. Examples include human rights issues, slavery, mental health, and economic issues. Keyword emphases include; “human rights”, “interests of others”, “multicultural”, and “human dignity”.

Connection of patriotism to acknowledgement of flaws or to active social justice manifests in one of two ways. First are statutes placing patriotism into a list of character traits that include acknowledgement of societal flaws, conceptually tying the concepts together. “Principles of nondiscrimination and freedom from prejudice”, “equal rights of man”, and “humanity and a universal benevolence”, in addition to community service and “human dignity”, encourage a view of patriotism as a concept that works toward equality, justice, and improvement of society, rather than a maintenance of a status quos, as an isolated ceremonial process, or a passive acknowledgement of differences.

Statutes framing patriotism as a less-shallow critique of the status quo may also place the Pledge of Allegiance and the Constitution next to counternarrative works such as “*What to a Slave is the Fourth of July*” by Frederick Douglass, “*Appeal*” by David Walker, and Chief Seattle’s letter to the United States government in 1852 (Indiana Code IC 20-30-3-4 Sec. 3). These statutes encourage juxtaposition of these documents, promoting patriotism as work toward improvement through analysis of narratives and counternarratives.

Discussion

Nuanced, complex, and often conceptually self-contradictory, statutes frame patriotism in ways that do not easily fit into a dichotomic framing of patriotism education as either authoritative or democratically oriented. Placed into four categories reflecting the degree to which they promoted patriotism as supporting or challenging status quos, statutes demonstrated varying degrees of discouraging or encouraging questioning, dissent, and protest.

Statutes emphasizing patriotism as active maintenance of status quos encourage students to view manifestation of patriotism as learning about heroic deeds, declaring loyalty, and gaining experience in dominant historical, cultural, and social narratives. Combined with patriotic exercises such as recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, active maintenance statutes present patriotism as a celebration of successes without acknowledgement of, or work toward improving, societal flaws. Though academic learning standards and teacher initiative may work to balance idealistic heritage with historical challenges, statutes do not reflect this balance. Though not specifically requiring unquestioning loyalty, active maintenance of status quo statutes do not acknowledge histories, economic or political policies, or cultural narratives in need of questioning. Manifesting love of country through loyalty and the learning of dominant narratives, these statutes frame patriotism as an active maintenance of status quos.

Statutes emphasizing patriotism as ceremonial maintenance of status quos isolate patriotism from concepts related to social justice. More decontextualized and rote when compared to other approaches to patriotism, ceremonial framing of patriotism emphasizes isolated processes not closely related to processes needed to sustain democracy. Strongly emphasizing ceremony, these statutes maintain status quos because they do not balance ceremonial action with civic action for improvement. Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, flag folding, singing of the Star-Spangled Banner, without encouragement of other civic processes such as discussion, debate, petition, or protest creates a conceptual gap between patriotic activities and democratic activities. Manifesting love of country through ceremony, these statutes frame patriotism as a ceremonial maintenance of status quos.

Statutes emphasizing patriotism as a shallow critique of status quos acknowledge historic, economic, cultural, and political differences, but tie patriotism to passive civic concepts. Tolerance, respect for others, and civic-mindedness, imply variations in history, culture, and economic status, but stop short at implying proactive engagement with societal flaws. Tying patriotism to these concepts, statutes that frame patriotism with shallow critique of status quos acknowledge differences, but do not strongly encourage proactive work to understand these differences or work toward societal improvement. Manifesting love of country through passive civic-mindedness concepts, these statutes frame patriotism as tied to shallow critique of status quos.

Statutes emphasizing patriotism as a less-shallow critique of status quos nest patriotism with acknowledgement of societal faults and encourage more proactive approaches to these faults than Shallow critique of status quos statutes, but stop short of strongly tying patriotism to critique, discussion, dissent, and protest. While work toward community improvement, multicultural understanding, the promotion of harmonious relations, and humane treatment of animals imply active engagement, these statutes do not closely tie patriotism with debate or protest. Manifesting love of country through active work to grow understanding across cultures, histories, and economics, but stopping short of encouraging debate, dissent, and protest, these statutes frame patriotism as tied to less-shallow critique of status quos.

Limitations

Limited to state statute language mentioning, referencing, or alluding to patriotism, this analysis examines only one layer of conceptual or curricular interpretation. Not considered were additional requirements by state boards of education, school district or school building policies or procedures, or teacher interpretation of, or fidelity to, these layers of mandates, recommendations, or cultural expectations. Though state statutes may be clear in their requirements, the ultimate experience of students regarding these statutes is beyond the scope of this analysis. Needed to gain deeper insight into the manifestation of patriotism in the classroom is research to explore each of the layers of interpretation, policy, and practice.

Relatedly, teachers may deeply engrain dialogue, debate, and action into their students' experience with patriotism. Responding to statutes that require analysis of founding documents such as the Constitution, teachers may focus on working to "...form a more perfect union" through patriotic protest and civic action that acknowledges deep societal flaws. Certainly teachers throughout the United States are encouraging their students to critically analyze their own manifestations of patriotism as a response to state statutes requiring patriotic education. This current analysis only focuses on one step in a multistep process of concept and curricular interpretation.

The strength of conceptual ties between patriotism and character traits in statutes is fundamentally arbitrary. Whether "tolerance" or "respect for differences", for example, reflect acknowledgement of societal faults or encourage action to improve society is context-based. Is the act of tolerance passive or does it encourage engagement or critique? How is respect for differences employed in patriotic critique and work to improve society? Though the current analysis serves as a starting point, needed is exploration of interplay between these concepts and their relationship to authoritarian or democratic patriotism to further understand how they blend together to support or challenge various status quos.

Implications

Ultimately endorsed through elections processes, state statutes broadly reflect state societies' conceptualizations of patriotism. Though special interest groups, lobbyists, and other players have roles in statute wording, elected representatives must vote to support or reject language that encourages or dissuades specific conceptualizations of patriotism. Throughout the 50 state and D.C. statutes analyzed, patriotism was not closely associated with fundamental aspects of democratic patriotism—questioning, dissent, and other deliberative processes (Schatz et al., 1999; Staub, 1997; Westheimer 2006, 2009).

In current social and political climates that dichotomize actions such as kneeling during the Star-Spangled Banner or refusal to recite the Pledge of Allegiance as either deeply unpatriotic or deeply patriotic, how statutes conceptualize the concept is relevant to students and their teachers. Complicating further the current debate is the layering of patriotism into competing history narratives, promulgating patriotism as adherence to "traditional" heroic narratives or as critique with the goal of improvement (The 1619 Project, 2019; The President's Advisory 1776 Commission, 2021). Future research may explore relationships between patriotism-oriented state legislative mandates, state academic standards, and competing curriculums such as these.

Forming a basis of societal expectation, how a statute conceptualizes patriotism influences how it is, or is not, manifested in classrooms. If a statute siloes patriotism as a ceremonial action to take place daily or weekly, for example, students may conceptualize patriotism as a rote, dis-integrated concept that does not require deep reflection. Statutes that promote heroic narratives and (often vaguely defined) American ideals as patriotic, students may experience hegemonic ideologies without opportunities for balanced critiques. Students in states that have statutes requiring exploration of counternarratives or education in character traits acknowledging societal flaws may experience patriotism as an action-oriented, social justice concept.

Teachers and their students would do well to explore the statutes of their state. Indeed, in states requiring patriotism education, classroom analysis of the statute is a natural starting point. Beyond informing students of the existence of mandated topics of study, analysis of patriotism statutes serves as a basis for exploration of patriotism as a concept. Further classroom exploration of patriotism by including statutes from multiple states may deepen students' perspectives and understanding of this complex and often debated concept.

Limited in scope, this analysis addresses only one layer of curricular interpretation. Needed is further exploration of state standards, school district policies and procedures, and teacher interpretation of, and fidelity to, statutes, standards, and practices. Though statutes require "teaching and learning" of these concepts, to what depth teachers ultimately engage in this requirement is worthy of exploration. Indeed, many states do not have mechanisms to hold schools and teachers accountable to their statutes.

Conclusion

Though most states require the teaching of or experience in patriotism, statutes generally frame patriotism as ceremonial or as a character trait taught alongside other traits of "good" citizenship. The traits of good citizenship focus on cooperation, loyalty, "niceness" and even cheerfulness, tolerance, and open-mindedness. Not mentioned in any statute that also requires patriotism are analysis, critique, evaluation, or protest of societal faults as a demonstration of love and commitment to a country or a society. By contrast, nested within lists of character traits that also include patriotism are patience, punctuality, courtesy, and cleanliness.

Though some statutes nest patriotism with character traits tacitly acknowledge differences, (tolerance, open-mindedness, respect for others), they stop short of closely weaving patriotism with active social justice concepts such as discussion, debate, protest, or questioning of societal flaws. State statutes tacitly acknowledging societal flaws do so in general ways that minimize active critique and evaluation of the status quos. Concepts such as tolerance and respect for differences do not themselves imply a critique of societal faults or a challenge of the status quos, but rather encourage societal placation through passive ideologies that have little active elements. Rare are state statutes that nest the concept of patriotism with active analysis of counternarratives or traits or actions that demonstrate commitment to country through deep, proactive dialogue, analysis, or civic action. No statute located strongly ties patriotism with concepts of proactive, democratic work for societal improvement.

Demonstrated in many ways, healthy love of country balances patriotic exercises with proactive analysis, critique, and evaluation, to create engaged, positive patriotism. Student participation in patriotic exercises, without experience in dialogue and engagement in society leads to shallow patriotism that does not encourage or allow for democratic process. Critique and debate without experience in patriotic exercise does not provide an individual with cultural or historical

context in which to consider and debate the benefits and risks of love and loyalty to one's country. To create this balance, needed are strong, apparent connections between patriotic exercises mandated by states through their statutes with opportunities to deeply explore, analyze, and critique the exercises themselves.

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Table 1: State statutes regarding patriotism education in schools

State	Statute
Alabama	Ala.Code 1975 § 16-6B-2. Core curriculum. Ala.Code 1975 § 16-35-3. Duties generally.
Alaska	AS § 14.03.130. Display of flags and Pledge of Allegiance
Arizona	Arizona Revised Statutes Title 15. Education § 15-710. Instruction in state and federal constitutions, American institutions and history of Arizona Arizona Revised Statutes Title 15. Education §15-717. American history and heritage
Arkansas	A.C.A. § 6-16-111. Morals, manners, patriotism, and integrity A.C.A. § 6-16-122 American heritage
California	Cal.Educ.Code § 233.5. Morals, etc. instruction Cal.Educ.Code § 51530. Prohibition and definition Cal.Educ.Code § 52720. Daily performance of patriotic exercises in public schools Cal.Educ.Code § 52730. Public school instruction promoting importance of Pledge of Allegiance Cal.Educ.Code § 60200.5. Instructional materials; objectives
Colorado	C.R.S.A. § 22-1-106. Information as to honor and use of flag
Connecticut	Connecticut C.G.S.A. § 10-29a. Certain days, weeks and months to be proclaimed by Governor. Distribution and number of proclamations
Delaware	Delaware Code Title 14 – Education Chapter 41. General Regulatory Provisions. § 4105. Salute to flag and pledge of allegiance. § 4106 Failure to require salute and pledge; penalty.
District of Columbia	No Statutes Found
Florida	F.S.A. § 1003.42 Required instruction F.S.A § 1003.44. Patriotic programs; rules
Georgia	Ga Code Ann., § 20-2-145 Comprehensive character education program Ga. Code Ann., § 20-2-1021. Display of historic documents
Hawaii	No Statutes Found
Idaho	I.C. § 33-1602. United States constitution--National flag and colors--National anthem--“America”--Citizenship--Civics test
Illinois	IL Statutes Chapter 105. Schools §27-3. Patriotism and principles of representative government--Proper use of flag--Method of voting--Pledge of Allegiance
Indiana	IC 20-30-3-3 National anthem

State	Statute
	IC 20-30-3-4 United States flag
	IC 20-30-5-3 Protected writings, documents, and records of American history or heritage
	IC 20-51-4-1 Autonomy and duties of eligible schools; reading, posting, and maintenance of, certain writings, documents, or records; content based censorship; teaching violent overthrow of United States government; mandatory curriculum
Iowa	No Statutes Found
Kansas	K.S.A. 72-9928 Formerly cited as KS ST 72-5308 Patriotic exercises; flag etiquette; observation of holidays
Kentucky	KRS § 158.175 Recitation of Lord's prayer and Pledge of Allegiance; instruction in proper respect for and display of the flag; observation of moment of silence or reflection KRS § 158.195 Display of national motto in public elementary and secondary schools; reading and posting in public schools of texts and documents on American history and heritage
Louisiana	LSA-R.S. 17:262. Flag and patriotic customs of the United States; required instruction LSA-R.S. 17:2117. Reading and posting of certain writings, documents, and records; prohibition; limitations; dissemination to local school systems
Maine	20 M.R.S.A. § 1221. Teaching of virtue and morality
Maryland	MD Code, Education, § 7-105. Patriotic observances
Massachusetts	M.G.L.A. 71 § 32. Observance of Memorial Day M.G.L.A. 71 § 69. Display of national flags; Pledge of Allegiance; penalty for violation
Michigan	M.C.L.A. 380.1347a. Recitation of Pledge of Allegiance
Minnesota	M.S.A. § 120A.42 Conduct of school on certain holidays M.S.A. § 120B.235. American heritage education M.S.A. § 121A.11. United States flag
Mississippi	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-6. United States flag; classroom display; etiquette instruction; recitation of Pledge of Allegiance Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-5. Displaying and studying of flags
Missouri	V.A.M.S. 161.104. State board to adopt rules on instruction of etiquette concerning the U.S. flag
Montana	MCA 20-4-301. Duties of teacher--nonpayment for failure to comply
Nebraska	Neb.Rev.St. § 79-8,108. Teachers and employees; pledge; form

State	Statute
	Neb .Rev. St. § 79-724. American citizenship; committee on Americanism; created; duties; required instruction; patriotic exercises; duties of officers
Nevada	N.R.S. 389.014 Formerly cited as NRS 389.040. Patriotic observance
New Hampshire	N.H. Rev. Stat. § 189:18. Patriotic Exercises. N.H. Rev. Stat. § 194:15-c. New Hampshire School Patriot Act.
New Jersey	N.J.S.A. 18A:35-3. Course in civics, geography and history of New Jersey N.J.S.A. 18A:36-13. Patriotic exercises preceding holidays N.J.S.A. 18A:36-3. Display of and salute to flag; Pledge of Allegiance
New Mexico	N. M. S. A. 1978, § 22-5-4.5. Pledge of Allegiance
New York	The Laws of New York. Consolidated Laws. Education. Title 1: General Provisions. Article 1 Short title and Definitions.§ 801-A. Courses of instruction in patriotism and citizenship and in certain historic documents The Laws of New York. Consolidated Laws. Education. Title 1: General Provisions. Article 1 Short title and Definitions.§ 802. Instruction relating to the flag; holidays
North Carolina	N.C.G.S.A. § 116-69.1 Display of the United States and North Carolina flags and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
North Dakota	NDCC Const. Art. 8, § 1 Section 1. NDCC, § 15.1-19-03.1. Recitation of prayer--Period of silence--Pledge of Allegiance
Ohio	R.C. § 3313.601. Moment of silence; prohibitions R.C. § 3313.602 Policy on oral recitation of Pledge of Allegiance to flag; emphasis on democratic and ethical principles; Veterans' Day observance R.C. § 3313.605. Community service education
Oklahoma	70 Okl. St. Ann. § 24-106. United States flag--Display--Instruction in history and etiquette--Pledge of Allegiance 70 Okl. St. Ann. § 24-106.1. Classroom display--Motto of the United States of America
Oregon	O.R.S. § 336.067 Formerly cited as OR ST § 336.240. Ethics and morality instruction O.R.S.§339.875 Procurement, display and salute of flags.
Pennsylvania	24 P.S. § 7-771. Display of United States flag; development of patriotism 24 P.S. § 15-1502-E. Character education program
Rhode Island	Gen. Laws 1956, § 16-22-11. Pledge of Allegiance
South Carolina	Code 1976 § 53-3-150. Patriotism Week. Code 1976 § 59-17-135. Character education.

State	Statute
South Dakota	SDCL § 13-33-6.1. Character development instruction
Tennessee	T. C. A. § 49-6-1001. American flag and emblems
Texas	Texas Civ. St. Art. 6144a. Texas week
Utah	U.C.A. 1953 § 53G-10-302 Formerly cited as UT ST § 53A-13-101.4. Instruction in American history and government--Study and posting of American heritage documents U.C.A. 1953 § 53G-10-304 Formerly cited as UT ST § 53A-13-101.6. Instruction on the flag of the United States of America
Vermont	16 V.S.A. § 908. Pre-Memorial Day exercises
Virginia	VA Code Ann. § 22.1-202. Instruction in history and principles of flags of United States and Virginia; Pledge of Allegiance to American flag; guidelines developed by the Board VA Code Ann. § 22.1-208.01. Character education required
Washington	RCWA 28A.195.020. Private schools--Rights recognized RCWA 28A.405.030. Must teach morality and patriotism RCWA 28A.405.040. Disqualification for failure to emphasize patriotism— Penalty
West Virginia	W. Va. Code, § 18-2-9. Required courses of instruction
Wisconsin	W.S.A. 118.06. Flag, Pledge of Allegiance, and national anthem
Wyoming	No Statutes Found

Table 2: Statute analysis questions

Authoritarian patriotism (Westheimer 2006)	Democratic patriotism (Westheimer 2006)	Statute analysis questions
Belief that one's country is inherently superior to others	Belief that a nation's ideals are worthy of admiration and respect	<p>Does the statute describe the United States as superior or "the best"?</p> <p>Does the statute describe other nations as lesser than the United States?</p> <p>Does the statute encourage a belief that the nation's ideals are worthy of admiration and respect?</p>
Primary allegiance to land, birthright, legal citizenship, and government's cause	Primary allegiance to set of principles that underlie democracy	<p>Does the statute distinguish between citizens and non-citizens?</p> <p>Does the statute refer to a greater mandate?</p> <p>Does the statute refer to God's endowment of blessing?</p> <p>Does the statute promote primary allegiance to a set of principles that underlie democracy?</p>
Nonquestioning loyalty	Questioning, critical, deliberative	<p>Does the statute mention loyalty?</p> <p>Does the statute mention critique, questioning, or dissent?</p>
Follow leaders reflexively, support them unconditionally	Care for the people of society based on particular principles (e.g., liberty, justice)	<p>Does the statute mention deeds of leaders?</p> <p>Does the statute highlight leaders in a way to emphasize their critique of the status quo?</p> <p>Does the statute emphasize care for people based on particular principles such as liberty or justice?</p>
Blind to shortcomings and social discord within nation	Outspoken in condemnation of shortcomings, especially within a nation	<p>Does the statute include references to flaws, either historically or contemporarily?</p> <p>If providing a list of required documents, does the statute include specific documents that critique the United States or that are framed as flawed?</p>
Conformist; dissent seen as dangerous and destabilizing	Respectful, even encouraging of dissent	<p>Does the statute include language regarding cooperation, courtesy, and agreement?</p> <p>Does the statute include language regarding questioning, critique, or disagreement?</p>

Table 3: State patriotism statutes requiring patriotism education or the Pledge of Allegiance

Requires or allows patriotism education	AL, AR, CA, FL, GA, IL, ME ¹ , MN, MS, MT, NE, NY, OH, PA ² , SC, SD, VT, VA, WA
Requires or allows “patriotic observances or exercises” not including the Pledge of Allegiance	KS, LA, MD, MA, MO, NV, NH, NJ, TN ³ , TX ⁴ , UT
No patriotism statute, but requires or allows the Pledge of Allegiance	AK, AZ, CO, CT, DE, ID, IN, KY, MI, NM, NC, ND, OK, OR, RI, WV, WI
Requires or allows recitation of Pledge of Allegiance	AL, AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WV, WI
No statute regarding Pledge of Allegiance	DC, HI, IA, NE ⁵ , VT, WY
No Patriotism or Pledge Statute	DC, HI, IA, WY

1. Maine statute: “love of country”

2. Pennsylvania statute: “love of country”

3. Tennessee statute: “patriotic emblems”

4. Texas statute: “patriotic pilgrimages”

5. Nebraska Administrative Code, Title 92, Ch. 10 § 003.12 requires schools to set aside time for recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance

Table 4: Maintenance of status quos through patriotic education

Category	States	Example statutes
Active maintenance of status quos	AR, CT, KY, MD, MS, NE, SC, TX	<p>Arkansas A.C.A. § 6-16-111 Morals, manners, patriotism, and integrity Curricula in morals, manners, patriotism, and business and professional integrity shall be included in the course of study for the state public schools.</p> <p>Connecticut C.G.S.A. § 10-29a. Certain days, weeks and months to be proclaimed by Governor. Distribution and number of proclamations (4) Loyalty Day. The Governor shall proclaim May first in each year to be Loyalty Day, which day shall be set aside as a special day for the reaffirmation of loyalty to the United States of America and for the recognition of the heritage of American freedom; and the flag of the United States shall be displayed on all state buildings on said day. Said day shall be suitably observed in the public schools of the state.</p> <p>Mississippi Miss. Code Ann. § 37-13-5 Displaying and studying of flags (3) In all public schools there shall be given a course of study concerning the flag of the United States and the flag of the State of Mississippi. The course of study shall include the history of each flag and what they represent and the proper respect therefor. There also shall be taught in the public schools the duties and obligations of citizenship, patriotism, Americanism and respect for and obedience to law.</p>

Category	States	Example statutes
Ceremonial maintenance of status quos	AK, AZ, CO, DE, ID, IL, KS, LA, MA, MI, MN, MO, NV, NH, NM, NC, ND, OK, RI, TN, UT, WI	<p>Nebraska: 79-8, 108. Teachers and employees; pledge; form.</p> <p>All persons engaged in teaching in the public schools of the State of Nebraska and all other employees paid from public school funds, shall sign the following pledge:</p> <p>I,, do believe in the United States of America as a government of the people, by the people, for the people; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic; an indissoluble nation of many sovereign states; a perfect union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes.</p> <p>I acknowledge it to be my duty to inculcate in the hearts and minds of all pupils in my care, so far as it is in my power to do, (1) an understanding of the United States Constitution and of the Constitution of Nebraska, (2) a knowledge of the history of the nation and of the sacrifices that have been made in order that it might achieve its present greatness, (3) a love and devotion to the policies and institutions that have made America the finest country in the world in which to live, and (4) opposition to all organizations and activities that would destroy our present form of government.</p> <p>Illinois: 105 ILCS 5/27-3 Formerly cited as IL ST CH 122 ¶ 27-3 Patriotism and principles of representative government-- Proper use of flag--Method of voting-- Pledge of Allegiance.</p> <p>American patriotism and the principles of representative government, as enunciated in the American Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of Illinois, and the proper use and display of</p>

Category	States	Example statutes
Shallow critique of status quos	AL, GA, NJ, MT, PA, OR, SD, WA, WV	<p data-bbox="837 279 1406 531">the American flag, shall be taught in all public schools and other educational institutions supported or maintained in whole or in part by public funds. No student shall receive a certificate of graduation without passing a satisfactory examination upon such subjects.</p> <p data-bbox="769 573 1317 636">Minnesota M.S.A. § 120B.235 American heritage education</p> <p data-bbox="781 646 1390 930">(a) School districts shall permit grade-level instruction for students to read and study America’s founding documents, including documents that contributed to the foundation or maintenance of America’s representative form of limited government, the Bill of Rights, our free-market economic system, and patriotism.</p> <p data-bbox="769 972 1349 1035">New Hampshire N.H. Rev. Stat. § 194:15-c New Hampshire School Patriot Act.</p> <p data-bbox="769 1045 1390 1224">I. As a continuation of the policy of teaching our country’s history to the elementary and secondary pupils of this state, this section shall be known as the New Hampshire School Patriot Act.</p> <p data-bbox="769 1234 1401 1413">II. A school district shall authorize a period of time during the school day for the recitation of the pledge of allegiance. Pupil participation in the recitation of the pledge of allegiance shall be voluntary.</p> <p data-bbox="769 1465 1333 1570">Georgia Ga. Code Ann., § 20-2-145. Comprehensive character education program</p> <p data-bbox="769 1581 1406 1864">(a) The State Board of Education shall develop by the start of the 1997-1998 school year a comprehensive character education program for levels K-12. This comprehensive character education program shall be known as the “character curriculum” and shall focus on the students’ development of the following character traits: courage,</p>

Category	States	Example statutes
		<p>patriotism, citizenship, honesty, fairness, respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect, self-control, courtesy, compassion, tolerance, diligence, generosity, punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for the environment, respect for the creator, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty, perseverance, and virtue. Such program shall also address, by the start of the 1999-2000 school year, methods of discouraging bullying and violent acts against fellow students. Local boards shall implement such a program in all grade levels at the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year and shall provide opportunities for parental involvement in establishing expected outcomes of the character education program.</p> <p>South Dakota SDCL § 13-33-6.1 Character development instruction Unless the governing body elects, by resolution, effective for not less than one or more than four school terms, to do otherwise, character development instruction shall be given in all public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools in the state to impress upon the minds of the students the importance of citizenship, patriotism, honesty, self discipline, self respect, sexual abstinence, respect for the contributions of minority and ethnic groups to the heritage of South Dakota, regard for the elderly, and respect for authority.</p> <p>Virginia VA Code Ann. § 22.1-208.01 Character education required The basic character traits taught may include (i) trustworthiness, including honesty, integrity, reliability, and loyalty; (ii) respect, including the precepts of the Golden Rule, tolerance, and courtesy; (iii) responsibility, including hard work,</p>

Category	States	Example statutes
Less-shallow critique of status quos	CA, FL, IN, ME, NY, OH, VT, VA	<p>economic self-reliance, accountability, diligence, perseverance, and self-control; (iv) fairness, including justice, consequences of bad behavior, principles of nondiscrimination, and freedom from prejudice; (v) caring, including kindness, empathy, compassion, consideration, generosity, and charity; and (vi) citizenship, including patriotism, the Pledge of Allegiance, respect for the American flag, concern for the common good, respect for authority and the law, and community-mindedness.</p> <p>California Cal. Educ. Code § 233.5. Morals, etc. instruction</p> <p>(a) Each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship, and the meaning of equality and human dignity, including the promotion of harmonious relations, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures, to teach them to avoid idleness, profanity, and falsehood, and to instruct them in manners and morals and the principles of a free government.</p> <p>New York § 801. Courses of instruction in patriotism and citizenship and in certain historic documents</p> <p>1. In order to promote a spirit of patriotic and civic service and obligation and to foster in the children of the state moral and intellectual qualities which are essential in preparing to meet the obligations of citizenship in peace or in war, the regents of The University of the State of New York shall prescribe courses of instruction in patriotism, citizenship, and human rights issues, with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery</p>

Category	States	Example statutes
		<p>(including the freedom trail and underground railroad), the Holocaust, and the mass starvation in Ireland from 1845 to 1850, to be maintained and followed in all the schools of the state. The boards of education and trustees of the several cities and school districts of the state shall require instruction to be given in such courses, by the teachers employed in the schools therein. All pupils attending such schools, over the age of eight years, shall attend upon such instruction.</p> <p>Ohio R.C. § 3313.605 Community service education</p> <p>A) As used in this section:</p> <p>(1) “Civic responsibility” means the patriotic and ethical duties of all citizens to take an active role in society and to consider the interests and concerns of other individuals in the community.</p> <p>(2) “Volunteerism” means nonprofit activity in the United States, the benefits and limitations of nonprofit activities, and the presence and function of nonprofit civic and charitable organizations in the United States.</p> <p>(3) “Community service” means a service performed through educational institutions, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, social service agencies, and philanthropies and generally designed to provide direct experience with people or project planning, with the goal of improving the quality of life for the community. Such activities may include but are not limited to tutoring, literacy training, neighborhood improvement, encouraging interracial and multicultural understanding, promoting ideals of patriotism, increasing environmental safety, assisting the elderly or disabled, and providing mental health care, housing, drug abuse prevention programs, and other philanthropic programs, particularly for disadvantaged or low-income persons.</p>

Category	States	Example statutes
States not classified	DC, HI, IA, WY	
