



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 24, 2021

DeSantis Signs New Laws, Emphasizing Civics and Lessons on Evils of Communism in Schools

Republican Florida Governor Ron DeSantis continues to position himself as the common-sense conservative Americans need in the face of an increasingly bold leftist agenda, this time signing three bills into law that will boost civics education in public schools and require teaching on the evils of communism, the [Daily Wire](#) reported.

On Tuesday, DeSantis signed House Bill 5, which will require the Florida Department of Education to create a civics education curriculum that “includes an understanding of citizens’ shared rights and responsibilities under the Constitution and Bill of Rights,” according to a [news release](#) on the bills. It will require the high-school curriculum to discuss political ideologies that oppose the principles of freedom and democracy, including communism and totalitarianism. The curriculum will also include a library of “Portraits in Patriotism,” which highlights individuals who have moved to this country for freedom to escape persecution from tyrannical regimes such as in Cuba or Venezuela. The bill requires first-person accounts of “victims of other nations’ governing philosophies who can compare those philosophies with those of the United States.”



AP Images

“We want all students to understand the difference, why would somebody flee across shark infested waters say, leaving from Cuba to come to southern Florida?” DeSantis explained during a press conference and signing ceremony at Three Oaks Middle School. “Why would somebody leave a place like Vietnam? Why would people leave these countries and risk their life to be able to come here? It’s important that students understand that. Now as part of this bill, Florida will create a ‘Portraits in Patriotism’ library so students can learn about real patriots who came to this country after seeing the horrors of these communist regimes.”

“We have a number of people in Florida,” DeSantis added, “who’ve escaped totalitarian regimes, who’ve escaped communist dictatorships to be able to come to America.”

Also signed on Tuesday was Senate Bill 1108, which will require state college and university students to take a civic literacy course and a civic literacy assessment as a graduation requirement.



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"The sad reality is that only two in five Americans can correctly name the three branches of government, and more than a third of Americans cannot name any of the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment," DeSantis said. "It is abundantly clear that we need to do a much better job of educating our students in civics to prepare them for the rest of their lives."

Under Senate Bill 1108, high-school students will be required to take a civic literacy assessment that, if passed, will exempt students from the post-secondary test requirement.

Governor DeSantis also signed House Bill 233 into law on Tuesday. This bill requires state colleges and universities to annually assess "viewpoint diversity and intellectual freedom at their institutions to ensure that Florida's postsecondary students will be shown diverse ideas and opinions, including those that they may disagree with or find uncomfortable."

"It used to be thought that a university campus was a place you'd be exposed to a lot of different ideas. Unfortunately now, the norm is really that these are more intellectually oppressive environments," the governor opined. "You have orthodoxies that are promoted, and other viewpoints are shunned or even suppressed. We don't want that in Florida. You need to have a true contest of ideas. Students should not be shielded from ideas and we want robust First Amendment speech on our college and university campuses."

The timing of the bills is appropriate, as high schools and colleges across the country continue to be bastions of Leftist thought that churn out the future anti-American, anti-white, anti-Christian, anti-capitalist leaders advocating for left-wing agenda items such as critical race theory, the *New York Times'* "1619 Project," and cancel culture.

Until the 1960s, civics education was commonplace in American schools, but shifting priorities and intrusive government education reforms ultimately slashed civics offerings from public schools. According to the National Education Association, only 25 percent of U.S. students today reach the "proficient" standard on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) Civics Assessment required to be passed by incoming citizens of the United States, with white, upper-class students four to six times more likely than Black and Hispanic students from low-income households to exceed that level.

Conservatives such as DeSantis understand the old adage that those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it, a sentiment that has been made most clear by recent testimony at a Loudoun County School Board meeting in Virginia by a mother who escaped Chairman Mao's brutal communist regime in China. Xi Van Fleet told the school board that critical race theory is "the American version of the Chinese Cultural Revolution."

"Critical race theory has its roots in cultural Marxism — it should have no place in our schools," she said.

"You are now teaching, training our children, to be social justice warriors and to loathe our country and our history," she continued.

"Growing up in Mao's China, all of this seems very familiar," insisted Van Fleet, who fled China at the age of 26. "The Communist regime used the same critical theory to divide people. The only difference is they used class instead of race."

Americans' lack of knowledge about their country's history was made painfully clear during a recent episode of *Jeopardy*, which aired on June 1, in which not one of the three contestants were able to



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answer a very easy question about the Gettysburg Address, prompting intense backlash from viewers.

An \$800 question in a “Quotations” category read, “Government of the people, by the people, for the people, is from the end of this brief but powerful speech.”

Seconds passed, followed by a brief but telling silence, before guest host Mayim Bialik revealed the answer to be the Gettysburg Address.

The embarrassing display [invited](#) vitriol from viewers online.

“I’m gonna pretend like I just didn’t see ALL THREE contestants miss ‘the Gettysburg Address’ just now,” [replied](#) another.

“How did #Jeopardy manage to find three contestants who don’t recognize the closing line of the Gettysburg Address? This isn’t Elementary Jeopardy, folks,” remarked [another](#) critic.

As noted by Life Site News, the three new laws are just the latest in a long list of conservative accomplishments for DeSantis, which include tougher penalties for riot-related offenses, requiring schools to allow silent time for prayer, opposition to overzealous COVID restrictions, banning sanctuary cities, strengthening election security, and keeping males out of female sports.



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