



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on March 9, 2022

Florida's Parental Rights Bill Draws Fire; DeSantis Stands His Ground

As the Culture War battle over LGBTQ+ issues continues to rage, Florida is stepping into the fray by poising itself to ban schools from indoctrinating young children in gender identity and sexual orientation. On Tuesday, the Florida Senate passed the Parental Rights in Education bill and — as could be expected — the liberal establishment attacked the Sunshine State, calling the bill the “Don’t Say Gay” bill.

Critics of the bill — which has already passed in the House — have busied themselves making all the usual claims that the bill would “harm” LGBTQ+ students, would increase suicide rates among the LGBTQ+ “community,” etc. The White House weighed in on the issue, with Biden tweeting, “I want every member of the LGBTQI+ community — especially the kids who will be impacted by this hateful bill — to know that you are loved and accepted just as you are. I have your back, and my Administration will continue to fight for the protections and safety you deserve.”



AP Images
Ron DeSantis

What the bill actually does is protect children from early indoctrination in sexual perversion while requiring schools to keep parents informed of any changes in a student’s physical, emotional, or mental well-being while allowing parents to sue if schools violate the provisions of the bill. As the [bill’s description](#) explains, it:

Requires district school boards to adopt procedures that comport with certain provisions of law for notifying student’s parent of specified information; requires such procedures to reinforce fundamental right of parents to make decisions regarding upbringing & control of their children; prohibits school district from adopting procedures or student support forms that prohibit school district personnel from notifying parent about specified information or that encourage student to withhold from parent such information; prohibits school district personnel from discouraging or prohibiting parental notification & involvement in critical decisions affecting student’s mental, emotional, or physical well-being; prohibits classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in certain grade levels; requires school districts to notify parents of healthcare services; authorizes parent to bring action against school district to obtain declaratory judgment; provides for additional award of



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injunctive relief, damages, & reasonable attorney fees & court costs to certain parents.

Since the liberal establishment has insisted on calling it the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, many have wrongly assumed the bill bans the word “gay” from public schools. And the Democrats appear to have fallen for their own press. As Daily Wire reported:

As a result, on Monday, The Daily Wire reported that in a show of solidarity with voters who want elementary school educators to teach students about transgenderism and other progressive sex-related ideas without parental knowledge, Florida Democrats chanted “Gay! Gay! Gay!” throughout the state’s capitol building.

But again, those Democrats fell for their own press, since the word “gay” does not even appear in the bill. In fact, Republican Governor Ron DeSantis — who has shown support for the bill — castigated a reporter who asked him about the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, asking, “Does it say that in the bill?” When the reporter pushed back with his own question, DeSantis retorted, “I’m asking you to tell me what’s in the bill, because you are pushing false narratives.” DeSantis went on to educate the reporter that the bill bans classroom instruction on sexual identity and gender orientation “for grades pre-K through three.” He added, “So, five-year-olds, six-year-olds, seven-year-olds — and the idea that you wouldn’t be honest about that and tell people what it actually says, is why people don’t trust people like you, because you pedal false narratives.”

And while the Left slams the bill and pedals false narratives, Jon Schweppe, director of policy at the American Principles Project, told The Daily Wire that the legislation is “about respecting the rights of parents and protecting kids,” adding, “Parents shouldn’t have to fear sending their kids to public school in America, but they do because woke ideologues have become obsessed with teaching kids as young as five that they can change their gender.”

He pointed out, “This bill doesn’t do anything the Left claims — kids can talk about their families, even if they’re LGBT. Classroom discussions can still take place about LGBT history,” adding, “But this bill tries to provide boundaries, prevent unwanted indoctrination, and give parents more control over the upbringing of their kids.”

But, as often happens, the Biden administration is completely off base where this issue is concerned. And, as usual, Biden seems to think that force from on high is both required and justified. On Tuesday, the Federal Department of Education issued what certainly appears to be a threat to Florida.

In a statement Tuesday afternoon, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona said, “Parents across the country are looking to national, state, and district leaders to support our nation’s students, help them recover from the pandemic, and provide them the academic and mental health supports they need,” adding, “Instead, leaders in Florida are prioritizing hateful bills that hurt some of the students most in need.”

Cardona went on to say, “The Department of Education has made clear that all schools receiving federal funding must follow federal civil rights law, including Title IX’s protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.” He further stated, “We stand with our LGBTQ+ students in Florida and across the country, and urge Florida leaders to make sure all their students are protected



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and supported.”

But as he did with that reporter, DeSantis stood firm. His press secretary, Christina Pushaw, told The Daily Wire Tuesday that she recommended Cardona read the bill before commenting on it.

“The bill does not single out any sexual orientation or gender identity — it applies to ALL discussion of sex and gender in grades VPK-3,” the governor’s spokeswoman said. “The idea that it’s inappropriate to instruct 7-year-olds about sexual topics should not be controversial in the least.”

“Children should never be sexualized,” Pushaw added. “They are far too young to be learning about these topics in school. If a young child has any questions about sexuality or gender, it’s solely up to that child’s parent or guardian how they want to answer those questions. This is not an LGBT issue, and most Floridians — gay or straight — are fully in favor of child safeguarding and parents’ rights.”

So, as Florida moves toward enacting a law that many feel does not go far enough — since it does not prohibit fourth-graders and above from LGBTQ+ indoctrination — the liberal establishment and its president are shouting and threatening. All the while, concerned parents across the nation are investigating alternatives to public education. Many are opting for homeschooling. Others have looked at either private schools or online academies, such as [Freedom Project Academy](#), where they have more control over what their children learn.



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