

Wednesday

WeBelong Biweekly:



**Florida's "Parental
Rights in Education" Bill**

The "Don't Say Gay" Bill

About the Bill:

Florida's Parental Rights in Education Bill states that lessons about sexual orientation are banned outright in kindergarten through third grade.

It also prohibits lessons in other grades unless they are "age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate."

Additionally, the bill would give parents the right to sue school districts if lessons on sexual orientation are discussed.

The bill passed by a 22-17 vote and is scheduled to go into effect on July 1.

The Significance:

Other states are considering similar measures—PEN America is tracking the issue and counts **15 proposals in nine states.**

When a person's identity (or the identity of a loved one) becomes politicized and a point of debate, it can be dehumanizing, increase stigma and stress – this be especially damaging for impressionable, vulnerable young people.

This is detrimental to the ongoing mental health crisis of LGBTQ+ youth and sends a message that they are not welcome in Florida.

The Stats:

66%

of LGBTQ+ youth say recent debates about state laws restricting their rights have negatively impacted their mental health.

42%

of LGBTQ+ youth considered suicide in the last year.

71%

of LGBTQ+ youth hear peers make negative remarks about sexual orientation and gender expression.

Steps to Take:

- Become knowledgeable of this law with **links in our bio**.
- Share this law and its impact on LGBTQ+ employees and employees who are parents of LGBTQ+ youth with leadership.
- Conduct a campaign promoting company values:
 - Most companies list “respect” as a value
 - Continue to educate leaders on best practices to show respect for all employees
- Identify free community mental health resources for LGBTQ+ employees and parents of LGBTQ+ youth with **links in our bio**.

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Call to Action:

- Learn more about this bill and support those who will be affected.
- Sign petitions against this bill.
- Learn how as a parent, you can create an LGBTQ+ Friendly Classroom.
- Learn how to support educators of LGBTQ+ youth.



Resources:

- Florida Department of Children and Families
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- 2-1-1
- Change.org
- The Action Network
- PEN America
- Family Equality