

By Senator Dyer

14-226-98

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to education; requiring the  
3           Department of Education to adopt a statewide  
4           uniform dress code policy for public school  
5           students; providing an effective date.  
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7 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
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9           Section 1. Legislative findings.--The Legislature  
10 finds that:

11           (1) The children of this state are entitled to an  
12 effective public school education.

13           (2) Students attending, and staff working in, public  
14 schools in this state are constitutionally guaranteed a safe  
15 and secure school environment. The safety of that environment  
16 is diminished by the ever-present threat of violence in  
17 society which permeates the schools.

18           (3) Gang-related apparel, which is a reflection of the  
19 violence in society, poses a threat to the school environment.

20           (4) Instructing teachers and administrators on the  
21 subtleties of identifying the constantly changing aspects of  
22 gang regalia and gang affiliation takes an increasing amount  
23 of time away from the education of children in this state.

24           (5) Weapons, including firearms and knives, which have  
25 become commonplace on school campuses, may be concealed by  
26 students under oversize or loose clothing or in large bags.

27           (6) The adoption of a statewide uniform dress code  
28 policy is a reasonable step in the protection of students and  
29 educators. A uniform dress code policy would alleviate many  
30 of the problems associated with the wearing of gang-related  
31 apparel on school premises.

1           (7) The adoption of a statewide uniform dress code  
2 policy would authorize district school boards to establish and  
3 maintain an effective learning environment that keeps the  
4 focus of the classroom on education, not personal safety.

5           (8) Many educators believe that school dress  
6 significantly influences student behavior. Schools that  
7 require students to wear a certain uniform while on school  
8 premises have experienced a general collegial feeling,  
9 increased school pride, and improved student behavior in and  
10 out of the classroom.

11           Section 2. The Department of Education shall adopt a  
12 reasonable dress code policy with statewide application which  
13 requires each public school student in this state to wear a  
14 school uniform. Implementation of the school uniform policy  
15 shall begin on the first day of the 1998-1999 school year.  
16 The policy must permit any student who participates in a  
17 nationally recognized youth organization to wear the  
18 organization's uniform on days on which the organization has a  
19 scheduled meeting.

20           Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a  
21 law.

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24 SENATE SUMMARY

25 Requires the Department of Education to adopt a statewide  
26 uniform dress code policy for public school students  
beginning with the 1998-1999 school year. The policy  
27 must allow students who are members of nationally  
recognized youth organizations to wear organization  
28 uniforms on days when those organizations meet.