

By Senator Fasano

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to disability history and awareness;
3 creating s. 1003.4205, F.S.; requiring district school
4 boards to designate "Disability History and Awareness
5 Weeks" during the first 2 weeks in October each year;
6 requiring students in all K-12 public schools to be
7 provided disability history and awareness instruction;
8 providing the content and goals of such instruction;
9 encouraging state postsecondary institutions to conduct
10 and promote activities related to disability history and
11 awareness; providing an effective date.

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13 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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15 Section 1. Section 1003.4205, Florida Statutes, is created
16 to read:

17 1003.4205 Disability history and awareness instruction.--

18 (1) Each district school board shall provide disability
19 history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public schools in
20 the district during the first 2 weeks in October each year. The
21 district school board shall designate these 2 weeks as
22 "Disability History and Awareness Weeks."

23 (2) (a) During this 2-week period, students must be provided
24 intensive instruction to expand their knowledge, understanding,
25 and awareness of individuals with disabilities, the history of
26 disability, and the disability rights movement. Disability
27 history must include the events and timelines of the development
28 and evolution of services to, and the civil rights of,
29 individuals with disabilities. Disability history must also

11-00509-08

2008514__

30 include the contributions of specific individuals with
31 disabilities, including the contributions of acknowledged
32 national leaders.

33 (b) The instruction must be integrated into the existing
34 school curriculum in ways including, but not limited to,
35 supplementing lesson plans, holding school assemblies, or
36 providing other school-related activities. The instruction may be
37 delivered by qualified school personnel or by knowledgeable guest
38 speakers, with a particular focus on including individuals with
39 disabilities.

40 (3) The goals of disability history and awareness
41 instruction include:

42 (a) Better treatment for individuals with disabilities,
43 especially for youth in school, and increased attention to
44 preventing the bullying or harassment of students with
45 disabilities.

46 (b) Encouragement to individuals with disabilities to
47 develop increased self-esteem, resulting in more individuals with
48 disabilities gaining pride in being an individual with a
49 disability, obtaining postsecondary education, entering the
50 workforce, and contributing to their communities.

51 (c) Reaffirmation of the local, state, and federal
52 commitment to the full inclusion in society of, and equal
53 opportunity for, all individuals with disabilities.

54 Section 2. State postsecondary institutions are encouraged
55 to conduct and promote activities on their campuses that provide
56 education, understanding, and awareness of individuals with
57 disabilities, disability history, and the disability rights
58 movement.

11-00509-08

2008514__

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Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.