

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2       An act relating to disability awareness; amending s.  
 3       1003.4205, F.S.; requiring district school boards to  
 4       provide disability history and awareness instruction in  
 5       all K-12 public schools; requiring certification of  
 6       individuals delivering the instruction; requiring the  
 7       Governor's Commission on Disabilities to initiate a study  
 8       on disability awareness training to be conducted by a  
 9       private nonprofit entity; providing requirements for the  
 10      study and submission of findings to the commission;  
 11      requiring the commission to oversee a statewide disability  
 12      awareness training provider and certification program;  
 13      providing program components to include requirements for  
 14      approval of providers and certification of individuals to  
 15      provide disability awareness instruction; providing for  
 16      the payment of certain fees; requiring the commission to  
 17      promote disability awareness training in all public  
 18      entities in the state; requiring rulemaking; providing an  
 19      effective date.

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

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 23           Section 1.   Section 1003.4205, Florida Statutes, is amended  
 24   to read:

25           1003.4205   Disability history and awareness instruction.—

26           (1)   Each district school board shall ~~may~~ provide  
 27   disability history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public  
 28   schools in the district during the first 2 weeks in October each

29 | year. The district school board shall designate these 2 weeks as  
 30 | "Disability History and Awareness Weeks."

31 | (2) (a) During this 2-week period, students shall ~~may~~ be  
 32 | provided intensive instruction to expand their knowledge,  
 33 | understanding, and awareness of individuals with disabilities,  
 34 | the history of disability, and the disability rights movement.  
 35 | Disability history shall ~~may~~ include the events and timelines of  
 36 | the development and evolution of services to, and the civil  
 37 | rights of, individuals with disabilities. Disability history  
 38 | shall ~~may~~ also include the contributions of specific individuals  
 39 | with disabilities, including the contributions of acknowledged  
 40 | national leaders.

41 | (b) The instruction shall ~~may~~ be integrated into the  
 42 | existing school curriculum in ways including, but not limited  
 43 | to, supplementing lesson plans, holding school assemblies, or  
 44 | providing other school-related activities. Beginning with the  
 45 | 2011-2012 school year, the instruction shall ~~may~~ be delivered by  
 46 | individuals who are certified to provide disability awareness  
 47 | instruction ~~qualified school personnel or by knowledgeable guest~~  
 48 | ~~speakers,~~ with a particular focus on including individuals with  
 49 | disabilities as instructors.

50 | (3) The goals of disability history and awareness  
 51 | instruction include:

52 | (a) Better treatment for individuals with disabilities,  
 53 | especially for youth in school, and increased attention to  
 54 | preventing the bullying or harassment of students with  
 55 | disabilities.

56 | (b) Encouragement to individuals with disabilities to

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57 | develop increased self-esteem, resulting in more individuals  
58 | with disabilities gaining pride in being an individual with a  
59 | disability, obtaining postsecondary education, entering the  
60 | workforce, and contributing to their communities.

61 | (c) Reaffirmation of the local, state, and federal  
62 | commitment to the full inclusion in society of, and the equal  
63 | opportunity for, all individuals with disabilities.

64 | Section 2. Disability awareness training standards,  
65 | protocol, and curriculum; certification.-

66 | (1) The Governor's Commission on Disabilities shall  
67 | initiate a study on disability awareness training beginning July  
68 | 1, 2010, to be conducted by a private nonprofit entity that  
69 | promotes disability awareness in the classroom and the community  
70 | at large and provides disability awareness training. State  
71 | agencies and programs shall cooperate with the private nonprofit  
72 | entity as it conducts the study to establish disability  
73 | awareness training standards, protocol, and curriculum. The  
74 | study shall:

75 | (a) Evaluate and recommend to the commission standards and  
76 | criteria necessary for authorizing providers to conduct  
77 | disability awareness training.

78 | (b) Establish guidelines and curriculum for a  
79 | certification program for disability awareness instructors.

80 | (c) Provide to the commission a summary of the current  
81 | trends in disability awareness training.

82 |

83 | The private nonprofit entity conducting the study shall submit  
84 | its findings to the commission by July 1, 2011.

85        (2) Beginning July 1, 2011, the commission shall oversee a  
86 statewide disability awareness training provider and  
87 certification program which shall include, but not be limited  
88 to, the following components:

89        (a) Disability awareness training providers must meet all  
90 criteria established and published by the commission to be  
91 approved to conduct continuing education courses to certify  
92 individuals as disability awareness training instructors. A  
93 provider may charge a service fee for the continuing education  
94 courses in an amount that is sufficient to cover its costs in  
95 providing the courses.

96        (b) To be approved by the commission, a disability  
97 awareness training provider must have a minimum of 5 years of  
98 experience working in the field of disabilities, submit an  
99 application to the commission to provide disability awareness  
100 training, pay an application or renewal fee set by the  
101 commission not to exceed \$200, and submit an annual report to  
102 the commission documenting the provider's training activities.  
103 An approved provider shall be required to renew its approved  
104 status with the commission every 3 years.

105        (c) Approved providers must use the commission's approved  
106 training methods and curriculum materials for conducting  
107 continuing education courses.

108        (d) A list of providers approved to offer disability  
109 awareness training for certification shall be published and made  
110 available to the public by the commission.

111        (e) Individuals seeking certification to provide  
112 disability awareness instruction shall participate in continuing

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113 education courses conducted by commission-approved providers.  
114 Individuals who successfully complete the required disability  
115 awareness continuing education courses shall be certified by the  
116 commission to provide disability awareness instruction in the  
117 state and shall pay a certification or certification renewal fee  
118 set by the commission not to exceed \$100. Certified individuals  
119 shall be required to renew certification with the commission  
120 every 3 years.

121 (3) The commission shall promote the inclusion in society  
122 of, and the equal opportunity for, individuals with disabilities  
123 through disability awareness training in all public entities in  
124 the state. Activities that provide instruction to expand  
125 knowledge, understanding, and awareness of individuals with  
126 disabilities, the history of disability, and the disability  
127 rights movement shall be encouraged.

128 (4) The commission shall adopt rules pursuant to ss.  
129 120.536(1) and 120.54, Florida Statutes, to implement the  
130 provisions of this section.

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