

By Senator Ring

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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
5 in all K-12 public schools during the first week in
6 October; requiring certified individuals in disability
7 awareness or teachers who specialize in exceptional
8 student education to provide the disability history
9 and awareness instruction; requiring the Governor's
10 Commission on Disabilities to initiate a study on
11 training in disability awareness to be conducted by a
12 private nonprofit entity; providing requirements for
13 the study and requiring submission of findings to the
14 commission; requiring the commission to oversee a
15 statewide program for providers of training in
16 disability awareness; providing program components to
17 include requirements for approval of providers and
18 certification of individuals who provide instruction
19 in disability awareness; providing for the payment of
20 certain fees; requiring the commission to promote
21 training in disability awareness in all public
22 entities in the state; requiring the commission to
23 encourage those public entities to participate in
24 activities that provide instruction to expand
25 knowledge, understanding, and awareness of individuals
26 who have disabilities; requiring the commission to
27 adopt rules; providing an effective date.

28
29 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

32-00307A-11

2011578

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31 Section 1. Section 1003.4205, Florida Statutes, is amended
32 to read:

33 1003.4205 Disability history and awareness instruction.—

34 (1) Each district school board shall ~~may~~ provide disability
35 history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public schools in
36 the district during the first week ~~2-weeks~~ in October each year.
37 The district school board shall designate this week ~~these 2~~
38 ~~weeks~~ as "Disability History and Awareness Week ~~Weeks~~."

39 (2) (a) During this 1-week ~~2-week~~ period, students shall ~~may~~
40 be provided intensive instruction to expand their knowledge,
41 understanding, and awareness of individuals with disabilities,
42 the history of disability, and the disability rights movement.
43 Disability history must ~~may~~ include the events and timelines of
44 the development and evolution of services to, and the civil
45 rights of, individuals with disabilities. Disability history
46 must ~~may~~ also include the contributions of specific individuals
47 with disabilities, including the contributions of acknowledged
48 national leaders.

49 (b) The instruction shall ~~may~~ be integrated into the
50 existing school curriculum in ways including, but not limited
51 to, supplementing lesson plans, holding school assemblies, or
52 providing other school-related activities. Beginning with the
53 2012-2013 school year, the instruction must ~~may~~ be delivered by
54 individuals who are certified to provide instruction in
55 disability awareness ~~qualified school personnel or by~~
56 ~~knowledgeable guest speakers,~~ with a particular focus on
57 including individuals who have ~~with~~ disabilities as instructors,
58 or by teachers who are currently employed at a school and who

32-00307A-11

2011578

59 specialize in exceptional student education at the school.

60 (3) The goals of disability history and awareness
61 instruction include:

62 (a) Better treatment for individuals who have ~~with~~
63 disabilities, especially for youth in school, and increased
64 attention to preventing the bullying or harassment of students
65 who have ~~with~~ disabilities.

66 (b) Encouragement to individuals who have ~~with~~ disabilities
67 to develop increased self-esteem, resulting in more individuals
68 who have ~~with~~ disabilities gaining pride in being an individual
69 with a disability, obtaining postsecondary education, entering
70 the workforce, and contributing to their communities.

71 (c) Reaffirmation of the local, state, and federal
72 commitment to the full inclusion in society of, and the equal
73 opportunity for, all individuals who have ~~with~~ disabilities.

74 Section 2. Disability awareness training standards,
75 protocol, and curriculum; certification.-

76 (1) The Governor's Commission on Disabilities shall
77 initiate a study regarding training in disability awareness
78 beginning July 1, 2011, to be conducted by a private nonprofit
79 entity that promotes disability awareness in the classroom and
80 the community at large and provides training in disability
81 awareness. State agencies and programs shall cooperate with the
82 private nonprofit entity as it conducts the study to establish
83 training standards, protocol, and curriculum with regard to
84 disability awareness. Within the study, the private nonprofit
85 entity shall:

86 (a) Evaluate and recommend to the commission standards and
87 criteria necessary for authorizing providers to conduct training

32-00307A-11

2011578

88 in disability awareness.

89 (b) Establish guidelines and curriculum for a certification
90 program for disability awareness instructors.

91 (c) Provide to the commission a summary of the current
92 trends in training in disability awareness.

93
94 The private nonprofit entity conducting the study shall submit
95 its findings to the commission by July 1, 2011.

96 (2) Beginning July 1, 2012, the commission shall oversee a
97 statewide program for providers of training and certified
98 instructors in disability awareness which includes, but is not
99 limited to, the following components:

100 (a) A training provider must meet all criteria established
101 and published by the commission in order to be approved to
102 conduct continuing education courses for certifying individuals
103 as instructors in disability awareness. A provider may charge a
104 service fee for the continuing education courses in an amount
105 that is sufficient to cover its costs in providing the courses.

106 (b) In order to be approved by the commission, a provider
107 of training in disability awareness must have a minimum of 5
108 years of experience working in the field of disabilities, submit
109 an application to the commission to provide training in
110 disability awareness, pay an application or renewal fee set by
111 the commission not to exceed \$200, and submit an annual report
112 to the commission which documents the provider's training
113 activities. An approved provider shall renew its approved status
114 with the commission every 3 years.

115 (c) An approved provider shall use the commission's
116 approved training methods and curriculum materials for

32-00307A-11

2011578

117 conducting continuing education courses.

118 (d) The commission shall publish and make available to the
119 public a list of providers approved to offer training for
120 certifying individuals as instructors in disability awareness.

121 (e) An individual seeking certification to provide
122 instruction in disability awareness shall participate in
123 continuing education courses conducted by a commission-approved
124 provider. The commission shall certify an individual as an
125 instructor who successfully completes the required continuing
126 education courses in disability awareness. This individual shall
127 pay a certification or certification renewal fee set by the
128 commission not to exceed \$100, and the certified individual
129 shall renew certification with the commission every 3 years.

130 (3) The commission shall promote the inclusion in society
131 of, and the equal opportunity for, individuals who have
132 disabilities through training in disability awareness in all
133 public entities in the state. The commission shall encourage
134 those public entities to participate in activities that provide
135 instruction to expand knowledge, understanding, and awareness of
136 individuals who have disabilities, the history of disability
137 awareness, and the disability rights movement.

138 (4) The commission shall adopt rules pursuant to ss.
139 120.536(1) and 120.54, Florida Statutes, to administer this
140 section.

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