

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 that each district school  
4       board provide disability history and awareness  
5       instruction in all K-12 public schools; requiring that  
6       the Department of Education assist in creating the  
7       curriculum for the disability history and awareness  
8       instruction; providing for individual presenters who  
9       have disabilities to augment the disability history  
10      and awareness instruction; creating the Disability  
11      History and Awareness Advisory Council within the  
12      Department of Education; providing for certain  
13      individuals to apply to the department for membership  
14      on the council; providing that the Commissioner of  
15      Education, the member of the Senate, and the member of  
16      the House of Representatives are ex officio, nonvoting  
17      members of the council; requiring that the department  
18      provide a liaison to assist the council; requiring  
19      that the department act as the fiscal agent for all  
20      financial transactions required by the council;  
21      providing responsibilities of the council; providing  
22      meeting times for the council; providing an effective  
23      date.

24  
25 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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27       Section 1. Section 1003.4205, Florida Statutes, is amended  
28       to read:

29       1003.4205 Disability history and awareness instruction.—

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30           (1) Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, each district  
31 school board shall ~~may~~ provide disability history and awareness  
32 instruction in all K-12 public schools in the district during  
33 the first 2 weeks in October each year. The district school  
34 board shall designate these 2 weeks as "Disability History and  
35 Awareness Weeks." The Department of Education shall assist in  
36 creating the curriculum for the disability history and awareness  
37 instruction that will be used in each school district.

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

48           (b) Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the  
49 instruction shall ~~may~~ be integrated into the existing school  
50 curriculum in ways including, but not limited to, supplementing  
51 lesson plans, holding school assemblies, or providing other  
52 school-related activities. The instruction shall ~~may~~ be  
53 augmented by presentations from individuals who have  
54 disabilities, who have been approved by the school or school  
55 district as presenters, and who the school or school district  
56 has ensured meet appropriate background screening requirements  
57 of s. 1012.465 to enter schools and interact with children  
58 ~~delivered by qualified school personnel or by knowledgeable~~

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59 ~~guest speakers, with a particular focus on including individuals~~  
60 ~~with disabilities.~~

61 (c)1. There is created within the Department of Education  
62 the Disability History and Awareness Advisory Council. The  
63 council shall consist of the following 15 members:

64 a. The Commissioner of Education or his or her designee.

65 b. A member of the House of Representatives, appointed by  
66 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, or his or her  
67 designee.

68 c. A member of the Senate, appointed by the President of  
69 the Senate, or his or her designee.

70 d. Six individuals who are younger than 30 years of age and  
71 who must apply to the Department of Education to become members  
72 of the council.

73 e. Six individuals who are 30 years of age or older and who  
74 must apply to the Department of Education to become members of  
75 the council.

76 2. The Commissioner of Education, the member of the Senate,  
77 and the member of the House of Representatives, or their  
78 designees, are ex officio, nonvoting members of the council.

79 3. The department shall provide a liaison to assist the  
80 council in its operation. The department shall act as the fiscal  
81 agent for all financial transactions required by the council.

82 4. The responsibilities of the council shall be, but are  
83 not limited to:

84 a. Providing to the Department of Education input regarding  
85 the curriculum for disability history and awareness;

86 b. Assisting, upon request, schools or school districts in  
87 locating individuals who have disabilities to make presentations

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88 at schools; and

89 c. Submitting an annual report to the Governor, the  
90 President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
91 Representatives, and the superintendent of each school district  
92 in this state by August 1, 2014, and each year thereafter. The  
93 annual report must include, but is not limited to,  
94 recommendations and policy alternatives regarding the state of  
95 disability awareness in this state.

96 5. The council shall meet at least four times a year and  
97 more often as needed.

98 (3) The goals of disability history and awareness  
99 instruction include:

100 (a) Better treatment for individuals who have ~~with~~  
101 disabilities, especially for youth in school, and increased  
102 attention to preventing the bullying or harassment of students  
103 who have ~~with~~ disabilities.

104 (b) Encouragement to individuals who have ~~with~~ disabilities  
105 to develop increased self-esteem, resulting in more individuals  
106 who have ~~with~~ disabilities gaining pride in being an individual  
107 with a disability, obtaining postsecondary education, entering  
108 the workforce, and contributing to their communities.

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

112 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.