

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to religious expression and classroom
3 requirements in K-12 schools; providing short titles;
4 prohibiting a school district from discriminating
5 against students, parents, or school personnel on the
6 basis of religious viewpoints or religious expression;
7 prohibiting penalty or reward for a student's
8 religious expression in coursework, artwork, and other
9 specified assignments; authorizing a student to wear
10 clothing, accessories, and jewelry that display
11 religious messages or symbols; authorizing a student
12 to pray or engage in religious activities or
13 expression; authorizing school personnel to engage in
14 such activities or expression with a student under
15 specified circumstances; authorizing a student to
16 organize prayer groups, religious clubs, and other
17 religious gatherings; prohibiting a school district
18 from preventing school personnel from participating in
19 voluntary, student-initiated religious activities on
20 school grounds under specified circumstances;
21 requiring that a school district provide religious
22 groups with equal access to school facilities;
23 authorizing religious groups to advertise or announce
24 meetings in the same manner and to the same extent as
25 secular groups; requiring that a school district adopt

26 | a limited public forum policy and deliver a disclaimer
27 | at school events; requiring the Department of
28 | Education to develop and publish a model policy
29 | regarding a limited public forum and religious
30 | expression; requiring that each district school board
31 | adopt and implement such model policy; amending s.
32 | 1003.44, F.S.; requiring the national anthem to be
33 | played at the beginning of each school day after the
34 | completion of the moment of silence; requiring
35 | students to be provided written notice of the right to
36 | not participate in specified activities; requiring
37 | students to be excused from specified activities upon
38 | written request; authorizing excused students to stand
39 | outside the classroom door for specified activities;
40 | requiring such students to immediately return to the
41 | classroom after such activities; requiring public
42 | schools to comply with certain provisions by a
43 | specified date; providing penalties for noncompliance;
44 | requiring school districts to conduct a public
45 | awareness campaign for specified purposes; providing
46 | requirements for the display of the state motto in
47 | certain portions of schools; requiring the department
48 | to provide certain materials; providing an effective
49 | date.
50 |

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

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53 **Section 1.** This act may be cited as the "Florida Religious
54 Liberty Awareness and Activation Act."

55 **Section 2.** Religious expression in public schools.-

56 (1) This section may be cited as the "Florida Student and
57 School Personnel Religious Liberties Act."

58 (2) A school district may not discriminate against a
59 student, parent, or school personnel on the basis of a religious
60 viewpoint or religious expression. A school district shall treat
61 a student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint on an
62 otherwise permissible subject in the same manner that the school
63 district treats a student's voluntary expression of a secular
64 viewpoint.

65 (3) (a) A student may express his or her religious beliefs
66 in coursework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments
67 free from discrimination. A student's homework and classroom
68 assignments shall be evaluated, regardless of their religious
69 content, based on expected academic standards relating to the
70 course curriculum and requirements. A student may not be
71 penalized or rewarded based on the religious content of his or
72 her work if the coursework, artwork, or other written or oral
73 assignments require a student's viewpoint to be expressed.

74 (b) A student may wear clothing, accessories, and jewelry
75 that display a religious message or symbol in the same manner

76 and to the same extent that clothing, accessories, and jewelry
77 that display a secular message or symbol are permitted to be
78 worn.

79 (4) (a) A student may pray or engage in religious
80 activities or expression before, during, and after the school
81 day in the same manner and to the same extent that a student may
82 engage in secular activities or expression. School personnel,
83 including classroom teachers and athletic coaches, may pray or
84 engage in religious activities or expressions with a student if
85 such prayer or religious activity or expression does not occur
86 during instructional time. A student may organize prayer groups,
87 religious clubs, and other religious gatherings before, during,
88 and after the school day in the same manner and to the same
89 extent that a student is permitted to organize secular
90 activities and groups.

91 (b)1. A school district may not prevent school personnel
92 from participating in religious activities on school grounds
93 that are initiated by students at reasonable times before or
94 after the school day if such activities are voluntary and do not
95 conflict with the responsibilities or assignments of such
96 personnel.

97 2. A school district shall comply with the federal
98 requirements in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which
99 prohibit an employer from discriminating against an employee on
100 the basis of religion.

101 (c) A school district shall provide a religious group with
102 access to the same school facilities for assembling as provided
103 to secular groups without discrimination based on the religious
104 content of the group's expression. A group that meets for prayer
105 or other religious speech may advertise or announce its meetings
106 in the same manner and to the same extent that a secular group
107 may advertise or announce its meetings.

108 (5) (a) A school district shall adopt a policy that
109 establishes a limited public forum for student speakers at any
110 school event at which a student is to speak publicly. The
111 limited public forum policy shall require the school district
112 to:

113 1. Provide the forum in a manner that does not
114 discriminate against a student's voluntary expression of a
115 religious viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject;

116 2. Provide a method based on neutral criteria for the
117 selection of student speakers at school events, activities, and
118 graduation ceremonies;

119 3. Ensure that a student speaker does not engage in
120 obscene, vulgar, offensively lewd, or indecent speech; and

121 4. State in written or oral form that the student's speech
122 does not reflect the endorsement, sponsorship, position, or
123 expression of the school district.

124 (b) The school district shall deliver the disclaimer
125 required in subparagraph (a)4. at all graduation events and any

126 other event at which a student speaks publicly.

127 (c) Student expression of a religious viewpoint on an
128 otherwise permissible subject may not be excluded from the
129 limited public forum.

130 (6) The Department of Education shall develop a model
131 policy regarding a limited public forum and voluntary expression
132 of religious viewpoints by students and school personnel in
133 public schools pursuant to this section. The department shall
134 publish the model policy on its website. Each district school
135 board shall adopt and implement the department's model policy.

136 **Section 3. Subsections (1) and (4) of section 1003.44,**
137 **Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

138 1003.44 Patriotic programs; rules.—

139 (1)(a)1. Each district school board may adopt rules to
140 require, in all of the schools of the district, programs of a
141 patriotic nature to encourage greater respect for the government
142 of the United States and its national anthem and flag, subject
143 always to other existing pertinent laws of the United States or
144 of the state.

145 2. The national anthem must be played at the beginning of
146 each school day after the completion of the moment of silence
147 pursuant to s. 1003.45. When the national anthem is played,
148 students and all civilians shall stand at attention, men
149 removing the headdress, except when such headdress is worn for
150 religious purposes.

151 3. The pledge of allegiance to the flag, "I pledge
152 allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to
153 the republic for which it stands, one nation under God,
154 indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," shall be
155 rendered by students standing with the right hand over the
156 heart. The pledge of allegiance to the flag shall be recited at
157 the beginning of the day in each public elementary, middle, and
158 high school in the state. ~~Each student shall be informed by a~~
159 ~~written notice published in the student handbook or a similar~~
160 ~~publication pursuant to s. 1006.07(2) that the student has the~~
161 ~~right not to participate in reciting the pledge. Upon written~~
162 ~~request by his or her parent, the student must be excused from~~
163 ~~reciting the pledge, including standing and placing the right~~
164 ~~hand over his or her heart.~~ When the pledge is given, unexcused
165 students must show full respect to the flag by standing at
166 attention, men removing the headdress, except when such
167 headdress is worn for religious purposes, as provided by Pub. L.
168 ch. 77-435, s. 7, approved June 22, 1942, 56 Stat. 377, as
169 amended by Pub. L. ch. 77-806, 56 Stat. 1074, approved December
170 22, 1942.

171 4. Each student shall be informed by a written notice
172 published in the student handbook or a similar publication
173 pursuant to s. 1006.07(2) that the student has the right not to
174 participate in singing the national anthem, reciting the pledge,
175 or the moment of silence in s. 1003.45. Upon written request by

176 his or her parent, the student must be excused from singing the
177 national anthem, reciting the pledge, including standing and
178 placing the right hand over his or her heart, or the moment of
179 silence in s. 1003.45. Each morning, before singing the national
180 anthem, reciting the pledge, and the moment of silence, a
181 moderator must announce that all excused students may leave the
182 classroom and stand outside the classroom door. Such students
183 must immediately return to the classroom after such activities.

184 5. Each school within a school district must comply with
185 the requirements of this paragraph by October 1, 2025. A school
186 that is not in compliance with such requirements by such date,
187 shall receive a warning from the department to comply within 30
188 days. If the school fails to comply within the 30-day period,
189 the district school superintendent shall be officially
190 reprimanded by the department for the school's noncompliance.
191 The department shall refer the school district to the State
192 Board of Education. The state board has the sole authority to
193 further review the school's noncompliance and take any actions
194 deemed necessary until the school complies with the requirements
195 of this paragraph.

196 (b) Each school district shall conduct a public awareness
197 campaign about the display of the state motto, "In God We
198 Trust," in district schools and buildings pursuant to subsection
199 (4), the inclusion of a moment of silence at the beginning of
200 each school day pursuant to s. 1003.45, and religious expression

201 in public schools as authorized by general law.

202 (4) (a) Each district school board shall adopt rules to
203 require, in all of the schools of the district and in each
204 building used by the district school board, the display of the
205 state motto, "In God We Trust," designated under s. 15.0301, in
206 a conspicuous place.

207 (b) The state motto, "In God We Trust," must be displayed
208 on a 22 inch by 28 inch posterboard in a conspicuous location in
209 each school library, cafeteria, gymnasium, and main office. The
210 department shall provide the posterboards required under this
211 paragraph.

212 **Section 4.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.