

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: CS/HB 447	COMPANION BILL: CS/SB 540 (Collins)
TITLE: Disability History and Awareness Instruction	LINKED BILLS: None
SPONSOR(S): Salzman	RELATED BILLS: None

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 107 Y's 0 N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

For school districts that provide disability history and awareness instruction during the first two weeks of October, the bill, to be known as the Evin B. Hartsell Act, requires the instruction to include specific materials for students in kindergarten through grade 3 on bullying and physical disabilities; for grades 4 through 6, on autism spectrum disorder; for grades 7 through 9, on hearing impairments; and for grades 10 through 12, on learning and intellectual disabilities. The bill authorizes the Department of Education to consult with the Evin B. Hartsell Foundation to further develop the required instructional material.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill may have an insignificant, negative fiscal impact on school districts that choose to provide disability history and awareness instruction with the additional required materials.

[JUMP TO](#)

[SUMMARY](#)

[ANALYSIS](#)

[RELEVANT INFORMATION](#)

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill, to be known as the Evin B. Hartsell Act, requires that school districts who elect to provide instruction on disability history and awareness during the first two weeks of October for [Disability History and Awareness Weeks](#), include the following material:

- For kindergarten through grade 3:
 - Conversations on bullying.
 - Such conversations may address what students should do if they are being bullied, what they should do if they see someone being bullied, why bullying is not the victim's fault, what different types of bullying look like, the possibility that a friend could be a bully, or the school's antibullying policy.
 - Activities to teach about physical disabilities.
- For grades 4 through 6, information about autism spectrum disorder.
- For grades 7 through 9, information about hearing impairments.
- For grades 10 through 12, information on different types of learning and intellectual disabilities.

The Department of Education may consult with the Evin B. Hartsell Foundation to further develop the required instructional material. (Sections [1](#) and [2](#)).

The bill was approved by the Governor on May 20, 2025, ch. 2025-49, L.O.F., will become effective on July 1, 2025. (Section [3](#)).

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STORAGE NAME: h0447z

DATE: 5/21/2025

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

The bill may have an insignificant, negative fiscal impact for school districts that choose to provide disability history and awareness instruction due to costs associated with the required instructional materials.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Disability Awareness

One in every five Americans is a person with a disability. A person may be born with a disability, develop one due to an accident or illness, or experience one as part of aging. Although disability is a natural part of life, people with disabilities have not always had equal opportunities.¹

Until 1975, children with disabilities did not have the right to a free and appropriate public education. That changed with the passage of the Federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act, now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.²

[Disability History and Awareness](#)

Florida law designates the first two weeks of October each year as Disability History and Awareness Weeks, requiring district school boards to recognize this designation. During this 2-week period, each district school board may provide disability history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public schools.³

Students may receive intensive instruction to expand their knowledge, understanding, and awareness of individuals with disabilities, the history of disability, and the disability rights movement. Disability history may include the events and timelines of the development and evolution of services to, and the civil rights of, individuals with disabilities. Disability history may also include the contributions of specific individuals with disabilities, including the contributions of acknowledged national leaders.⁴

The instruction may be integrated into the existing school curriculum in ways including, but not limited to, supplementing lesson plans, holding school assemblies, or providing other school-related activities. The instruction may be delivered by qualified school personnel or by knowledgeable guest speakers, with a particular focus on including individuals with disabilities.⁵

The goals of disability history and awareness instruction include:⁶

- Better treatment for individuals with disabilities, especially for youth in school, and increased attention to preventing the bullying or harassment of students with disabilities.
- Encouragement to individuals with disabilities to develop increased self-esteem, resulting in more individuals with disabilities gaining pride in being an individual with a disability, obtaining postsecondary education, entering the workforce, and contributing to their communities.
- Reaffirmation of the local, state, and federal commitment to the full inclusion in society of, and the equal opportunity for, all individuals with disabilities.

OTHER RESOURCES:

[Department of Education Resource Guide for Disability History and Awareness](#)

¹ Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System/Panhandle Area Educational Consortium, *Disability History and Awareness Weeks*, <https://www.paec.org/disabilityhistoryawareness/> (last visited Apr. 28, 2025).

² *Id.*, see also 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400–1482.

³ S. [1003.4205\(1\), F.S.](#); see also, Florida Department of Education, *Disability History & Awareness*, <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/parent-info/disability-history-awareness.stml> (last visited Apr. 28, 2025).

⁴ S. [1003.4205\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

⁵ S. [1003.4205\(2\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

⁶ S. [1003.4205\(3\), F.S.](#)

