

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL ANALYSIS

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

**BILL #:** [CS/HB 371](#)

**TITLE:** Patriotic Displays at Public Schools

**SPONSOR(S):** Snyder and Shoaf

**COMPANION BILL:** [CS/SB 420](#) (Burgess)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** none

## Committee References

[Education Administration](#)

16 Y, 0 N, As CS



[Education & Employment](#)

19 Y, 0 N

## SUMMARY

### **Effect of the Bill:**

As part of school patriotic programs, the bill requires district school boards, subject to legislative appropriation, to adopt rules requiring the display of portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in a conspicuous place at each public school. The Department of Education (DOE) must select the portraits and make them available to school districts.

### **Fiscal or Economic Impact:**

The bill is likely to have a significant negative fiscal impact on the DOE. The exact cost depends on the method by which the portraits are made available for each public school and which portraits the DOE selects. The implementation of this bill is contingent upon appropriation of funding.

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## ANALYSIS

### **EFFECT OF THE BILL:**

As part of school [patriotic programs](#), the bill requires each district school board, subject to legislative appropriation, to adopt rules requiring the display of portraits of [George Washington](#) and [Abraham Lincoln](#) in a conspicuous place at each public school in the district.

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to select the portraits and make them available to each school district. (Section [1](#)).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026 (Section [2](#)).

### **FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:**

#### STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill is likely to have a significant negative fiscal impact on the DOE. The exact cost depends on the method by which the portraits are made available for each public school and which portraits the DOE selects. The implementation of this bill is contingent upon appropriation of funding.

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### **SUBJECT OVERVIEW:**

[Patriotic Programs](#)

**STORAGE NAME:** h0371b.EEC

**DATE:** 2/17/2026

Florida law authorizes each district school board to adopt rules requiring, in all schools of the district, programs of a patriotic nature to encourage respect for the government of the United States and its national anthem and flag.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the pledge of allegiance to the flag must be recited daily in all public elementary, middle, and high schools,<sup>2</sup> and district school boards must adopt rules requiring the display of the state motto, “In God We Trust,” in a conspicuous place in all schools and district buildings.<sup>3</sup> The flag must be made in the United States, must be at least 2 feet by 3 feet, and must be properly displayed in accordance with applicable federal law. The principal, director, or president of each educational institution must attempt to acquire the flags through donations or fundraising for 1 year prior to securing other funding sources or allocating funds for the purchase of flags.<sup>4</sup>

District school boards may allow teachers or administrators to read or post materials in schools or at school-related events. Such materials may include, among others, the national motto, the national anthem, the pledge of allegiance, foundational documents such as the Constitutions of Florida and the United States, and writings or speeches of U.S. presidents and civil rights leaders. These materials must be presented from a historical perspective and in a non-proselytizing manner.<sup>5</sup>

All public schools are also encouraged to provide instruction about the nation’s founding fathers and related history at all grade levels, using special events, classroom activities, or other educational opportunities to reinforce civic knowledge and awareness during “American Founders’ Month” which is designated as the month of September each year.<sup>6</sup>

### Historical Figures

George Washington and Abraham Lincoln are iconic figures in American history who played pivotal roles in shaping the United States.

#### [George Washington](#)

George Washington, born February 22, 1732, in Westmoreland County, Virginia, served as commander-in-chief of the colonial armies during the American Revolution and became the first President of the United States, earning the title “Father of the Nation.” He died at his Mount Vernon home on December 14, 1799, at the age of 67.<sup>7</sup>

#### [Abraham Lincoln](#)

Abraham Lincoln, born in 1809 near Hodgenville, Kentucky, was the 16th President of the United States. Rising from a childhood of frontier hardships and limited formal education, he taught himself law and became a prominent public figure. Lincoln preserved the Union during the Civil War and issued the Emancipation Proclamation, earning him the nickname “The Great Emancipator.” He was assassinated at Ford’s Theatre in Washington, D.C., in 1865 at the age of 56.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Section [1001.44\(1\)-\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Section [1003.44\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Section [1003.44\(4\), F.S.](#)

<sup>4</sup> Section [1000.06\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Section [1003.44\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>6</sup> Section [1003.44\(3\), F.S.](#); see also [s. 683.1455, F.S.](#)

<sup>7</sup> Britannica, *George Washington*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-Washington> (last visited Feb. 17, 2026).

<sup>8</sup> Britannica, *Abraham Lincoln*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-Lincoln> (last visited Feb. 17, 2026).

**BILL HISTORY**

<b>COMMITTEE REFERENCE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF</b>	<b>ANALYSIS PREPARED BY</b>
<a href="#">Education Administration Subcommittee</a>	16 Y, 0 N, As CS	2/5/2026	Sleap	Dixon
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised the display of portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln to each public school in the district rather than specific classrooms.</li> <li>Specified the provisions of the bill are subject to legislative appropriation.</li> </ul>			
<a href="#">Education &amp; Employment Committee</a>	19 Y, 0 N	2/17/2026	Hassell	Dixon

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**THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.**  
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