

FLORIDA STUDENTS THREATENED BY PROPOSED CENSORSHIP LEGISLATION

The [Florida Citizens' Alliance](#) (FLCA), whose goal is to inject "conservative values" into the state's classrooms and libraries, is sponsoring several bills in the Florida legislature that threaten the right of students right to receive a wide range of information that is currently available to them and to students in every other state. FLCA plans to lobby for these bills in Tallahassee during the week of March 11.

The First Amendment prohibits government from promoting any particular religion or ideology and requires all public schools to make decisions about instructional materials based on educational value, not personal beliefs, and prohibits discrimination based on viewpoint. The First Amendment preserves Florida schools and libraries as welcoming spaces for learning, discovery and creative expression.

Proposed Bills [HB 855/SB 1454](#), [SB 330](#) and [HB 195](#) will:

- **Threaten students' right to comprehensive science education** by allowing school boards to alter science teaching standards in response to religiously-motivated curriculum challenges. ([SB 330](#))
- **Compel** schools to offer Bible studies courses, a direct First Amendment violation. The bill's sponsor is a minister who has lobbied to require all schools to display their belief in God. **Public schools can teach about world religions but they cannot promote one religion over others.** ([HB 195](#))
- **Violate federal legal standards** by revising the definition of material "harmful to minors." HB 855 and SB 1454 would designate as harmful any images or text with sexual content, including material that has "serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value." As a result, it would be a crime to teach Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Orwell's *1984*, Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, along with hundreds of other acclaimed novels. ([HB 855/SB 1454](#))
- **Paralyze educators' ability to make professionally sound decisions** by authorizing any Florida resident (even if they have no connection to a particular school or library) to sue for injunctions to remove material they deem controversial and burden school districts with legal fees and court action. **Legislation should empower teachers and librarians to select what is best for their students' education, not force them to act out of fear of criminal prosecution.** ([HB 855/SB 1454](#))

These bills will weaken academic freedom, chill the work of educators and overburden Florida schools with litigation costs and time-consuming curricular challenges.

Contact Information for Lawmakers

[Florida State House of Representatives can be found here.](#)

[Florida State Senators can be found here.](#)

Timeline of FLCA Censorship Activity

The Florida Citizens Alliance has been training its members for years to bring frivolous challenges against textbooks in all 66 Florida counties.

- **2016:** FLCA publishes an “assessment” of curricular materials, calling for the removal of hundreds of classic literary works, history and science texts from Collier, Martin, Clay and Nassau Counties. They challenged 220 science texts in Collier County alone.
- **2017:** FLCA authors unprecedented legislation allowing any Florida resident to challenge textbooks, regardless of whether their children attended school. (Learn more about HB 989)
- **2018:** FLCA teams up with Truth in Textbooks, a Texas group that claims to have trained estimated 20,000 volunteer challengers.
- **2019:** FLCA teams up with *It’s Your Tea Party FL* to challenge dozens of texts in Marion County.
- **NOW:** FLCA introduces new bills to require bible study, remove materials that do not conform with conservative values, and authorize challengers the right to sue.