

Florida Governor DeSantis signs new law mandating teaching the “evils of communism” to children as young as five

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30 April 2024

On April 24, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed into state law a directive to teach young people throughout the state’s public schools about the “evils of communism” beginning in kindergarten and extending through high school.

The measure pledges “age-appropriate” curriculum changes across K-12. Currently, the state standards require anti-communist instruction in seventh grade and high school. Coursework on “Victims of Communism Day,” a designation DeSantis manufactured in 2022, is a graduation requirement.

Educators have noted that no similar instruction on fascism or its history exists within the state education standards. “Is there also a bill mandating teaching the horrors of fascism in our schools?” said one commentator on Facebook, adding, “BTW—our capitalism is not working so well.” Another critic cited the long use of anti-communism across the American South “to quell movements for freedom, justice and equality.” An educator denounced the measure and cited the fact that Florida’s teachers’ pay ranks 48th in the nation and per-pupil funding ranks “F” nationally.

The sponsors of the original bill, which received Republican and Democratic support, say they were motivated by the fact that that “too many” American youths today view communism in a positive light. Indeed, every poll for the last decade has shown growing numbers of young people identifying as “socialist.” Since 2021, when 54 percent of Gen Z said they viewed capitalism negatively, these numbers have only increased.

The governor’s goal, his office said, is to prepare students “to withstand indoctrination on communism at colleges and universities.”

DeSantis’s reactionary mandate was accompanied two days later by a call for repression against the explosion of protests against Israel’s US-backed genocide in Gaza on campuses including those in Florida. Libeling protesters as “violent” without citing any evidence, the governor called for reprisals against pro-Palestinian students, including the expulsion of American students and the deportation of international students.

The state-run University of Florida (UF) followed up with threats to banish demonstrators from campus for three years should they violate a host of vague rules including “disruption,” “littering; camping or use of tents, sleeping bags or pillows; [or] blocking anyone’s path.” Employees in violation of these rules would be fired, said the UF authorities.

The announcement of the law requiring government-scripted anti-communist propaganda in classrooms was made on the 63rd anniversary of the failed invasion at Cuba’s Bay of Pigs, with DeSantis speaking before a flank of right-wing Cuban veterans of the assault. The event was staged at the Hialeah Gardens Museum, a recently erected and publicly funded paean to the “heroes” of the CIA plot to overthrow Fidel Castro.

The attempted US coup in 1961 sought to restore the right-wing policies of Fulgencio Batista, a brutal and corrupt dictator who maintained Cuba as a watering hole for American businessmen and mafioso. But the invading CIA-trained “2506 Assault Brigade” received negligible backing among Cubans, who welcomed the overthrow of the hated Batista. The US military fiasco at the Bay of Pigs, however, has become a fascistic dog-whistle, especially among right-wing Cuban exiles.

Rafael Montalvo, president of Brigade 2506,

explained his endorsement of DeSantis' indoctrination law: "The most important fight against communism is the one that's done in the schoolrooms. That's where the battle is happening right now. And this [law] is going to be a tool [giving] us the victory in that area."

In addition to the "increasing threat of communism," "the history of communism in the United States" and "tactics of communist movements," the curriculum is to address "atrocities committed in foreign countries under the guidance of communism." This transparent ideological broadside against historical truth, overseen by the fascist DeSantis, will take effect for the 2026-27 school year.

Additionally, the law calls for the creation of an Institute for Freedom in the Americas at Miami Dade College to promote "economic and individual freedoms" across Latin America and the Caribbean. Finally, it recommends the departments of education and state collaborate to develop a Florida-based museum on the history of communism.

Florida Education Commissioner Manny Diaz Jr. endorsed the measure, saying, "I know firsthand the evils that communism brings, and I am proud to stand by Governor DeSantis as he signs this legislation to ensure Florida remains the bastion of freedom."

Last year, Florida's Department of Education notoriously modified its state standards to include the proposition that "some Black people benefited from slavery because it taught them useful skills." DeSantis also blocked a new high school Advanced Placement course on African American studies from being taught, calling it a Trojan horse for "indoctrinating" students with a left-wing ideology.

While the latest Florida education measure was pushed by DeSantis, state Democrats crossed the aisle to support it as well. Fear and suppression of increasing numbers of leftward-moving youth and workers is a bipartisan affair, as both parties know growing numbers recognize capitalism as the cause of genocide, war, poverty, lack of healthcare and climate change.

While DeSantis and Trump are making anti-communism and bigotry their rallying cry, the Democratic Party works in tandem with its "Republican colleagues," as President Joe Biden puts it. The Democrats have overseen the brutal repression of students on campuses across the US in recent weeks. Biden's Department of Education is seeking to

criminalize opposition to genocide by launching investigations against pro-Palestinian teachers and claims of civil rights violations at colleges.

On April 26, Representative Ritchie Torres, Democrat of New York, ratcheted up this line of attack, announcing a bipartisan-backed bill to enable the US Department of Education (ED) to establish an "antisemitism monitor" in all schools that receive federal funds. Clearly targeting the school which has become the epicenter of protests, the College Oversight and Legal Updates Mandating Bias Investigations and Accountability (COLUMBIA) Act is designed to place maximum pressure on universities to repress their own students.

Claiming a "blatant violation of Title VI," Torres threatened that schools not complying with the antisemitism monitor would lose all public funding. The ED would have broad power to set the "terms and conditions of the monitorship," and the colleges would be forced to pay the costs of their own antisemitism monitor.

Schools that do not comply with the monitoring would risk losing federal funding. This measure, considered the "nuclear option," would mean students could not use federal financial aid to pay tuition—a measure which would put most colleges out of business.



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