

New California law gives the state more power over local school boards

California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law on Monday new legislation that gives more control to the state government in order to prevent local school districts from banning books, curriculum, or instruction material deemed as inclusive or diverse.

5 State Superintendent Tony Thurmond sponsored and pushed for the passage of AB 1078 amid a wave of local school boards adopting policies related to the LGBTQ community.

"Dangerous trends have emerged recently," Thurmond said in a press release sent on September 15th. "A small group of extremists has sought to divide communities by advancing policies to ban books related to civil rights for communities of color and the LGBTQ+ community, to force school districts to 'out' LGBTQ+ students, and to restrict inclusive curriculum. We needed to act quickly and reject these polices."

The press release also noted how districts would be fined for having "insufficient instructional materials, especially in an attempt to discriminate against students of color or LGBTQ+ students." (...)

15 Thurmond's office gave FOX News Digital a couple of examples of "insufficient instructional materials.

"One example of insufficient instructional materials would be including a modern American History textbook that doesn't even contain information about our last three U.S. Presidents. Another example would be removing a section (or pages) from historical textbooks that aim to exclude information about a prominent Civil Rights leader in the LGBTQ+ community," Thurmond's office said. (...)

In response to the new law, Chino Valley School District Board President Sonja Shaw told FOX News Digital that the bill is a "blatant overreach that undermines the power of local boards and takes away the parent's voice."

25 "Taking local control away from School Boards is a direct violation of the founding principles of this country's Constitution and goes against what is in the ED code," she continued. (...)

Thurmond's office stressed that California remains a "local control state" and that he supports local control.

30 "However, Local Control does not extend to the point of willfully breaking the law or violating constitutional protections. There are limits to what one can consider Local Control, and those limits should never apply to those who enact policies that violate the law and directly harm students," Thurmond's office said. "Nor should they apply to those who willingly remove instructional materials that have been approved by the California State Board of Education and recommended by teachers representing every elementary school in the district and reviewed by parents and community members and been overwhelmingly supported by parents in a local process." (...)

Some California parents shared their thoughts with FOX News Digital about the new law. (...)

40 "Passing 1078 is a complete overreach of authoritarian dictatorship," Madison Miner, a mother of four in Orange Unified School District said.

Lance Christensen, a father of four currently enrolled in the Wheatland School District, said that AB 1078 is "poorly written and will be difficult to clearly implement in its current form."

45 "AB 1078 is a direct attack on local school districts meant to silence parents who have concerns about objectionable curricula, texts that are not age appropriate and course material that is more propaganda than instructional," he said.