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“Don’t Say Gay” Laws



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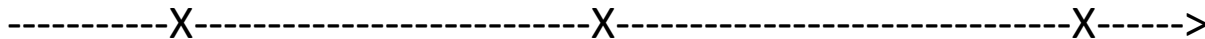
Today



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August 8th
Article published



§1-4 = INTRODUCTION & WHAT HAPPENED

What are “Don’t Say Gay” laws and what’s the link with Shakespeare’s works.

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§10-11 = CONCLUSION + LOOKING TO THE FUTURE (questions are raised)

Psychology courses = difficult to remove content on gender and sexual orientation

Will they be able to teach the full course?

More and more books have been challenged or banned in American schools and libraries recently. Now, even the works of Shakespeare are under attack in Florida.

This is what this article published on npr.org in August is about.

It discusses Florida's so-called "Don't Say Gay" laws and the numerous questions that they raise.

ORLANDO, Fla. — Students in a Florida school district will be reading only excerpts from William Shakespeare's plays for class rather than the full texts under redesigned curriculum guides developed, in part, to take into consideration the state's ["Don't Say Gay" laws](#).

The changes to the Hillsborough County Public Schools' curriculum guides were made with Florida's new laws prohibiting classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in mind. (...)

Several Shakespeare plays use suggestive puns and innuendo, and it is implied that the protagonists have had premarital sex in "Romeo and Juliet." Shakespeare's books will be available for checkout at media centers at schools, said the district, which covers the Tampa area.

"First and foremost, we have not excluded Shakespeare from our high school curriculum. Students will still have the physical books to read excerpts in class," the statement said. "Curriculum guides are continually reviewed and refined throughout the year to align with state standards and current law."

Students in Florida cannot read Shakespeare's full works → only extracts

Reason : "Don't Say Gay laws" → gender identity & sexual orientation may not be discussed in the classroom.

Books are not banned = students can still read them on their own

But school curriculum has to follow the rules and respect the law.

The decision in Tampa is the latest fallout from laws passed by Florida's Republican-controlled Legislature and championed by GOP Gov. Ron DeSantis over the past two years.

In Lake County, outside Orlando, the school district reversed a decision, made in response to the legislation, to restrict access to a popular children's book about a male penguin couple hatching a chick. The School Board of Lake County and Florida education officials last week asked a federal judge to toss out a First Amendment lawsuit that students and the authors of "And Tango Makes Three" filed in June. Their complaint challenged the restrictions and Florida's new laws. (...)

"And Tango Makes Three" recounts the true story of two male penguins who were devoted to each other at the Central Park Zoo in New York. A zookeeper who saw them building a nest and trying to incubate an egg-shaped rock gave them an egg from a different penguin pair with two eggs after they were having difficulty hatching more than one egg at a time. The chick cared for by the male penguins was named Tango.

The book is listed among the 100 most subjected to censorship efforts over the past decade, as compiled by the American Library Association.

Transition : It's not only about Shakespeare, though.

Other books have been attacked over the past few years

Example : Children's book about a couple of gay penguins who hatched and took care of a chick

The access to the book was restricted before the decision was finally reversed / overturned

But the danger still exists → hundreds of books are under attack.

The "Don't Say Gay" legislation has been at the center of a fight between Disney and DeSantis, who is running to be the 2024 GOP presidential nominee and has made the culture wars a driving force of his campaign. DeSantis and Republican lawmakers took over control of the district after Disney publicly opposed the legislation.



Ron DeSantis

🏠 Governor of Florida

🎂 46 years old on Inauguration Day

Ron DeSantis has built a national reputation as a combative conservative eager to do battle with liberals.

As governor of Florida, he has led a laissez-faire response to the coronavirus pandemic and — with the help of an allied state legislature — limited the teaching of racial history in schools and enacted substantial restrictions affecting L.G.B.T.Q. Floridians. He has also made extensive use of executive power against political opponents, from a local Democratic prosecutor to Disney.

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Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis during a campaign event on July 17 in Tega Cay, S.C. He is drawing new criticism for his comments on slavery. (Meg Kinnard/AP)

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Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is intensifying his efforts to de-emphasize racism in his state's public school curriculum by arguing that some Black people benefited from being enslaved and defending his state's new African American history standards that civil rights leaders and scholars say misrepresents centuries of U.S. reality.

"They're probably going to show that some of the folks that eventually parlayed, you know, being a blacksmith into doing things later in life," DeSantis said on Friday in response to reporters' questions while standing in front of a nearly all-White crowd of supporters.

Culture wars

Disagreements about cultural and social beliefs between groups, especially between people with more conservative opinions (generally against social change) and people with more progressive opinions (generally supporting social change)

The legislation has been heavily criticized.

Fight between Republican governor (and presidential hopeful) de Santis and people / companies that oppose such laws.

For example, Disney was punished by Gov DeSantis after the company criticized the new legislation.

The College Board has refused to alter its Advanced Placement psychology course to comply with Florida's new laws, even though it includes content on gender and sexual orientation. The College Board said last week that it hoped Florida teachers would be able to teach the full course.

With students preparing to return to school this week in many school districts, it remained unclear whether any modifications to the course would be expected to comply with Florida's rules.

Transition : On top of that, the new law poses a few problems for teachers and students.

For instance, will it be possible for students to follow psychology courses without any reference to gender or sexual orientation?

This question remains unanswered.

WRAP-UP (bilan)

To conclude
At the end of the day
All in all
The upshot is
The bottom line is

“Don’t Say Gay” laws are highly controversial and are revealing of the ongoing culture war not only in Florida, but in America as a whole.

