



The Washington Flyer
August 11, 2023

“Every child in American should be acquainted with his own country. He should read books that furnish him with ideas that will be useful to him in life and practice. As soon as he opens his lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country.”

Noah Webster

Florida Battles for Accuracy and Appropriate Material in School Books

The Florida Department of Education continues to face scrutiny over its efforts to ensure accuracy in school textbooks. This year, Florida rejected more than 30 social science textbooks and requested edits for over 40 more in compliance with state laws. Many of these textbooks contained [theories](#) that Florida defined as critical race theory (CRT), social justice, culturally responsive teaching, social and emotional learning, and any other theories that lead to student indoctrination. To offer an explanation, Florida released [five sample edits](#) of textbooks that previously violated the Florida standards, including one which removed discussion of taking a knee during the National Anthem from K-5 material. Florida’s Governor Ron DeSantis has increasingly targeted what he calls “wokeness” in education, even signing into law the [Stop W.O.K.E. Act](#) in 2022, which prohibits the teaching of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in public schools. Although a temporary injunction has stopped the law from going into effect in public colleges, the law is still in effect for public K-12 schools. Some publishers have expressed confusion over what materials can be included in the curriculum, while also stating their efforts to meet the state standards in their textbooks. One publisher, [Studies Weekly](#), offered an apology saying that its curriculum team “severely overreacted” by submitting materials that omitted mention of Rosa Parks’s race. After many publishers edited their material, Florida approved [66 of 101](#) social studies textbook submissions. Florida Education Commissioner Manny Diaz Jr. [praised](#) Florida’s approach to education saying, “We must ensure our students and teachers have the highest quality materials available—materials that focus on historical facts and are free from inaccuracies or ideological rhetoric.”

Parents and teachers have also joined the efforts to ensure that school books contain accurate and appropriate materials for students. Vicki Baggett, a teacher in Escambia County in Florida, challenged over 100 book titles last year that were in the school library, charging that the books contained inappropriate material. She [stated](#) that all books “should be evaluated based on explicit sexual content, graphic language, themes, vulgarity and political pushes.” Based on her efforts and those of parents who also spoke out about the books, 15 books have been removed from school premises, and an additional 139 books have been placed under [restrictive access](#) by Escambia County Public Schools. In response, the publishing company Penguin Random House has joined with PEN American, a group known for tracking book restrictions, in filing a lawsuit against Escambia County, claiming the school district violated the First Amendment and Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution because [37%](#) of the books that were removed or restricted are by authors who are nonwhite or identify as LGBT. Those suing [have said](#) the school district is removing books “based on ideological objections to their contents or disagreement with their messages or themes.” However, as Baggett stated, “It has nothing to do with my preference of things, it has to do with what is appropriate, especially by law.” AACCS summer intern Sarah Butler contributed to this article.

Biden Administration Revokes Title X Funding for Pro-Life State

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that it would [stop funding](#) Tennessee's Title X programs which [provide](#) family-planning services, including contraceptives and health screenings, for low-income individuals. HHS points to a new regulation, established under the Biden administration, which eliminates federal funding for Title X programs that not include abortion referrals. Tennessee's pro-life laws prohibit abortion, and thus, the state's Title X clinics offer health services but no referrals for abortion. The Biden Title X rule requiring abortion referrals was a reversal of a [Trump regulation](#) that it illegal to refer patients to abortion clinics. After the Biden administration established the new rule that eliminates federal funding for services that do not include abortion referrals, [twelve states](#) filed a lawsuit, saying Biden's rule violates language in Title X which says that no federal funds "shall be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning." Those opposed to the new regulation claim that the HHS is not complying with the law's intent by reinstating regulations that support abortion referrals. In states where abortion is prohibited and laws conflict with the new Title X federal requirements, restricted funding could become a problem as it could result in a state health department being ineligible to receive funds. Tennessee Representative Mark Green called out the Biden administration's illegal actions in an [op-ed](#), stating, "In an extreme example of putting politics above people, the Biden administration is weaponizing federal agencies in a blatant attempt to bully Tennessee into submitting to the pro-abortion agenda." *AACS summer intern Sarah Butler contributed to this article.*

Evidence Links China's Communist Party to Some American K-12 Schools

The group Parents Defending Education (PDE) has discovered a connection between Thomas Jefferson High School and the Chinese government. For over a decade, this school for science and technology received over \$1 million in financial aid from the Chinese government. Upon further investigation, PDE uncovered 143 schools in the United States that also had financial links to China. Since 2009, the Chinese government has been forming [relationships](#) with American K-12 schools through grants and programs to create [Confucius Institutes](#), which are "centers that teach Chinese language and culture." Through these partnerships, the Chinese government would pay schools to use instructors supplied by the Chinese government to teach the classes. The amount of financial exchanges between Confucius Institutes and the Chinese government ranged from a few thousand dollars to more than a million dollars. PDE also found at least two connections between American schools and Chinese schools that were linked to military and energy operations, one of which is "supervised" by the Chinese defense industry. The report by PDE does note that as of March 2023, 108 Confucius Institutes have either closed or are in the process of closing, while 13 Confucius Institutes are [still functioning](#). The National Association of Scholars (NAS) has also [reported](#) on the alarming presence of Confucius Institutes in American schools, noting that when schools report that centers are closing, often the centers are simply renamed. Both the NAS and PDE have urged state and federal officials to investigate further the involvement of China's government in American schools and if China has access to student information and curriculum. *AACS summer intern Sarah Butler contributed to this article.*

In Case You Missed It:

[Weekly Market Update](#) provided by Jeff Beach of the [AACS Investment Team at Merrill Lynch](#)

[Practical Legal Help for Christian Schools: ADF Ministry Alliance](#)

[Promise to America's Children](#)

[Poll Shows Support for School Choice has Soared, Crossed Demographics](#)

Jamison Coppola: Government Relations Director

Olivia Summers: Government Relations Assistant

Maureen Van Den Berg: Policy Analyst

Washington Office, 119 C Street SE, Washington, DC 20003