



Student Understanding of Florida House Bill 1557

Lindsey Salomone, Dr. Rose Skepple
College of Education, Florida State University



Abstract

This study investigates student understanding of House Bill 1557 (HB 1557). The researcher surveyed university-aged students. Questions were asked regarding how comfortable they felt in their understanding of different excerpts of Section 1 of the bill. Data collected will allow for more insight on the language and clarity of the bill.

Purpose

This research is essential to achieve a concrete understanding of the impact of this bill on K-12 education. The data collected will gauge students understanding of HB 1557 and its implications.

Introduction

Florida House Bill 1557, *The Parental Rights in Education*, outlines certain restrictions on content that can be utilized within the classroom. Advocates say it gives parents necessary control over what their children learn so that they may decide what and how to teach their children. Opponents argue the bill makes education less inclusive for LGBTQ+ students (Kline 2022). The ways in which this bill will affect K-12 education still need to be discovered.

Methods

The researcher administered the survey link to participants via email. Each of the 7 parts of Section 1 of the bill is presented in the format shown in the sample survey question depicted below.

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Read the excerpt of HB1557 below:

(c) 1. In accordance with the rights of parents enumerated in ss. 1002.20 and 1014.04, adopt procedures for notifying a student's parent if there is a change in the student's services or monitoring related to the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being and the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for the student. The procedures must reinforce the fundamental right of parents to make decisions regarding the upbringing and control of their children by requiring school district personnel to encourage a student to discuss issues relating to his or her well-being with his or her parent or to facilitate discussion of the issue with the parent. The procedures may not prohibit parents from accessing any of their student's education and health records created, maintained, or used by the school district, as required by s. 1002.22(2).

Please share how comfortable you feel in your understanding of the this part of the bill.

Extremely uncomfortable Somewhat uncomfortable Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable Somewhat comfortable Extremely comfortable

Select from:

Every question in the survey is followed with “Please elaborate on your response.”

Discussion

Understanding of legislative language often affects the implementation and reception of a bill. Lack of clarity on parameters of laws can lead individuals to take agency in what they believe to be acceptable or not. Contrarily, vagueness of legislation can create a perceived need to act in an abundance of caution, in fear of crossing boundaries set by a language that is not understood (Ásgeirsson 2022).

Investigating how well HB 1557 is understood by its readers can help predict how it will be implemented by those it affects. Results to the survey are still being collected and findings are to be analyzed upon receipt. Personal elaborations by participants will allow for a deeper understanding of individual perception of the bill and its language.

References

Ásgeirsson Hrafn. (2020). *The nature and value of vagueness in the law*. Hart. Bloomsbury Publishing.

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