

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Education Pre-K-12 Appropriations Committee

**BILL:** CS/SB 856

**INTRODUCER:** Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs and Senator Fasano

**SUBJECT:** Disability History and Awareness Pilot Project

**DATE:** April 10, 2008      **REVISED:** \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Harkey	Matthews	ED	<b>Favorable</b>
2.	Ray	Jameson	CF	<b>Fav/CS</b>
3.	Armstrong	Hamon	EA	<b>Favorable</b>
4.				
5.				
6.				

**Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:**

A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE.....  Statement of Substantial Changes

B. AMENDMENTS.....  Technical amendments were recommended

Amendments were recommended

Significant amendments were recommended

**I. Summary:**

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 856 authorizes district school boards to designate “Disability History and Awareness Weeks” during the first two weeks in October of each year. The bill encourages state postsecondary institutions to conduct and promote activities related to disability history and awareness.

This bill creates section 1003.4205, F.S., and an un-numbered section of law.

**II. Present Situation:**

According to a project on disability history, by the museum of disability history, students will benefit from learning about the story of people with disabilities, including how they used to be viewed and treated, how conditions have changed over time and how individuals with disabilities are currently actively involved in self-advocacy and in their communities.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://disabilityhistoryweek.org/>, (last visited on March 11, 2008).

According to the Department of Education (DOE), some Florida school districts have implemented disability awareness activities as part of staff development and some have implemented disability awareness activities with their students as part of ongoing instruction. Instructional materials are available. The DOE gives as an example, "More Alike than Different," a specially designed curriculum used by some school districts in professional development activities. The purpose of the curriculum, developed by a team of parents and school district staff, is to increase sensitivity toward people with disabilities so that students and adults can recognize that all children can learn, although their methods or styles may differ.<sup>2</sup>

### **Florida Youth Council**

The Florida Youth Council is supported by a partnership between the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council. The council is part of the National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth. The council is comprised of youth ages 15-17, and emerging leaders ages 18-30.<sup>3</sup>

### **University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service**

The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) is one of 67 UCEDDS in the United States and its territories that facilitate the communication of disability-related information among universities, community providers, and government agencies.<sup>4</sup>

## **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The bill authorizes each district school board to provide disability history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public schools each year during the first two weeks in October. The bill provides that during this two week period, students may be provided with:

- Intensive instruction to expand knowledge, understanding, and awareness of individuals with disabilities; and
- The history of disability and disability rights movement

The bill allows the instruction to be worked into the existing school curriculum.

The bill provides that the goals of disability history and awareness instructions include the following:

- Better treatment for individuals with disabilities and increased attention to preventing the bullying or harassment of students with disabilities;
- Encouragement to individuals with disabilities to develop increased self-esteem, resulting in more individuals with disabilities gaining pride, obtaining postsecondary education, entering the workforce, and contributing in his or her community; and

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Education Bill Analysis, SB 856, January 9, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth website, available at <http://www.nclcd-youth.info/fyc.htm> (last visited March 11, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Association of University Centers on Disability website, available at <http://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=24> (last visited March 11, 2008).

- Reaffirmation of the local, state, and federal commitment to the full inclusion in society of , and the equal opportunity for, all individuals with disabilities.

The bill encourages state postsecondary institutions to conduct and promote activities related to disability history and awareness.

The bill will take effect July 1, 2008.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

This bill may encourage school districts to provide disability awareness instruction; however, because participation is discretionary, this bill has no fiscal impact.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**CS by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs on March 5, 2008:**

The bill removes the implementation of a pilot project for disability history and awareness and removes all requirements of county school boards, relating to disability history and awareness weeks.

The bill authorizes each district school board to provide disability history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public schools each year during the first two weeks in October and provides a suggested plan for the implementation of the two weeks.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.