A bill to be entitled
An act relating to religious expression in public
schools; amending s. 1002.20, F.S.; prohibiting
penalty or reward for a student's religious expression
in coursework, artwork, or other specified
assignments; authorizing a student to wear jewelry
displaying religious messages or symbols; authorizing
a student to organize prayer groups, religious clubs,
and other religious gatherings; authorizing religious
groups to have equal access to school facilities;
authorizing religious groups to advertise or announce
meetings in the same manner and to the same extent as
secular groups; authorizing the enforcement of such
student rights under the Religious Freedom Restoration
Act of 1998; amending s. 1002.205, F.S.; prohibiting a
school district from preventing school personnel from
participating in voluntary, student-initiated
religious activities on school grounds under specified
circumstances; authorizing the enforcement of the
right to such participation under the Religious
Freedom Restoration Act of 1998; providing an
effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.
Section 1. Subsection (25) is added to section 1002.20,
Florida Statutes, to read:

1002.20 K-12 student and parent rights.—Parents of public school students must receive accurate and timely information regarding their child's academic progress and must be informed of ways they can help their child to succeed in school. K-12 students and their parents are afforded numerous statutory rights including, but not limited to, the following:

(25) RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES.—
(a) Religious expression.—A student may express his or her religious beliefs in coursework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free from discrimination. A student's homework and classroom assignments shall be evaluated, regardless of their religious content, based on expected academic standards relating to the course curriculum and requirements. A student may not be penalized or rewarded based on the religious content of his or her work if the coursework, artwork, or other written or oral assignments require a student's viewpoint to be expressed.

(b) Religious jewelry.—A student may wear jewelry that displays a religious message or symbol in the same manner and to the same extent that secular types of jewelry that display messages or symbols are permitted to be worn.

(c) Religious organization.—A student may organize prayer groups, religious clubs, and other religious gatherings before,
during, and after the school day in the same manner and to the same extent that a student is permitted to organize secular activities and groups. A religious group may be given access to the same school facilities for assembling as given to secular groups without discrimination based on the religious content of the group's expression. A group that meets for prayer or other religious speech may advertise or announce its meetings in the same manner and to the same extent that a secular group may advertise or announce its meetings.

The rights as provided in this subsection may be enforced under chapter 761.

Section 2. Section 1002.205, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.205 Guidelines on religious expression; distribution.—The Department of Education shall each year distribute for informational purposes to all district school board members, district school superintendents, school principals, and teachers the entire guidelines on "Religious Expression in Public Schools" published by the United States Department of Education, as updated from time to time. In addition, a school district may not prevent school personnel from participating in religious activities on school grounds which are initiated by students at reasonable times before or after the school day if such activities are voluntary and do not...
conflict with the responsibilities or assignments of such personnel. The rights as provided in this section may be enforced under chapter 761.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.