

Florida's School Chaplain Bill Proving to Be a Double-Edged Sword

From Strang Report YouTube: "Advocating for Chaplains in Schools: The Impact of Spiritual Care on Students"

Florida is currently in the process of passing HB 931/SB 7044, which will give school districts and charter schools the ability to bring in volunteer school chaplains "to provide support, services, and programs to students as assigned by the district school board or charter school governing board."

Considering the multitude of issues public schools face across the country, bringing in chaplains to address the spiritual needs of students appears like an incredible idea at first glance.

But lurking in the shadows are the laws of unintended consequences.

Most Christians would agree, having a biblically based chaplain would provide an immense service to the students of a school. They have served faithfully in the military for decades and often are an indispensable comfort for those about to engage in warfare, both physical and spiritual.

This is America, however, and freedom of religion is a cherished right acknowledged by our government as a gift from our Creator. So it is illegal to allow a Christian chaplain into a school who passes the requirements.

Breaking News. Spirit-Filled Stories. Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!

As reported by the Daytona Beach News-Journal, "It requires parental consent before a student meets with a chaplain and

says they [chaplain] must undergo background checks first. It also mandates that districts publish a list of the chaplains on its website and for school principals to inform parents about them.

"Other than that, most of the rollout of the legislation is left to local school officials."

Upon approval, a chaplain will be able to hail from any background, including The Satanic Temple who is now recognized as a tax-exempt religious organization.

And they are waiting to see if this bill passes in Florida.

"Any opportunity that exists for ministers or chaplains in the public sector must not discriminate based on religious affiliation," wrote The Satanic Temple's director of ministry Penemue Grigori in a statement published by the Tallahassee Democrat.

"Our ministers look forward to participating in opportunities to do good in the community, including the opportunities created by this bill, right alongside the clergy of other religions."

Should this bill become law, are parents ready to see a Satanic Temple chaplain at their school?

Some politicians, such as Sen. Erin Grall, R-Vero Beach, are aware of the concerns held by many about who will be approved to be a volunteer chaplain.

"I think that as soon as we get in the middle of defining what is religion and what is not, and whether or not someone can be available and be on a list, we start to run up to constitutional problems," Grall said in a statement to a reporter.

"So I think that us making sure that it's open and available to anybody who wants to put themselves through the background

screening, and let parents know they're available for that service, is the best way to go."

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up-to-date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

Another proponent for the bill, Rep. Kim Daniels, D-Jacksonville, let the legislative body know, quite profoundly, that this isn't about trying to convert people, but offer them the spiritual guidance needed in today's ever-darkening world.

"I have been around so many people [in the legislature], I am the opponents of this bill's worst nightmare. I cast out devils," Daniels said on the House floor.

"I pray in tongues. I'm a holy roller. But let me tell you this: Nobody on this floor can ever say that I tried to convert you. Jesus is too good to push down anybody's throat."

While the bill still needs to pass through the state senate, this process raises another question: is it a school's responsibility to offer youth spiritual guidance?

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." That is a statement aimed at the parents, not schools.

Should parents delegate such authority to a public education system when the Word of God tells them to do it?

That is a question each individual parent must answer, and while there are positive gains to be had by this bill bringing in honest, caring chaplains who want to help young people who are struggling, there are predators and false teachers laying in wait to influence the same students.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

James Lasher *is Staff Writer for Charisma Media.*