

Controversial 'Gender Identity' Proposal Threatens Central Florida Schools

The Orange County Public School Board in central Florida will attempt to force through a vote Tuesday night on a proposal creating a new legal protected class for homosexuals, transsexuals and others, "protecting gender identity and expression," which will affect public school students, teachers and all school employees.

Florida Family Action has issued an urgent action alert, asking its supporters to call the school board members and leave messages about their opposition to the proposed rule changes.

The legislative arm of the Florida Family Policy Council is also asking for people to attend the board meeting Tuesday evening at the Orange County Public School Board building in Orlando, Fla. The meeting starts at 5:30 p.m., but the group recommends getting there much earlier in order to get a speakers card. FFA says its supporters will wear blue to show unity, while opponents will be wearing red.

The Florida Family Policy Council gathered in front of the OCPS Board building Monday morning to protest the changes this policy proposes.

"This gender non-discrimination proposal really imposes absurd obligations and absurd results," said John Stemberger, FFPC president and general counsel. "Under these ordinances and rule changes, basically, if a first, second or third grade teacher who is 'Sam,' and wants to become 'Sally,' guess what? The first, second and third-graders just have to put up with that."

In the action alert, FFPC gives the following reasons the proposed student and faculty gender identity and expression rules are bad:

1. **Creates new and special rights for homosexuals and transgendered:** The ordinance creates new and special rights and affirmative action for homosexuals, transgendered and others by creating a new protected class and a special legal classification based on “sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.”

2. **Weakens Florida's marriage amendment as the union of one man and one woman:** Ordinances like this around the country have been used to undermine and overturn state marriage laws and state constitutional amendments defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Gay rights activists around the country have used the collective scheme of ‘non discrimination laws’ like this one to legalize homosexual marriages in states like Vermont, Iowa, New Hampshire and Washington, D.C.

3. **“Gender Identity and Expression” is not identified.** The bad proposals do not define what is meant by “gender identity and expression.” The city of Gainesville passed a similar bathroom bill and defines it as follows: “An inner sense of being a specific gender, or the expression of a gender identity by verbal statement, appearance, or mannerisms, or other gender-related characteristics of an individual with or without regard to the individual's designated sex at birth.”

4. **Creates legal defenses for pedophiles:** The proposed language of gender identity and gender expression would allow male students and teachers to be able to use women's bathrooms (and vice versa) based upon their subjective sense of whether they are a male or female at any given moment, allowing pedophiles to have a defense for using girls' bathrooms. This shocking provision is being forced onto cities all around the country. The security and privacy of our children's locker

rooms, showers, dressing rooms, bathrooms and other separate facilities are all compromised.

5. **Chairman Bill Sublette is attempting to ramrod this bad and dangerous proposal with little to no public notice.** The only thing more outrageous than the proposals themselves are the way these proposed rule changes are being tried to be sneaked into law quickly without any public knowledge or notice.

- No notice to parents;
- No notice to teachers;
- No notice to administrators;
- Not clearly identified on the meeting agenda;
- No second public reading;
- No notice to media;
- The text of the bill is tucked away hard to find on the website and was only posted over the last couple of days.

6. **There is no legitimate public policy for this rule change.** Orange County, Fla., is a tolerant place and there is no need for this proposal other than thrusting social change on children and teachers. Orange County Public Schools has no pattern of discrimination against gay-identified persons that would be solved by this proposal.