

Utah Bans Pride Flags in Government Buildings

Utah has become the first state to prohibit pride flags from flying in state government buildings and public schools.

Governor Spencer Cox (R) allowed the bill to become law without his signature. Cox said that he had “serious concerns” about HB77 but believed the Republican majority would override a potential veto.

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“As tired as Utahns are of politically divisive symbols, I think they are also tired of culture war bills that don’t solve the problems they intend to fix,” the governor wrote in a letter obtained by The Salt Lake Tribune. “In an attempt to make some kids feel more welcome, other kids feel less welcome. I appreciate that the bill is neutral on the types of flags in question (and I find it strange that no headline reads ‘MAGA flags banned from classrooms’).”

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Cox wrote that he has asked the State Board of Education to “continue their work to find ways to make our classrooms more politically neutral.”

“The idea that kids can only feel welcome in a school if a teacher puts up a rainbow flag is just wrong,” he noted in the letter. “Let’s do everything possible to make our classrooms one of the last remaining politically neutral places in our state.”

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The governor added that he thinks “it’s wrong for city and county officials to fly divisive flags,” explaining that “elections have consequences and the best way to stop that behavior is to elect people who believe differently. All this bill does is add more fuel to the fire.”

Under HB77, flags that may be displayed include those of the United States, the state flag, flags representing cities, the military, Native American tribes, colleges and universities, and the Olympics.

The law takes effect on May 7.

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