

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2023-1163

TITLE: Resolution Condemning the Recent Decision to Ban AP Psychology in Florida Schools

AUTHOR(S): Gator Party Leader Bronson Allemand

SPONSORS: Judiciary Chair Jonathan C. Stephens, Judiciary Vice-Chair Joaquin R.C. Marcelino, Senator Monish Vijayaraghavan, Senator Claudia Garcia, Senator Samantha Kinggard, Senator Owen Lekebusch, Member at Large Isabel Ponce, Senator Paige Kleppe, Senator Elsa Brantmeyer, Senator Saketh Damara, Senator Laurie Wang, Senator Matthew Reich

WHEREAS, Advanced Placement (AP) courses provide students with opportunities to explore college-level studies while in high school, fostering skills needed for higher education; and,

WHEREAS, AP Psychology has been a part of Florida's high school curriculum for three decades, providing an essential introduction to the field of psychology and promoting critical thinking skills [1]; and,

WHEREAS, AP Psychology, as a part of the AP curriculum, enhances students' understanding of the human mind, mental health, and social interactions [2]; and,

WHEREAS, over 28,000 Florida students took AP Psychology coursework in the 2022-23 academic year [3]; and,

WHEREAS, the Florida Department of Education announced a decision to ban AP Psychology from the curriculum, effective from the academic year 2023-2024, citing the reasoning behind the decision as teaching foundational content on sexual orientation and gender identity is illegal under state law [3]; and,

WHEREAS, this decision is in line with a worrying trend in the Florida education system to prevent any discussion on sexual orientation or gender identity in Florida classrooms and holds similar sentiments to the Florida's Parental Rights in Education act, more commonly known as the “Don’t Say Gay” bill [4]; and,

WHEREAS, AP Psychology has been shown to positively impact students' college readiness and contributes to the overall development of psychological literacy [5]; and,

WHEREAS, the decision to ban AP Psychology was made without broad consultation with educators, students, parents, and other stakeholders; and,

WHEREAS, this decision may set a precedent that could affect other AP courses and curricular decisions in the future; and,

WHEREAS, nearly 30,000 Florida students were enrolled to take AP Psychology statewide for the 2023-24 academic year, a 2,000 student increase in enrollment from the previous academic year [6]; and,

WHEREAS, the ban on AP Psychology could result in a loss of trained and experienced educators in this field, negatively impacting schools' ability to offer diverse learning opportunities; and,

WHEREAS, other states continue to offer AP Psychology, creating an educational disparity between Florida and other parts of the country that will prevent Florida students from receiving a complete education [7]; and,

WHEREAS, the decision to ban AP Psychology contradicts the trend of increasing AP course offerings to enhance educational opportunities and student readiness for higher education [8]; and,

WHEREAS, students who had planned to take AP Psychology may now face confusion and challenges in their educational pathway; and,

WHEREAS, the ban might adversely affect the mental health awareness initiatives in schools by further reducing the understanding and discussion of psychological principles, gender identity, and sexuality; and,

WHEREAS, the decision has sparked concerns among educators, students, and educational organizations across Florida [9]; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the value of AP Psychology and other AP coursework in shaping students' educational experiences and future prospects.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate condemns the decision to effectively ban AP Psychology in Florida schools and the decision's intent to prevent students from having open discussion regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate advocates for the reinstatement of AP Psychology and recognizes this course's role in enhancing mental health awareness, promoting academic excellence, and preparing students for higher education.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Chief Executive Officer of College Board David Coleman, Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida Department of Education Chancellor of the Division of Public Schools Dr. Paul Burns, Florida Department of Education Vice Chancellor for Strategic Improvement Dr. Margaret Aune, University of Florida President Ben Sasse, University of Florida Vice President of Government and Community Relations Mark Kaplan, University of Florida Assistant Vice President of Federal Relations Sarah Mathias, University of Florida Assistant Director of Government Relations Sara Bremer, University of Florida External Affairs Agency Head Hope Lerman, and University of Florida Student Body President Olivia Green

- [1]<https://people.com/ap-psychology-course-effectively-banned-in-florida-college-board-says-7569667>
- [2] <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-psychology>
- [3] <https://newsroom.collegeboard.org/statement-ap-psychology-and-florida>
- [4]<https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-politics-and-policy/floridas-dont-say-gay-bill-actually-says-rcna19929>
- [5] <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/04/news-high-school-psychology>
- [6]<https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/education/2023/08/04/ap-psychology-in-florida-state-effectively-bans-college-level-course-for-high-school-students/70527211007/>
- [7]<https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2023-08-04/college-board-shelves-ap-psychology-class-in-florida-over-guidance-on-gender-content>
- [8]https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/midatlantic/app/Docs/Infographics/RELMA_AP_offerings_Factsheet_508.pdf
- [9]<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2023/08/03/ap-psychology-banned-florida/70523459007/>