

# Florida History of Communism Law

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In 2024, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed Senate Bill 1264, “requiring instruction in public schools on the history of communism.”<sup>1</sup>

“We will not allow our students to live in ignorance, nor be indoctrinated by Communist apologists in schools. To the contrary, we will ensure students in Florida are taught the truth about the evils and dangers of Communism,” DeSantis said after signing the bill into law.

The law has been derided by local media as “skewed,” “highly biased,” and a “revival of McCarthyism.”<sup>2</sup> It has also been ridiculed by progressive organizations like PEN America, which claims that “Florida’s new standards impose a single, rigid set of beliefs such as criticizing communism.”<sup>3</sup>

In fact, Florida’s “act relating to the history of communism” does not prescribe ideological viewpoints. Rather, it requires instruction that meets standards of professionalism and historical accuracy. It specifically notes, “Members of the instructional staff of the public schools, subject to the rules of the State Board of Education and the district school board, shall teach efficiently and faithfully, using the books and materials required that meet the highest standards for professionalism and historical accuracy.”

In other words, the law is strictly designed to ensure that public schools fully and accurately teach the history of communism.

## 1. Is this law necessary?

There are two primary reasons Florida lawmakers deemed it necessary to pass a law mandating that public schools teach the history of communism.

As several polls over the past few years show, far too many American students are ill-informed about the history and nature of communism. A large portion of American students cannot even correctly define terms like communism and have no knowledge of the vast number of human atrocities committed by communist regimes in the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> Generally, American students are not being taught about the millions murdered and starved under Stalin.

They are not being informed about the depravity that occurred during Mao’s Cultural Revolution and Great Leap Forward. They are not learning that communism is antithetical to human nature and the antithesis of the founding principles of the United States.

While being ignorant about the basic history and essence of communism, young Americans are also enthusiastically supporting communism in the United States. Again, multiple polls over the past few years document that young Americans are indeed embracing communism. In 2025, nearly 80 percent of young Americans voted for democratic socialist mayoral candidates in New York City and Seattle.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. What does the law do?

According to the letter of the law, “Members of the instructional staff of the public schools, subject to the rules of the State Board of Education and the district school board, shall teach efficiently and faithfully, using the books and materials required that meet the highest standards for professionalism and historical accuracy, following the prescribed courses of study, and employing approved methods of instruction... the history of communism. Such instruction must be age appropriate and developmentally appropriate and include:

- The history of communism in the United States and domestic communist movements, including their histories and tactics.
- Atrocities committed in foreign countries under the guidance of communism.
- Comparative discussion of political ideologies, such as communism and totalitarianism, which conflict with the principles of freedom and democracy essential to the founding principles of the United States.
- The increasing threat of communism in the United States and to our allies through the 20th century, including the events of the Cultural Revolution in the People’s Republic of China and other mass killings from communist regimes.
- The economic, industrial, and political events that have preceded and anticipated communist revolutions.
- The communist policies of Cuba and the spread of communist ideologies throughout Latin America, including the roots of the Communist Party of Cuba and guerilla forces throughout Latin America.

Specifically, SB 1264 calls for the Florida Board of Education “to prepare and offer standards for the instruction” of the history of communism. In late 2025,



the Florida Board of Education released new social studies standards, which include new sections on the history of communism in sixth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade, and high school courses.<sup>6</sup>

## 3. What do the new standards specifically include about the history of communism?

According to the newly revised Florida social studies standards, which went into effect in the 2026-27 school year, students must learn the following themes:

**Sixth Grade:** SS.6.HC.1.1: Explain ancient communal systems and the effect on their respective societies.

**Seventh Grade:** SS.7.HC.1.1: Assess the effects of communist governments on individual freedoms, political participation, and the economy.

**Eighth Grade:** SS.8.HC.1.1: Examine early attempts at communal living in American society and their effect on economic stability and societal prosperity.

**Ninth - Twelfth Grades:** SS.912.HC.1: Analyze the intellectual, political, and economic origins of communism.

SS.912.HC.2: Analyze the tactics and tools utilized by communist movements and states.

SS.912.HC.3: Analyze how communist movements and nations, past and present, use propaganda to gain and maintain power.

SS.912.HC.4: Evaluate the rise and development of the Soviet Union and its subsequent decline and eventual collapse.

SS.912.HC.5: Evaluate the rise and development of communism in East and Southeast Asia.

SS.912.HC.6: Evaluate the rise and development of communism in Latin America, including the rise of communist states in South America.

SS.912.HC.7: Analyze communism in the United States and the role of the Communist International.

SS.912.HC.8: Analyze resistance to communism and authoritarianism internationally and within individual states.

SS.912.HC.9: Analyze how communist movements and tactics have evolved from the 20th to 21st centuries.

SS.912.HC.10: Analyze the consequences of communism and communist movements on individuals and society.

SS.912.HC.11 Analyze how Communism and Totalitarianism are antithetical to the American ideals of liberty, justice, and equality.

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**- Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis**

## **4. Does Florida’s inclusion of history of communism standards replace other important subjects in the social studies curriculum?**

Despite suggestions that Florida’s addition of comprehensive history of communism standards in grades six, seven, eight, and nine-12 means that classroom time will be redirected from other vital historical topics, this is simply not the case.

The 2025 updates to the state standards did not result in less emphasis on subjects like “The history of the United States, including the period of discovery, early colonies, the War for Independence, the Civil War, the expansion of the United States to its present boundaries, the world wars, and the civil rights movement to the present,” “The history of the Holocaust,” “The history of African Americans, including the history of African peoples before the political conflicts that led to the development of slavery, the passage to America, the enslavement experience, abolition, and the history and contributions of Americans of the African diaspora to society,” or “The history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, including the history of Japanese internment camps and the incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II.”

It should be noted that Florida’s standards explicitly state that “Instructional personnel may facilitate discussions and use curricula to address, in an age- appropriate manner, how the freedoms of persons have been infringed by sexism, slavery, racial oppression, racial segregation, and racial discrimination, including topics relating to the enactment and enforcement of laws resulting in sexism, racial oppression, racial segregation, and racial discrimination, including how recognition of these freedoms have overturned these unjust laws.”

## **5. Under the law, will kindergarten students learn about communism?**

A common critique of the Florida law is that it will result in students as young as five-years-old being forced to learn about communism. However, that is not accurate. As the standards clearly indicate, history of communism begins in the sixth grade, as a component of world history.

## **6. Does the law prohibit teachers from discussing positive aspects of socialist or collectivist ideas?**

As written, the law includes no direct or indirect language that could be interpreted as promoting censorship regarding specific content. It is important to understand that the law, as mentioned above, only applies to “historical accuracy” of content. Free and open inquiry, including robust debate from all perspectives about the subject of communism in the classroom, is protected under the freedom of speech.

## Endnotes

- 1 Executive office of the governor, “Governor DeSantis Signs Legislation Further Enhancing Florida’s Education Standards on the Evils of Communism,” April 17, 2024, <https://www.flgov.com/eog/news/press/2024/governor-desantis-signs-legislation-furtherenhancing-floridas-education-standards>
- 2 Jeffrey S. Solochek, “Florida revives McCarthyism, anti-communism with classroom guidelines,” Tampa Bay Times, November 1, 2025, <https://www.tampabay.com/news/education/2025/11/01/ron-desantis-joseph-mccarthy-john-birch-society-florida/>
- 3 PEN America, “New Florida Curriculum on Communism is a ‘Dangerous Recasting’ of McCarthyism,” November 17, 2025, <https://pen.org/press-release/new-florida-curriculum-is-dangerous-recasting-of-mccarthyism/>
- 4 Chris Talgo, The Heartland Institute, “Teaching the Truth About Socialism in America’s Public Schools,” February 2026, <https://heartland.org/publications/teaching-the-truth-about-socialism-in-americas-public-schools/>
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 Florida Board of Education, “Florida’s State Academic Standards 2025 Social Studies,” accessed February 25, 2026, <https://www.fldoe.org/file/20885/7-3.pdf>