

# [***House Passes Bill That Makes Schoolkids Get Permission Before Changing Gender ID***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67VP-9T21-JBCM-F501-00000-00&context=1516831)

Forbes.com

March 24, 2023 Friday

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**Length:** 993 words

**Byline:** Sara Dorn, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** The legislation would require elementary schools to obtain parental consent if a child wants to change their gender accommodations.

**Body**

**Topline**

The House passed a bill Friday fulfilling the GOP s midterm promise to combat woke school policies, as the issue has taken center stage in heated school board debates and Republican-controlled state legislatures but the legislation is more symbolic than it is practical as it faces long odds of passing the Democratic-controlled Senate.

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House Republican Conference Chair Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., and Julia Letlow, R-La., conduct a discussion with parents and children on the Parents Bill of Rights Act on Wednesday, March 1, 2023. (Tom Williams/CQ-Roll Call, Inc via Getty Images)

CQ-Roll Call, Inc via Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Julia Letlow (R-La.), passed the House, 213-208, with five Republicans voting alongside Democrats against the bill.

The Parents Bill of Rights Act would update the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act by requiring elementary schools to obtain parental consent if a child wants to change their gender accommodations and by allowing parents to inspect library books (a nod to GOP-backed efforts to ban books that promote racial and LGBTQ inclusion).

Most of the other parental rights outlined in the legislation are already likely deployed by many school districts, including the ability to review the school s curriculum and budget, meet with teachers twice a year and receive information about their child s performance and violent activity in the school.

The legislation fulfills a midterm promise House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) made to advance the bill, first introduced by Letlow in 2021, in his Commitment to America one-pager on GOP policy priorities as he sought to rally Republican voters to flip the House to GOP control in November.

The bill faces long odds of passing the Democratic-controlled Senate, but serves as a vehicle for GOP lawmakers to showcase their war on woke policies such as Covid-19 restrictions, LGBTQ inclusion and anti-racism efforts in schools.

**Contra**

Some conservative members of the House opposed the legislation, citing its defiance with a key component of the GOP platform: that the federal government should not get involved in state issues. Right-wing Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) voted against the bill, citing the inconsistencies with the widely held GOP belief that the federal Department of Education should have less power and for Washington to have less of a role in curriculum, hetold the **.** Reps. Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.), Ken Buck (R-Colo.), Mike Lawler (R-N.Y.) and Matt Rosendale (R-Mont.) also voted no.

**Tangent**

The House approved amendments to the bill on Friday that mandate parents rights to know if their children s schools allow transgender children to compete in sports contrary to their sex assigned at birth or if the school allows transgender individuals to use restrooms in accordance with their preferred sex. Both amendments were sponsored by Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-Colo.).

**Chief Critic**

Education Secretary Miguel Cardona criticized the GOP s latest move in the culture wars as fueling partisan ***politics*** in schools and defended the federal policies already in place that enforce parents rights in their children s education in a op-edearlier this month. He also argued that the Biden Administration has made authentic parent engagement a top priority, citing new funding under the American Rescue Plan Act that sent Covid-19 relief funds to schools and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act geared toward additional mental health resources.

**Key Background**

Culture wars in schools took on a new life during the Covid-19 pandemic, prompting protests and impassioned school board meeting speeches among parents opposed to restrictions such as school closures and mask mandates. The heated debates have continued over gender and racial inclusion policies supported by the left and book bans championed by the right. In some cases, the debates have led toviolence,threatsto school board members andarrests. The issue was a prominent campaign talking point for some Republican lawmakers during the midterm election, with GOP Govs. Glenn Youngkin (Va.) and Ron DeSantis (Fla.) serving as some of the movement s most prominent voices. DeSantis has staunchly opposed critical race theory and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in both K-12 schools and colleges and universities. He backed a number of local school board candidates that helped flip the Miami-Dade County School Board, one of the state s largest, from blue to red, and has signed a slew of bills to combat woke policies in schools, including those that ban transgender students from competing in women s sports and the controversial Don t Say Gay bill. Youngkin, meanwhile, backed a ban on school mask mandates, championed a now-defunct tip line to report teachers for "inherently divisive practices and signed an executive order to limit critical race theory teaching.

**Big Number**

64. That s the number of laws passed during the last three years in 25 states that instituted new school rules and regulations linked to culture war issues, according to an October**Washington Post** study.

**What To Watch For**

The Florida state legislatureis consideringseveral DeSantis-backed bills aimed at LGBTQ rights and diversity inclusion initiatives, including bills that would require K-12 school employees to address students by their pronouns assigned at birth and limit classroom instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation. Legislation aimed at higher education would prohibit state universities from deploying diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in their hiring practices and ban gender studies majors and minors.

**Further Reading**

The Fight Over Parental Rights In Schools Comes To The House Floor(The Washington Post)

GOP Pushes Parents Rights Bill In Clash Over What s Taught In Schools(Associated Press)

House Republicans pass Parents Bill of Rights(The Hill)

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2023

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