

Issue Brief

Corporal Punishment



End Corporal Punishment in Florida Schools



History and Related Bills

19 districts — almost a third of Florida's 67 school districts — reported incidents of corporal punishment in 2017-18, based on the most recent statewide data. The state defines the practice as “the moderate use of physical force or physical contact by a teacher or principal to maintain discipline or to enforce school rules.” (Phoenix, n.d.) (Impact, n.d.)

Corporal punishment refers to spanking, paddling, or other forms of physical discipline in schools. While many states have banned corporal punishment in public schools, Florida allows the practice. A Florida parent must give approval in principle before any paddling is used and must be carried out in the presence of another informed adult. (Phoenix, n.d.) (Impact, n.d.)

SB 1058: Corporal Punishment in Public Schools GENERAL BILL by Taddeo was introduced on 7/1/2019. This bill asked that only school principals, and not teachers, administer corporal punishment to public school students; requiring school principals to notify students' parents in writing and receive written consent before administering corporal punishment; requiring school principals who have administered corporal punishment to provide parents with written explanations of the punishment; authorizing teachers and other instructional personnel to request that principals administer corporal punishment, etc. This bill died on 3/14/2020 (Senate, n.d.)

What's happening with current bills?

Protecting our Students in Schools Act of 2020 was introduced in the Senate on 12/01/2020. This bill prohibits the use of corporal punishment in schools that receives federal funding. It also establishes enforcement provisions, including a private right of action for a student who has been subjected to corporal punishment, creates a grant program for state educational agencies to implement positive behavioral interventions and supports to address student behavior and reduce exclusionary and aversive discipline practices. (Children, n.d.) (Track, n.d.)

Why support an end to corporal punishment?

Corporal Punishment for Students with Disabilities can create lasting injuries and barriers to education. It can also aggravate medical conditions for students with disabilities. Sometimes students are punished for manifestations of their disabilities. (Education, n.d.)

Corporal Punishment can inflict long lasting physical and mental harm. Studies have shown that the use of corporal punishment can lead to high risk for anxiety, depression, substance abuse, stress, and other mental health concerns. (Education, n.d.)

Corporal punishment has been banned in US prisons and military training and animals are protected from the same sort of punishment. Let's protect our students. (Education, n.d.)

Definitions

Corporal punishment is defined as a “physical punishment” and a “punishment that involves hitting someone.” In K-12 schools, corporal punishment is often spanking, with either a hand or paddle, or striking a student across his/her hand with a ruler or leather strap. More extreme instances, including the use of a chemical spray and Taser have also been recorded by US schools. (ProCon, n.d.)

Sources:

1. Britannica ProCon. <https://www.procon.org/headlines/should-corporal-punishment-be-used-in-k-12-schools/>
2. Council for Exceptional Education. <https://exceptionalchildren.org/>
3. Florida Phoenix. <https://www.floridaphoenix.com/2019/06/20/florida-public-school-officials-are-still-allowed-to-paddle-little-kids-and-teens/>
4. Florida Senate. <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2020/1058/?Tab=RelatedBills>
5. Gov. Track. <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr8460>
6. Impairing Education. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/08/10/impairing-education/corporal-punishment-students-disabilities-us-public-schools#>
7. State Impact. <https://stateimpact.npr.org/florida/2015/01/26/study-florida-schools-should-end-corporal-punishment/>

