

# Deseret News

## **New York bill would hold students back if parents don't take parenting classes**

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A bill before the New York Legislature would require parents of grade school children to take four parent-support classes. The children of parents who don't attend the classes would be held back from entering seventh grade.

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Third respondent

A bill before the New York Legislature would require parents of grade school children to take four parent-support classes. The children of parents who don't attend the classes would not be allowed into seventh grade.

Under the bill, which is sponsored by state Sen. Ruben Diaz Sr., D-Bronx, the New York State Education Department would be required to create 12 different parenting courses. Parents would have to attend four of them.

"By teaching parents how to deal with these problems they will be able and prepared to talk with their children and deal with problems," Diaz told CBS6 News in Albany. "This is not for bad parents. To the contrary, this is for good parents."

Diaz said that parents don't even come to parent-teacher conferences, so mandating it is necessary.

"Voluntary is what we have now, where we require parents to voluntarily meet with the teachers and come to parent-teacher meetings, and as you know they don't come," he told U.S. News and World Report.

"Diaz envisions the classes helping parents deal with issues such as sexual orientation, bullying and suicide, and the bill specifically mandates a course on physical, emotional and sexual abuse," writes U.S. News' Steven Nelson. "Employers would be required to provide one day of paid leave annually to allow parents to attend."

Nelson noted that the same bill from Diaz, who is an evangelical minister, failed to make it out of the Legislature's education committee last session.

"The bill has provoked a bit of a public outcry in recent weeks," writes Walter Olson on the Cato at Liberty blog hosted by Cato Institute. "Among the comments at the official state site: 'How about letting us raise our own children?' 'An insult and serves no purpose'; 'Please keep your noses out of my home'; 'The only people that will benefit from this are the ones who will charge for the classes.'"

That's an opinion shared by Sarah Newcomb of the Toronto Sun: "So it would be useful, for example, for parents to know there are resources available at their child's school to help 'enhance' their parenting skills, should they voluntarily choose to attend. But to force parents to attend is both absurd and wrong."

While some people who spoke to a Fox News affiliate in Philadelphia were critical, there were others who liked the idea, the station said.

"I don't mind taking the classes because I think it's a good thing," it quoted one parent.

"You need a license to fish, but anyone can be a parent. And there are some really bad parents out there," another told the station.

"I think every good parent would admit there's always something more that they can learn. People who are truly offended by it are probably the ones that need it the most," added a third respondent.