

DeSantis Signs Public School Chaplains Bill, Says Satanists Need Not Apply, 19 April 2024, <https://rb.gy/576a85>

The state won't allow Satanists to take advantage of a new law allowing religious chaplains to serve as counselors in public schools for students whose parents approve, Gov. Ron DeSantis said Thursday while signing the legislation.

"It's our view that if school districts want to bring in chaplains to offer voluntary services, they're within their right to do so. But there's been a lot of confusion about that, about what's permitted and what's not. This legislation clarifies that, yes, school districts and charter schools have the authority to allow volunteer chaplains to be on campus and provide additional counseling and support to students," DeSantis said during a bill-signing ceremony at Tohopekaliga High School in Kissimmee.

"It's totally voluntary for a parent or a student to participate. No one's being forced to do anything. But to exclude religious groups from campus, that is discrimination. You're basically saying that God has no place. That's wrong. That's not what our Founding Fathers intended," DeSantis said.

"Some have said that if you do a school chaplain program that, somehow, you're going to have Satanists running around in all our schools. We're not playing those games in Florida. That is not a religion. That is not qualified to be able to participate in this. So, we're going to be using common sense when it comes to this. You don't have to worry about it."

Representatives of the Satanic Temple have told the Florida Gannett newspapers that they intend to take advantage of the law. The group claims IRS recognition as a church.

