

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 1116 Session of  
2025

INTRODUCED BY MASTRIANO, DUSH, ARGALL AND LAUGHLIN,  
DECEMBER 10, 2025

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, DECEMBER 10, 2025

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An  
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain  
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial  
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the  
5 laws relating thereto," in terms and courses of study,  
6 providing for communism education.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known  
10 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a  
11 section to read:

12 Section 1556. Communism Education.--(a) Beginning with the  
13 2026-2027 school year, each school entity shall provide age-  
14 appropriate instruction to students on all of the following:

15 (1) The origins, development and core tenets of communist  
16 ideology.

17 (2) The historical establishment and governance of communist  
18 regimes around the world.

19 (3) Documented human rights abuses, restrictions on  
20 individual freedoms, economic failures and social impacts

associated with communist governments.

(4) First-person accounts, survivor testimony or primary-source materials relating to persons persecuted by communist regimes, where age-appropriate.

(5) A comparison of communist political systems with the democratic principles of the United States, including:

(i) constitutional limitations on government;

(ii) separation of powers;

(iii) due process;

(iv) freedom of speech;

(v) freedom of religion; and

(vi) protection of individual rights.

(b) Instruction under this section may be integrated into existing courses of instruction, including:

(1) United States history;

(2) world history;

(3) civics;

(4) government;

(5) economics; and

(6) world cultures.

(c) Instruction under this section shall be consistent with the applicable State academic standards.

(d) (1) The department shall develop and make publicly available all documents appropriate for use in satisfying subsection (a), including:

(i) model curriculum;

(ii) primary-source materials;

(iii) instructional resources; and

(iv) supporting documents.

(2) To develop documents as required in paragraph (1), the

department shall, when practicable, consult with:

(i) historians;

(ii) human rights organizations;

(iii) democracy education organizations; and

(iv) survivors of communist regimes.

(e) The department shall make materials developed under this section available on the department's publicly accessible Internet website by May 1, 2026.

(f) A school entity may utilize the department's materials or may adopt locally selected materials that meet the requirements of this section.

(g) The department shall make available professional development programs to assist educators in fulfilling the instructional requirements of this section. Training may address:

(1) The historical, economic and social impacts of communism.

(2) Best practices for age-appropriate instruction.

(3) Methods for facilitating civil and open classroom discussions.

(4) The use of primary-source documents and survivor testimony to support critical thinking.

(h) Professional development may be delivered by the department, intermediate units or qualified external partners and may be offered in person or online.

(i) The department may support, encourage or facilitate public awareness or educational initiatives related to:

(1) The experiences of victims of communist regimes.

(2) Recognition or commemoration events that highlight the dangers of totalitarian ideologies.

1 (3) Partnerships with museums, universities, survivor  
2 organizations or civic institutions.

3 (j) Participation in any initiative under this section shall  
4 be voluntary for school entities.

5 (k) Beginning December 1, 2027, and annually thereafter,  
6 each school entity shall submit to the department a report, in a  
7 form determined by the department, that contains:

8 (1) confirmation as to whether instruction required under  
9 subsection (a) has been provided;

10 (2) the grade levels in which instruction was offered; and

11 (3) a description of the manner in which instruction was  
12 delivered.

13 (l) The department shall annually compile the information  
14 received under subsection (k) and publish a summary on the  
15 department's publicly accessible Internet website.

16 (m) The department may promulgate rules and regulations  
17 necessary to implement this section.

18 (n) As used in this section, the following words and phrases  
19 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless  
20 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

21 "Communism." A political and economic ideology derived from  
22 the writings of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin and  
23 others, as implemented by various regimes throughout the  
24 twentieth and twenty-first centuries, advocating for:

25 (1) abolition of private property;

26 (2) centralized control of economic production; and

27 (3) one-party authoritarian political structure.

28 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
29 Commonwealth.

30 "School entity." A school district, intermediate unit, area

1 career and technical school, charter school, regional charter  
2 school or cyber charter school.

3 "Totalitarian ideology." A system of government  
4 characterized by:

5 (1) centralized control;

6 (2) suppression of dissent;

7 (3) restrictions on individual freedoms; and

8 (4) the absence of democratic processes or human rights  
9 protections.

10 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.