

Gov. Mike DeWine signs so-called 'Parents' Bill of Rights,' dozens of other bills

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COLUMBUS, Ohio—Gov. Mike DeWine signed nearly 30 bills into law on Wednesday, including [a so-called “Parents’ Bill of Rights”](#) that requires school officials to notify parents if their child asks to be identified by a different gender.

Other bills signed by the governor will expand grounds for K-12 student suspensions, criminalizing “sexortion” and sexual “grooming” of minors, limit courts’ ability to suspend Ohioans’ driver’s licenses, and increase state drunk-driving penalties.

The cluster of bills, each of which will take effect in March, was [passed last month during a last-minute flurry of votes](#) by state lawmakers before their 2023-2024 legislative session ended.

[House Bill 8](#) includes what lawmakers have described as a “Parents’ Bill of Rights,” which will require K-12 school officials, among other things, to notify parents if their child is exposed to sexually explicit instructional content or if the student asks teachers to identify them by a different gender.

Supporters say such rules will ensure that school officials don’t withhold important information from parents about their children. Opponents worry that the bill puts LGBTQ students at risk by requiring teachers to “out” them to their parents.

HB8 also will require all school districts to develop policies allowing students (at their parents’ request) to be released from class for religious instruction time. Until now, that’s been something that’s been up to each district to decide.

Other bills signed by the governor include:

- [Senate Bill 206](#), which expands the list of offenses for which public-school students could get a year-long suspension to include writing threatening manifestos, social-media

posts or hit lists. It also provides an additional \$4 million to administer the state's publicly funded voucher program for private schools, and it gives charter schools a grace period of up to two years for not meeting the state-required minimum of three stars on their state's five-star school report card.

- [House Bill 531](#), which enacts new, felony-level penalties for those convicted of "sextortion," which generally entails using a nude or private image of someone as leverage to extort money or pressure the victim into committing a crime.
- [House Bill 322](#), which creates a new crime of "grooming" a minor for sexual activity, punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$750 fine -- or even more severe penalties in certain cases.
- [Senate Bill 237](#), which takes steps to prevent abusive defamation lawsuits, filed by often-wealthy plaintiffs as a way to silence critics for fear of having to pay huge legal bills.
- [Senate Bill 63](#), which will make it harder to win an asbestos-related lawsuit by requiring plaintiffs to provide defendants specific details about their alleged exposure to the cancer-causing substance.
- [House Bill 37](#), which raises state penalties for aggravated vehicular homicide, allows law-enforcement officers to collect a saliva sample from a suspected drunk driver to test for alcohol or other drugs, and raises the minimum amount in fines and fees that convicted drunk drivers have to pay by a net of \$30, among other changes.
- [House Bill 74](#), which gives Attorney General Dave Yost increased power to prevent a proposed constitutional amendment from making the statewide ballot, grants Secretary of State Frank LaRose broad power to set

standards for the “security and integrity” of ballots and county voter-registration systems, and make it easier for Ohioans to register to vote or update their registration while at a state Bureau of Motor Vehicles office.

- [House Bill 77](#), which sets new state-level rules and regulations for operating unmanned drones in Ohio.
- [House Bill 106](#), the Pay Stub Protection Act, under which employers must allow workers to see their earnings and deductions each pay period.

Last week, [DeWine signed three other bills](#) passed in the waning hours of the two-year legislative session. One included language permitting police to charge up to \$75 per hour for publicly available bodycam footage and allowing patients to obtain off-label drugs.

DeWine used his line-item veto pen to strike three parts of that mega-bill, [House Bill 315](#), including following through [on an earlier promise](#) to nix language that would prevent medical regulators in Ohio from disciplining doctors who express unorthodox medical opinions.