

Date of Hearing: April 6, 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair  
HR 28 (Dababneh) – As Introduced July 15, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Humane education

**SUMMARY:** Encourages the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to ensure the incorporation of humane education in the core curriculum, and resolves that compliance with existing law regarding humane education should include educating students on principles of kindness and respect for animals. Specifically, **this resolution:**

- 1) Resolves that compliance with existing law regarding humane education should include educating students on the principles of kindness and respect for animals and observance of laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to the humane treatment of animals, including wildlife and its environment.
- 2) Resolves that actions such as implementing statewide or districtwide “humane education days” and involving nonprofit organizations in humane education activities with local faculty and school administrators be considered for inclusion in compliance efforts.
- 3) Resolves that the SPI be encouraged to ensure the incorporation of humane education in the core curriculum.
- 4) Resolves that the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of the resolution to the State Senate, the SPI, the State Board of Education (SBE), the California Department of Education (CDE), and the author for appropriate distribution.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requires each teacher to endeavor to impress upon the minds of the students, among other things, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures.
- 2) Requires that, when adopting instructional materials, governing boards of local educational agencies (LEAs) require those materials, as they deem necessary and proper, to encourage thrift, fire prevention, and the humane treatment of animals and people.
- 3) Requires any student with a moral objection to dissecting or otherwise harming or destroying animals to notify his or her teacher of this objection, and permits the teacher and student to develop and agree upon an alternative educational project. States that a student may not be discriminated against based upon his or her decision to exercise this right.
- 4) Requires that animals on the premises of a public elementary or high school be housed and cared for in a humane and safe manner, and prohibits the injuring or experimental medication or drugging of animals at public elementary and high schools.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** This resolution has been keyed non-fiscal by the Office of Legislative Counsel.

**COMMENTS:**

***Need for the resolution.*** The author states: “This resolution will put the state of California on record that compliance with Education Code provisions should include educating students on the principles of kindness and respect for animals and observance of laws, regulations, and policies pertaining to the humane treatment of animals, including wildlife and its environment. It calls on the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, and the California Department of Education to ensure compliance with the Education Code relative to humane education in California’s public school system.”

***Humane education.*** According to the SPCA of Los Angeles, the primary goals of humane education are to decrease both animal cruelty and interpersonal violence. Numerous organizations offer free curriculum materials which may be used by schools and individuals to teach about topics ranging from the prevention of animal cruelty, to animal safety, to careers with animals, among others. Proponents of humane education note the well-established association between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence in adulthood.

***Humane education in state curriculum.*** This resolution encourages the SPI to ensure the incorporation of humane education in the core curriculum. This incorporation could be achieved through the inclusion of humane education concepts in state content standards, frameworks, and adopted instructional materials. It does not appear that humane education is included in state content standards or frameworks for the core subjects of English language arts or mathematics.

To ensure that state-adopted instructional materials are in compliance with state law regarding humane education (see Existing Law above), the CDE and LEAs use a document titled “Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content,” adopted by the SBE in 2013. This document guides evaluators in ensuring compliance with various requirements for curriculum in statute and SBE policy as they review instructional materials for state and local adoption. Reflecting existing law regarding humane education in instructional materials, this document states: “Humane treatment of people and animals should be encouraged through illustrations and text.”

***CDE compliance monitoring.*** This resolution states that the CDE should monitor for specified humane education activities through its compliance monitoring system. The CDE monitors LEAs for compliance with state and federal law through on-site and online reviews. LEAs may be selected for monitoring every two years, and 120 new LEAs are monitored per year. The CDE reports that several factors are considered when identifying LEAs for review, including compliance history, academic achievement, program size, and fiscal status. Some are also chosen on a random basis. The CDE uses program instrument documents to guide monitors and LEAs in determining whether a district is in compliance with the law.

***Prior legislation.*** SB 811 (O’Connell) of the 2001-02 Session, would have required that the promotion of compassion and respect for both humans and animals be considered in the next cycle in which the science, and history/social science curricula frameworks and the accompanying instructional materials are adopted. This measure was held in the Assembly and not heard in this Committee.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

Social Compassion in Legislation (sponsor)  
Association of Professional Humane Educators  
Beagle Freedom Project  
City of West Hollywood  
Humane Society of the United States  
In Defense of Animals  
Public Interest Coalition  
RedRover  
Stanislaus Animal Services Agency  
Over 300 individuals

**Opposition**

Butte County Kennel Club Board of Directors  
California Right to Life Committee, Inc.

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