

Is This Where *The Handmaid's Tale* starts? (excerpts from a recent MoveOn piece)

Teachers in Florida have removed books from their classrooms or wrapped their bookshelves in paper so that students can't access them, in order to avoid being charged with a felony—up to five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine—simply for providing students books that Ron DeSantis and his supporters find offensive.¹

Bookshelves in some Florida schools are "entirely barren of books."²

DeSantis also just banned the teaching of AP African American Studies—a course that covers slavery, the civil rights movement, and much more, saying the course "lacked educational value."³

And, starting last fall, Florida is requiring high school students to submit detailed information about their menstrual cycles to the government in order to be cleared to play school sports.⁴

These dystopian policies follow on the heels of DeSantis's push to ban abortion, attack and further marginalize trans youth, and ban the teaching of accurate American history in favor of upholding a white supremacist vision of our nation.

DeSantis is expected to officially announce his run for president in the coming weeks, and pundits agree that these efforts in Florida are meant to reflect his campaign platform and attract the most extreme voters using vile, dangerous culture-war tactics.

We need to be clear-eyed in this moment, because these moves by DeSantis are not empty threats—they are already having real-world impact.

On Wednesday, the organization that oversees all AP courses announced that it had caved to conservative pressure and would remove all mentions of slavery reparations, queer representation, the Black Lives Matter movement, and more from its curriculum.⁵

This is the world that DeSantis and the Republicans want to build.

A world where not only is white supremacy the norm, but where discussions about the treatment of Black Americans and other people of color are illegal.

A world where books are burned for daring to tell the truth.

A world where our children are not free to gain knowledge.

A world where menstruating people are tracked day and night so that they can be punished if they have abortions.