

EDUCATION

Conn. lawmaker wants littlest kids to learn about climate

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A state legislator in Connecticut wants to make schools teach climate change to elementary students.

If the [bill](#) passes, Connecticut would be the first state in the country with required curriculum about global warming for kids of that age group.

The bill was drafted Wednesday by newly elected state Rep. Christine Palm (D), who said it's crucial that students begin learning about climate change as early as primary school.

"I want kids to learn about the import of this and what they can do to prevent their own generations from suffering from the deleterious effects and what they can do to change and protect their environment," Palm said in an interview.

Most public schools in Connecticut teach climate change as an elective since it is not part of the core curriculum. Palm's bill would change that.

"It's an early intervention in raising awareness on the part of kids who will inherit this Earth that admittedly older generations have befouled," Palm said.

"And they do need to know how to protect what is left of their environment and hopefully reverse that course," she added.

Climate change can be a divisive topic politically. But there's wider support for teaching it in science classes, according to an [analysis](#) by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.

The survey found that 78 percent of respondents believe that schools should teach global warming. That extends to some conservative states. In Oklahoma and Texas, which are rich in fossil fuels, more than 70 percent of people support the idea.

author of the study. "They want to know more."

That's not true everywhere. In Idaho, some legislators argued that students shouldn't learn that climate change is caused by human activity. Instead, the lawmakers say students should be given opposing arguments and allowed to decide for themselves, according to the Yale study.

"The public overwhelmingly believe that [climate change] is happening, but many people are confused about whether it's caused by humans," Marlon said.

The study also found that many teachers are uncertain of what's causing global warming. Thirty percent of them teach that climate change is naturally caused.

Some schools and teachers decide not to teach it based on their personal skepticism of warming, Marlon said. She also said some parents refuse to let their children participate in classes about climate change.

"There's nothing that should be optional about learning about climate change," Palm said. "We are way beyond the point where it's OK for kids not to know what is at stake."

In Connecticut, Palm plans to introduce her bill soon. It could then be vetted by members of the Joint Committee on Education. Democrats hold the majority in the state House and Senate.

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