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1  
2 An act relating to civic literacy education; amending  
3 s. 1003.44, F.S.; requiring the Commissioner of  
4 Education to develop criteria for a civic literacy  
5 practicum that meets certain goals beginning in a  
6 specified school year; providing purpose and  
7 requirements for the practicum; authorizing time spent  
8 on specified civic engagement activities to count  
9 toward requirements for certain scholarships and  
10 academic awards; creating s. 1004.342, F.S.;  
11 establishing the Citizen Scholar Program within the  
12 University of South Florida; providing that the  
13 program will be headquartered at a specified location;  
14 requiring the program to contract with a specified  
15 entity to serve certain students, subject to  
16 appropriation; providing program requirements;  
17 providing undergraduate credit for program completion;  
18 providing an effective date.

19  
20 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

21  
22 Section 1. Subsection (5) of section 1003.44, Florida  
23 Statutes, is renumbered as subsection (6), and a new subsection  
24 (5) is added to that section, to read:

25 1003.44 Patriotic programs; rules.—

26 (5) (a) The commissioner shall develop minimum criteria for  
27 a civic literacy practicum that helps students evaluate the  
28 roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens  
29 and identify effective methods of active participation in

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30 society, government, and the political system. The practicum may  
31 be incorporated into a school's curriculum for the high school  
32 United States Government course under s. 1003.4282(3)(d)  
33 beginning in the 2022-2023 school year.

34 (b) The purpose of the practicum is to inspire meaningful  
35 civic engagement and help students learn how governmental  
36 entities at the local, state, or federal level interact with the  
37 public which they represent and serve. The practicum must  
38 provide students with an opportunity to be civically engaged  
39 through any of the following activities:

40 1. Participation in an unpaid internship at a governmental  
41 entity.

42 2. A series of simulations or observations of one or more  
43 governmental entities performing their core functions in  
44 relation to the public. Such functions may include  
45 administrative, legislative, or judicial functions and other  
46 official business conducted by a governmental entity.

47 3. Learning about the United States citizenship  
48 naturalization process and attending a United States citizenship  
49 naturalization oath ceremony.

50 (c) The practicum must require a student to complete a  
51 research paper that must include all of the following:

52 1. Reflection on the student's experience participating in  
53 the civic engagement activity.

54 2. Explanation of the significance of the governmental  
55 entity's role in the student's community, the state, or the  
56 nation.

57 3. Explanation of how the governmental entity is responsive  
58 to the public.

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59           (d) The hours outside of classroom instruction that a  
60 student devotes to an unpaid civic engagement activity under  
61 paragraph (b) may count toward the community service  
62 requirements for participation in the Florida Bright Futures  
63 Scholarship Program. School districts are encouraged to include  
64 and accept civic literacy practicum activities and hours toward  
65 requirements for academic awards, especially those awards that  
66 include community service as a criterion or selection factor.

67           Section 2. Section 1004.342, Florida Statutes, is created  
68 to read:

69           1004.342 The Center for Civic Engagement Citizen Scholar  
70 Program.—

71           (1) The Citizen Scholar Program is created within the  
72 University of South Florida and shall be headquartered at the  
73 Center for Civic Engagement at the University of South Florida  
74 St. Petersburg due to its commitment to enhancing civic literacy  
75 and community engagement in the next generation of leaders.

76           (2) Subject to appropriation, the University of South  
77 Florida St. Petersburg shall contract with the YMCA, a nonprofit  
78 organization exempt from taxation under s. 501(c)(3) of the  
79 United States Internal Revenue Code, to provide students  
80 participating in the YMCA Youth and Government program the  
81 opportunity to be designated Citizen Scholars and earn  
82 undergraduate credit.

83           (3) The Citizen Scholar Program shall:

84           (a) Combine academic instruction with the implementation of  
85 concepts learned in the classroom into the local community,  
86 including business, educational and social services, and  
87 laboratory research, to improve civic literacy and expand

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88 educational experiences for students.

89 (b) Provide students with opportunities to deepen their  
90 knowledge of American democracy and improve civil discourse.

91 (4) High school students completing the program shall  
92 receive up to 6 undergraduate credit hours and be known as  
93 Citizen Scholars.

94 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.