

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

BILL: SR 150

INTRODUCER: Senator Diaz

SUBJECT: Individual Liberty and Democracy

DATE: January 26, 2021 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Candelaria	McVaney	GO	Pre-meeting
2.	_____	_____	JU	_____
3.	_____	_____	RC	_____

I. Summary:

SR 150 renounces democratic socialism in favor of the true American values of individual liberty and democracy.

Legislative resolutions have no force of law and are not subject to the approval or veto powers of the Governor.

II. Present Situation:

A Senate Resolution

A Senate resolution is a one-house document pertaining to issues that are ceremonial in nature in which the House of Representatives has no involvement.¹ Florida Senate Rule 3.6 states that resolutions are required to contain a proper title as required by Article III, Section 6 of the Florida Constitution. Florida Senate Rule 4.14 states that a Senate resolution be read by title only, two times on the same day before the question is put on adoption by voice vote.

Democracy

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) defines democracy as a representative government in which the government is elected by its citizens.² Citizens vote for their government officials, and in return, those officials represent the citizens' ideas and concerns in government. The United States Constitution establishes the United States as a democratic

¹ The Florida Senate, *Glossary, Bills: Resolution: Senate Resolution*, available at <http://www.flsenate.gov/Reference/Glossary#B> (last visited January 12, 2021).

² The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, *Democracy in the United States*, available at, https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/lesson-plans/Government_and_You_handouts.pdf, (last visited January 13, 2021).

republic by which the government's powers are derived from the people in the form of an election.³

International Monetary Fund

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) lists the United States as the highest valued growth domestic product (GDP) in the world at over \$21 trillion.⁴ The next closest country is the People's Republic of China with a GDP of over \$16 trillion, followed by Japan which ranks third with a GDP of over \$5 trillion. The United States has held the number one position for highest GDP in the world since the 1920's.⁵ The United States is also ranked as the number one overall economy in the world using the seven indicators provided by the IMF. These indicators are:

- Real GDP growth;
- Current GDP value;
- GDP per capita;
- Purchasing power parity;
- GDP based on percentage of world population;
- Population; and
- Unemployment rate.⁶

Definitions of Democratic Socialism

While there are no official definitions of "democratic socialism," there are socialist parties and labor movements that have created several characterizations of the political model. As a result, there are various definitions being used to describe democratic socialism, which all use different terminology.

Democratic Socialists of America

Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) define democratic socialism as a government that is run economically and socially democratically in order to meet the public needs.⁷ The DSA states that democratic socialists do not want to create an all-powerful government but rather a government that makes decisions based on whom are most affected.⁸

People's Policy Project Organization

The People's Policy Project, a self-described left-leaning, progressive organization, defines democratic socialism as a system whose means of production are owned by society. This system respects basic liberal rights and features democratic elections that are free and fair.⁹ Hence,

³ *Id.*

⁴ International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlooks - GDP Current Prices*, available at <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPD@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD> (last visited January 13, 2021)

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Democratic Socialists of America, *What is Democratic Socialism*, available at <https://www.dsusa.org/about-us/what-is-democratic-socialism/>, (last visited January 14, 2021)

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ People's Policy Project, *Musings on the Meaning of Democratic Socialism*, available at, <https://www.peoplespolicyproject.org/2018/06/30/musings-on-the-meaning-of-democratic-socialism>, (last visited January 14, 2021)

democratic socialism is a political economic form that combines liberal democracy with social ownership of the means of production.

United Kingdom Labour Party

The United Kingdom's Labour Party identifies its party ideology as democratic socialist. The Labour Party defines democratic socialism as greater state intervention, strengthening workers' rights, and creating social justice reform.¹⁰

Democratic Socialism: A Global Survey

Donald F. Busky, adjunct Professor of Political Science at Camden County College and author of *Democratic Socialism: A Global Survey*, defines democratic socialism as the wing of the socialist movement that combines a belief in a socially owned economy with that of political democracy.¹¹ According to Busky, democratic socialist ideals stem from revised Marxism, adding elements of Marxism to democracy.¹²

Countries with Constitutional References to Democratic Socialism

Currently, there are no countries whose official political model is democratic socialism. However, there are countries who reference the model in their respective constitutions and have adopted certain aspects of it in their governing style. The following countries reference democratic socialism in their constitutions:

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

The Republic of Sri Lanka's Constitution preamble states:

“Representatives who were elected by an overwhelming majority, to constitute Sri Lanka into a Democratic Socialist Republic whilst ratifying the immutable republican principles of Representative Democracy and assuring to all peoples Freedom, Equality, Justice, Fundamental Human Rights and the Independence of the Judiciary as the intangible heritage that guarantees the dignity and well-being of succeeding generations of the People of Sri Lanka and of all the people of the World, who come to share with those generations the effort of working for the creation and preservation of a Just and Free Society.”¹³

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Sri Lanka is currently valued at a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$86 billion, with a population of over 22 million people.¹⁴

¹⁰ New World Encyclopedia, *Labour Party (UK)*, available at [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Labour_Party_\(UK\)](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Labour_Party_(UK)) (last visited January 14, 2021)

¹¹ Donald F. Busky, *Democratic Socialism: A Global Survey*, Chapter One, Page 7. (Jan. 2000)

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Constitute Project, *Sri Lanka Constitution*, available at https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Sri_Lanka_2010?lang=en, (last visited January 13, 2021)

¹⁴ World Bank, *Population Total – Sri Lanka*, available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=LK>, (last visited January 13, 2021).

Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

Section 1, Article 4 of the Nepal Constitution states that: “Nepal is an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive democratic socialism-oriented federal republican state.”¹⁵

According to the IMF, Nepal is currently valued at a GDP of over \$34 billion, with a population totaling over 29 million people.¹⁶

Portuguese Republic

Portugal’s Constitution preamble states:

“The Constituent Assembly affirms the Portuguese people's decision to defend national independence, guarantee citizens' fundamental rights, establish the basic principles of democracy, ensure the primacy of a democratic state based on the rule of law and open up a path towards a democratic socialist society, with respect for the will of the Portuguese people and with a view to the construction of a country that is freer, more just and more fraternal.”¹⁷

According to the IMF, Portugal is valued at a GDP of over \$257 billion, with a total population of over 10 million people.¹⁸

People’s Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh’s preamble states:

“Pledging that the high ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism, which inspired our heroic people to dedicate themselves to, and our brave martyrs to sacrifice their lives in, the national liberation struggle, shall be the fundamental principles of the Constitution

Further pledging that it shall be a fundamental aim of the State to realize through the democratic process a socialist society, free from exploitation a society in which the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice, political, economic and social, will be secured for all citizen”¹⁹

According to the IMF, Bangladesh is currently valued at a GDP of over \$338 billion, with a total population of over 164 million people.²⁰

¹⁵ Constitute Project, *Nepal’s Constitution*, available at https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Nepal_2015.pdf (last visited January 13, 2021)

¹⁶ World Bank, *Population Total – Nepal*, available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=NP> , (last visited January 13, 2021).

¹⁷ Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, *Preamble*, available at <https://dre.pt/constitution-of-the-portuguese-republic>, (last visited January 13, 2021).

¹⁸ World Bank, *Population Total – Portugal*, available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=PT> , (last visited January 13, 2021).

¹⁹ The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, *Preamble*, available at <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367.html> (last visited January 14, 2021)

²⁰ World Bank, *Population Total – Bangladesh*, available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=BD> , (last visited January 13, 2021).

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SR 150 provides clauses relating to democratic socialism and American values, signifying that:

- Since its inception, the United States has adhered to the rule of law, embracing constitutional democracy and individual liberty;
- The rule of law ensures that citizens can participate in regulation through the election of their representatives, thereby protecting their real and personal property against unreasonable taxation;
- Individual liberty includes the freedom of a citizen to engage in, and benefit from, the labor of his or her hands;
- In the words of statesman, lawyer, diplomat, philosopher, and Founding Father James Madison, who served as our nation's fourth president, "As a man is said to have a right to his property, he may be equally said to have a property in his rights";
- All of the citizens of this great nation benefit from limiting the imposition of regulation on industry and supporting capitalism as a means of increasing the strength of our economy;
- In 2020, the International Monetary Fund reported that the economy of the United States remains the largest in the world at \$20.49 trillion, surpassing such competitors as China at \$13.4 trillion, Japan at \$4.97 trillion, and Germany at \$4 trillion;
- In contrast to the true American values of individual liberty and democracy, democratic socialism is a political and economic theory of social organization which advocates the ownership or regulation of production, distribution, and exchange by the community as a whole; and
- In many nations that have relied upon democratic socialism to improve the lives of their citizens, the result has been economic and social chaos, an extraordinarily low standard of living for the vast majority, and the lack of individual freedoms for all.

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IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

The mandate restrictions do not apply because the bill does not require counties and municipalities to spend funds, reduce counties' or municipalities' ability to raise revenue, or reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties and municipalities.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

As written, lines 2 and 43 of the resolution “renounces” democratic socialism. The use of the term “renounce” may be interpreted to suggest that the State of Florida currently adheres to democratic socialism and would like to abandon it rather than making a claim against the political model. Consideration of an amendment to lines 2 and 43 to replace “renounce” with “denounce” may be needed to clarify the intent of the bill.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

None.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
