

By Senator Brandes

24-00294B-22

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1 A bill to be entitled
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; authorizing the
6 practicum to be incorporated into a school's
7 curriculum beginning in a specified school year;
8 providing purposes and requirements for the practicum;
9 authorizing time spent on specified civic engagement
10 activities to count toward requirements for certain
11 scholarships and academic awards; creating s.
12 1004.342, F.S.; establishing the Citizen Scholar
13 Program within the University of South Florida;
14 providing that the program will be headquartered at a
15 specified location; requiring the program to contract
16 with a specified entity to serve certain students,
17 subject to appropriation; providing program
18 requirements; providing undergraduate credit for
19 program completion; prohibiting engaging in protest
20 civics from counting toward credit under the Citizen
21 Scholar Program; providing an effective date.

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23 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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25 Section 1. Present subsection (6) of section 1003.44,
26 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (7), and a new
27 subsection (6) is added to that section, to read:

28 1003.44 Patriotic programs; rules.—

29 (6) (a) The commissioner shall develop minimum criteria for

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30 a civic literacy practicum that helps students to evaluate the
31 roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens
32 and to identify effective methods of active participation in
33 society, government, and the political system. The practicum may
34 be incorporated into a school's curriculum for the high school
35 United States Government course under s. 1003.4282(3)(d)
36 beginning in the 2023-2024 school year.

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

43 1. Participating in an unpaid internship at a governmental
44 entity.

45 2. Participating in a series of simulations or observations
46 of one or more governmental entities performing their core
47 functions in relation to the public. Such functions may include,
48 but are not limited to, administrative, legislative, or judicial
49 functions and other official business conducted by a
50 governmental entity.

51 3. Learning about the United States citizenship
52 naturalization process and attending a United States citizenship
53 naturalization oath ceremony.

54 (c) The practicum must require each student to complete a
55 research paper that includes all of the following:

56 1. A reflection on the student's experience participating
57 in the civic engagement activity.

58 2. An explanation of the significance of the governmental

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59 entity's role in the student's community, the state, or the
60 nation.

61 3. An explanation of how the governmental entity is
62 responsive to the public.

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

71 Section 2. Section 1004.342, Florida Statutes, is created
72 to read:

73 1004.342 The Center for Civic Engagement Citizen Scholar
74 Program.—

75 (1) The Citizen Scholar Program is created within the
76 University of South Florida and shall be headquartered at the
77 Center for Civic Engagement at the University of South Florida
78 St. Petersburg due to the center's commitment to enhancing civic
79 literacy and community engagement in the next generation of
80 leaders.

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

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88 (3) The Citizen Scholar Program must:

89 (a) Implement concepts learned in the classroom in the
90 local community, including, but not limited to, business,
91 educational and social services, and laboratory research, to
92 improve civic literacy and expand educational experiences for
93 students.

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

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

99 (5) Engaging in protest civics may not count toward credit
100 under the Citizen Scholar Program.

101 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.