

By Senator Davis

5-01035A-25

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to public postsecondary education;
3 amending s. 1001.03, F.S.; requiring the State Board
4 of Education to ensure that Florida College System
5 institutions are free from undue government influence
6 and interference; deleting a provision prohibiting the
7 board from shielding students, faculty, and staff from
8 free speech protected under the First Amendment to the
9 United States Constitution, Article I of the State
10 Constitution, or a specified law; amending s.
11 1001.706, F.S.; requiring the Board of Governors to
12 ensure that state universities are free from undue
13 government influence and interference; deleting a
14 provision prohibiting the Board of Governors from
15 shielding students, faculty, and staff from free
16 speech protected under the First Amendment to the
17 United States Constitution, Article I of the State
18 Constitution, or a specified law; creating s.
19 1004.022, F.S.; providing that a student in the State
20 University System or Florida College System has the
21 unalienable right to pursue education access without
22 governmental or institutional interference; creating
23 s. 1012.802, F.S.; authorizing a faculty member at a
24 state university or Florida College System institution
25 to negotiate his or her assignments; requiring that
26 the negotiation process be free from interference from
27 a governing body; authorizing the Board of Governors
28 and the State Board of Education to adopt regulations
29 and rules, respectively; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subsection (19) of section 1001.03, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1001.03 Specific powers of State Board of Education.—

(19) INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY ASSESSMENT.—

(c) The State Board of Education shall ensure that Florida College System institutions are free from undue government influence and interference in academic affairs, including curriculum design, faculty appointments, research activities, and administrative operations ~~may not shield students, faculty, or staff at Florida College System institutions from free speech protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, Art. I of the State Constitution, or s. 1004.097.~~

Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (13) of section 1001.706, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1001.706 Powers and duties of the Board of Governors.—

(13) INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY ASSESSMENT.—

(c) The Board of Governors shall ensure that state universities are free from undue government influence and interference in academic affairs, including curriculum design, faculty appointments, research activities, and administrative operations ~~may not shield students, faculty, or staff at state universities from free speech protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, Art. I of the State Constitution, or s. 1004.97.~~

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59 Section 3. Section 1004.022, Florida Statutes, is created
60 to read:

61 1004.022 Freedom to learn.—Notwithstanding any other law to
62 the contrary, each student in the State University System and
63 the Florida College System has the unalienable right to pursue
64 education access across all academic disciplines without
65 governmental or institutional interference, including, but not
66 limited to, a student's prerogative to select, drop, or change
67 courses and areas of study without facing pressure or
68 restrictions based on political or ideological grounds.

69 Section 4. Section 1012.802, Florida Statutes, is created
70 to read:

71 1012.802 Faculty assignments at public postsecondary
72 educational institutions.—

73 (1) Each faculty member at a state university or Florida
74 College System institution may negotiate his or her annual
75 assignments with his or her department chair and academic
76 officers. To maintain the professional autonomy of faculty
77 members, the negotiation process must be free from interference
78 by the state university's or Florida College System
79 institution's board of trustees or any other governing body.

80 (2) The Board of Governors and the State Board of Education
81 may adopt regulations and rules, respectively, to administer
82 this section.

83 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.