

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 Rules

BILL: CS/CS/SB 1760

INTRODUCER: Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government Committee and Senator Grall

SUBJECT: Public Officers and Employees

DATE: April 22, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>McVaney</u>	<u>McVaney</u>	<u>GO</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
2.	<u>Davis</u>	<u>Betta</u>	<u>AEG</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
3.	<u>McVaney</u>	<u>Yeatman</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/CS/SB 1760 places additional citizenship and residency requirements on state executive branch officers, limits political activities of public officials and employees, limits reimbursement of travel expenses for secretaries and executive directors of state departments in certain instances, and defines the term “office” for purposes of the constitutional prohibition on dual office-holding.

This bill is not expected to affect state or local government revenues or expenditures.

This bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

Residency Requirements

A residency requirement is a mandate that certain public officers – elected and, in some cases, appointed—be residents of the area they serve or the area in which they work. Current law places specific residency requirements on the following public officers in Florida:

- Governor.¹
- Lieutenant Governor.²
- Cabinet members (Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer, and Commissioner of Agriculture).³
- State legislators.⁴
- State attorneys.⁵
- Public defenders.⁶
- County commissioners.⁷
- School board members.⁸
- Judges (supreme court justices, district court of appeal judges, and circuit court judges).⁹

All candidates for state and county public office, except candidates for judicial office, must subscribe to an oath affirming they are qualified electors of their county at the time of qualifying for public office.¹⁰ In order to be a qualified elector, one must be a U.S. citizen and a resident of the state as well as the county in which he or she registers to vote.¹¹ The Division of Elections within the Department of State has opined that, unless otherwise provided by the State Constitution, statute, or court ruling, the qualifications one must possess for public office, including residency, are determined as of the commencement of the term of office.¹² Accordingly, county constitutional officers¹³ must be residents of the jurisdiction they serve at the time of assuming office.

¹ The Governor must be a state resident for seven years and an elector before being elected. FLA. CONST. art. IV, s. 5(b).

² The Lieutenant Governor must be a state resident for seven years and an elector before being elected. *Id.*

³ Cabinet members must be state residents for seven years and an elector before being elected. *Id.*

⁴ State legislators must be residents of the district from which they are elected, be an elector in the district from which they were elected, and have resided in Florida for at least two years prior to being elected. FLA. CONST. art. III, s. 15(c).

⁵ State attorneys must be an elector of the state and reside in the territorial jurisdiction of the circuit in which they serve upon taking office. FLA. CONST. art. V, s. 17; *see also* Florida Division of Elections, *FAQ—Candidates*, <https://dos.fl.gov/elections/contacts/frequently-asked-questions/faq-candidates/> (last visited Apr. 22, 2025).

⁶ Public defenders must be an elector of the state and reside in the territorial jurisdiction of the circuit in which they serve upon taking office. FLA. CONST. art. V, s. 18; *see also* Florida Division of Elections, *FAQ—Candidates*, <https://dos.fl.gov/elections/contacts/frequently-asked-questions/faq-candidates/> (last visited Apr. 22, 2025).

⁷ County commissioners must be residents of the district from which they are elected at the time of election. FLA. CONST. art. VIII, s. 1(e); *see also* Florida Division of Elections Opinion 94-04; *State v. Grassi*, 532 So.2d 1055 (Fla. 1988).

⁸ A school board member must be a resident of the district school board member residence area and be an elector in the district in which he or she serves at the time of qualifying. Sections 1001.34 and 1001.36, F.S.; *see also* Florida Division of Elections Opinion 94-04.

⁹ Judges must reside in the territorial jurisdiction of the court they serve and be an elector of the state at the time of assuming office. FLA. CONST. art. V, s. 8; *see also Advisory Opinion to the Governor*, 192 So. 2d 757 (Fla. 1966).

¹⁰ Section 99.021(1)(a)1., F.S. Note candidates for municipal office are not explicitly required by this statute to reside within the municipality in which they are running for office. Instead, residency requirements for municipal offices are typically established on a local level. *See Nichols v. State*, 177 So.2d 467 (Fla. 1965); *Marina v. Leahy*, 578 So.2d 382 (Fla. 3rd DCA 1991); Florida Division of Elections Opinion 94-04.

¹¹ Section 97.041(1)(a), F.S.

¹² Florida Division of Elections Opinion 94-04.

¹³ The term “county constitutional officers” includes sheriffs, tax collectors, property appraisers, supervisors of elections, and clerks of circuit courts. FLA. CONST. art. VIII, s. 1(d).

Commissions

For purposes of ch. 20, F.S., a “commission” is “a body created by specific statutory enactment within a department,¹⁴ the office of the Governor, or the Executive Office of the Governor and exercising limited quasi-legislative or quasi-judicial powers, or both, independently of the head of the department or the Governor.”¹⁵ Commissions play an essential role, serving as regulatory oversight bodies across various policy areas. These entities are typically responsible for rulemaking, licensing, adjudicating disputes, or enforcing regulations.

Board of Trustees

For purposes of ch. 20, F.S., a “board of trustees” is a “board created by specific statutory enactment and appointed to function adjunctively to a department, the Governor, or the Executive Office of the Governor to administer public property or a public program.”¹⁶ While these entities may function within an executive department or under the Governor’s authority, they often operate with a degree of autonomy, making policy decisions and managing public programs in alignment with statutory mandates. Florida college boards of trustees are required to reside in the service delivery area of the college,¹⁷ while university boards of trustees do not have to reside in the state.¹⁸

The Board of Governors

The State University System of Florida consists of 12 public universities,¹⁹ each governed by an individual board of trustees.²⁰ The Board of Governors (BOG) is responsible for overseeing, regulating, and managing the entire State University System.²¹ Through its authority, the BOG ensures affordable access to higher education, promotes articulation with other educational institutions, and upholds fiscal responsibility and accountability across Florida’s public universities.²² The BOG consists of 17 members, 14 of which are “citizens” appointed by the Governor, subject to Senate confirmation.²³ The commissioner of education, the chair of the advisory council of faculty senates, and the president of the Florida student association are also members.²⁴

¹⁴ “Department” means the principal administrative unit within the executive branch of state government. Section 20.03(8), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 20.03(4), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 20.03(2), F.S. The definition specifically exempts boards created under ch. 253, F.S., relating to public lands and property.

¹⁷ FLA. CONST. art. IX, s. 8(c).

¹⁸ Section 1001.71(1), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 1000.21(9), F.S.; see State University System, *Universities*, <https://www.flbog.edu/universities/> (last visited Apr. 22, 2025).

²⁰ FLA. CONST. art. IX, s. 7(b), FLA. CONST.; s. 1001.71, F.S.

²¹ See FLA. CONST. art. IX, s. 7(d).

²² Section 20.155(4)(b), F.S.

²³ FLA. CONST. art. IX, s. 7(d); see s. 1001.70, F.S.

²⁴ FLA. CONST. art. IX, s. 7(d).

Licensing Boards

For purposes of ch. 20, F.S., a “licensing board” is “a board authorized to grant and revoke licenses to engage in regulated occupations.”²⁵ The boards are typically established to oversee and enforce standards within various professions, ensuring that practitioners meet the requisite qualifications and that those practitioners adhere to established ethical and professional guidelines. The boards are commonly composed of professionals licensed in the respective fields and members of the public who represent consumer interests.

Quasi-public Entities

Throughout the Florida Statutes, entities have been established that are neither entirely governmental in nature nor entirely private but possess traits from both the public and private sectors. These entities are often referred to as quasi-public entities (QPEs). The reasons for their establishment in law vary from entity to entity. Some are independent entities created to advance certain policy goals. For example, the Florida Housing Finance Corporation was created to finance or refinance housing and related facilities.²⁶ Others, like the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation²⁷ and Citizens Property Insurance Corporation,²⁸ are created to administer government programs or to achieve a particular outcome in the state or in a community.

Just as the purposes of these QPEs vary, so too do their structures. For example, some are nonprofit corporations established completely independent of government and others are for-profit corporations funded through methods that allow the entity to be entirely self-sufficient. The governing bodies of QPEs, usually a board of directors or board of trustees, vary, too. The membership of these boards ranges from government officials and political appointees to private sector representatives and board-elected members.

Executive Departments

Florida’s executive branch structure is set forth in the State Constitution and further refined by statute. The State Constitution provides that “[a]ll functions of the executive branch of state government [must] be allotted to among not more than twenty-five departments,” excluding those explicitly created or authorized by the Constitution.²⁹ A “department” is the principal administrative unit within the executive branch of state government.³⁰ Each department is headed by a secretary³¹ appointed by the Governor or an executive director³² appointed by the Governor

²⁵ Section 20.03(9), F.S.

²⁶ Section 420.504(1), F.S.

²⁷ Florida Healthy Kids Corporation aims to improve children’s health by providing comprehensive and affordable health insurance coverage. Section 624.91(2)(a), F.S.

²⁸ Citizens Property Insurance Corporation was created to provide property insurance coverage to those unable to find affordable coverage in the voluntary admitted market. Section 627.351(6)(a)1., F.S.

²⁹ FLA. CONST. art. IV, s. 6.

³⁰ Section 20.03(8), F.S.

³¹ See s. 20.03(12), F.S.

³² See s. 20.03(10), F.S.

and Cabinet or a board.³³ Additionally, some departments house subunits that function independently of their parent department.³⁴ These department heads and administrative officers play a critical role in policy implementation, program administration, and regulatory enforcement.

Prohibited Political Activities of Public Officials and Employees

Section 104.31(1)(a), F.S., prohibits a state, county and municipal officer or employee from using his or her official authority or influence to interfere with an election or nomination of office or coercing or influencing another person's vote or affecting the result of an election. However, this prohibition does not limit the political activities of an elected officer or candidate for office or apply to an official appointed as a state agency head or a member of a state board or commission.

Section 104.31(1)(b), F.S., prohibits a public officer or employee from directly or indirectly coercing or attempting to coerce, command, or advise another officer or employee to contribute anything of value for political purposes. However, an employee may suggest to another employee in a noncoercive manner to voluntarily contribute to political funds.

Section 104.31(1)(c), F.S., prohibits a public officer or employee from coercing or attempting to coerce another officer or employee regarding where commodities might be purchased or otherwise interfering with the officer's or employee's personal rights.

A violation of any of these prohibitions is punishable as a first-degree misdemeanor.

Section 110.233(4), F.S., prohibits a state employee in the Career Service from holding, or being a candidate for, public office while employed by the state or to take any active part in a political campaign while on duty or during a time in which the employee is expected to perform services. A state employee in the Career Service is also prohibited from using the employee's authority of his position to secure support for, or oppose, any candidate, party, or issue in a partisan election.

Travel Reimbursement

Section 112.063, F.S., establishes the procedures and reimbursement policies for travel by public employees. All travel must be authorized and approved by the head of the agency, or a designated representative.³⁵ Travel expenses must be limited to those expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of a public purpose authorized by law to be performed by the agency.³⁶ Travel expenses include reimbursement of transportation expenses, reimbursement of lodging expenses, and per diem and meal allowances.

³³ For example, the executive director of the State Board of Administration is appointed by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees comprised of the Governor, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Attorney General. The Governor must vote on the prevailing side. Section 215.441, F.S.

³⁴ For example, the Division of Administrative Hearings is housed with the Department of Management Services but is not subject to the department's control, supervision, or direction. Section 120.65(1), F.S.

³⁵ Section 112.061(3)(a), F.S.

³⁶ Section 112.061(3)(b), F.S.

An officer's or employee's official headquarters is the city or town in which the officer or employee is assigned. For departmental secretaries and executive directors, the official headquarters is located typically in Tallahassee. A traveler may leave the assigned post to return home overnight, over a weekend, or during a holiday.³⁷ However, the traveler may not be reimbursed for travel expenses more than the established rate of per diem allowed had the traveler remained at the assigned post.³⁸ No allowance shall be made for meals when travel is confined to the city or town of the official headquarters or immediate vicinity.³⁹

Travelers are allowed for each day of travel either \$80 per diem or, if actual expenses exceed \$80, the amounts permitted for subsistence plus actual expenses for lodging at a single-occupancy rate.⁴⁰ The allowable amounts for subsistence are \$6 for breakfast, \$11 for lunch, and \$19 for dinner.⁴¹

Dual Office-holding

The State Constitution prohibits individuals from holding multiple public offices simultaneously and applies to public offices in state, county, and municipal government.⁴² The provision applies to both elected and appointed offices, ensuring that no single individual accumulates multiple governmental roles that could create a conflict of interest.⁴³ Neither the State Constitution nor the Legislature has defined the term "office," leaving the court to establish its meaning through case law. Florida courts have interpreted the term "office" in opposition to the term "employment," with the latter not being subject to prohibition on dual office-holding. An "office," the courts have held, refers to a position that exercises sovereign power, has a legally prescribed tenure, and is established by law rather than by contract.⁴⁴ The term "employment," by contrast, "does not comprehend a delegation of any part of the sovereign authority [of government]."⁴⁵ Positions such as department heads, members of governing boards, and elected officials have typically been considered offices, while positions like assistants, deputy clerks, and administrative employees have typically been classified as public employees.⁴⁶

Despite the general prohibition, Florida courts have recognized an ex officio exception that allows an individual to perform additional official duties if those duties are assigned by legislative designation to the office itself rather than to the individual holding it, provided that the additional duties are consistent with those already exercised.⁴⁷ For example, county commissioners and school board members may also serve ex officio on a property appraisal adjustment board if the law assigns this responsibility to their office rather than to the individual,

³⁷ Section 112.061(4)(c), F.S.

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ Section 112.061(5), F.S.

⁴⁰ Section 112.061(6)(1)(a), F.S.

⁴¹ Section 112.061(6)(1)(b), F.S.

⁴² FLA. CONST. art. II, s. 5(a).

⁴³ *Bath Club, Inc. v. Dade County*, 394 So. 2d 110 (Fla. 1981); see *Blackburn v. Broroin*, 70 So. 2d 293 (Fla. 1954).

⁴⁴ *State ex rel. Holloway v. Sheats*, 83 So. 508 (Fla. 1919); *State ex rel. Clyatt v. Hocker*, 22 So. 721 (Fla. 1897).

⁴⁵ *State ex rel. Holloway v. Sheats*, 83 So. 508 (Fla. 1919).

⁴⁶ See Office of the Attorney General, *Dual Office-holding*,

<https://www.myfloridalegal.com/files/pdf/page/4FF72ECF62927EEA85256CC6007B4517/DualOfficeHoldingPamplet.pdf> (last visited Apr. 22, 2025).

⁴⁷ *Bath Club, Inc. v. Dade County*, 394 So. 2d 110 (Fla. 1981).

as their additional duties are consistent with their existing responsibilities. Additionally, the State Constitution explicitly exempts certain roles, such as notaries public, military officers, and members of advisory bodies from the dual office-holding prohibition.⁴⁸

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 creates s. 20.71, F.S., effective October 1, 2025, to establish requirements of “U.S. citizenship” and “state residency” for individuals serving as:

- The secretary of a department (this includes most executive branch secretaries, except the departments of Legal Affairs; Financial Services; Agriculture and Consumer Services; and those departments noted below);
- The executive director of a department (this includes the executive directors of the departments of Revenue; Law Enforcement; Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles; Veterans’ Affairs; Elderly Affairs; and Citrus; the executive director of the State Board of Administration; the Commissioner of Education; and the Adjutant General of the Department of Military Affairs);
- The chief administrative officer of any unit of state government housed under a department for administrative purposes but not subject to control by the department (this includes, but is not limited to, the executive directors of the Florida Gaming Control Commission; Florida Transportation Commission; Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; the director of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities; the Commissioner of Insurance Regulation; and the Commissioner of Financial Regulation, the Chief Judge of the Division of Administrative Hearings, the executive director of the Human Relations Commission, and the chair of the Public Employees Relations Commission);
- A member of a commission;
- A member of a licensing board;
- The chair of a governing board, or the chief executive of a statewide entity statutorily created for a public purpose or to carry out a government program, and that is not under the direct control of a governmental entity; or
- An appointee to state office in the executive branch.

Effective January 6, 2027, the bill requires:

- A member of a state university board of trustees to be a U.S. citizen and either a Florida resident or a graduate of the state university, the administration of which is overseen by such board of trustees.
- A member of the Board of Governors to be a U.S. citizen and either a Florida resident or a graduate of a [Florida] state university.

The office of an individual that does not meet the applicable residency and citizenship requirements under the bill is automatically deemed vacant.

Section 2 amends s. 104.31, F.S., to repeal the exemption that allows officials appointed as the heads or directors of state administrative agencies, boards, commissions, or committees to engage in certain political activities. Such officials will be subject to the same standards as all

⁴⁸ Members of a constitutional revision commission and taxation and budget reform commission are also exempt. FLA. CONST. art. II, s. 5(a).

other state, county, or municipal officers or employees, meaning he or she cannot use his or her official authority or influence to interfere with an election, nomination of office, or another's vote. The current exemption for elected officials or candidates for public office in the state or any county or municipality is maintained.

Section 3 amends s. 110.233, F.S., to prohibit a state career service employee from using the influence of his or her position to (a) directly or indirectly coerce or attempt to coerce, command, or advise any other officer or employee to pay any part of his or her salary to any political purpose, and (b) directly or indirectly coerce or attempt to coerce, command, or advise any other officer or employee to purchase commodities or otherwise interfere with the with the person's personal right.

Section 4 amends s. 112.061, F.S., to prohibit the payment of travel expenses for a department secretary or executive director when the person travels between the department's official headquarters (or assigned post) and the officer's permanent residence.

Section 5 creates s. 112.31251, F.S., to define the term "office" for purposes of the constitutional restriction on dual office-holding in Florida. The term "office" is defined to mean any position in state, county, or municipal government that:

- Delegates to the individual holding the position a portion of sovereign power of the government;
- Requires the exercise of independent governmental authority performed in an official capacity rather than solely based upon a contractual or employment relationship;
- Has a prescribed tenure; and
- Exists independently of the individual holding the position.

The following offices are enumerated as positions that meet the definition of "office":

- Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Cabinet officers;
- State senator and state representative;
- County commissioner, sheriff, tax collector, property appraiser, supervisor of elections, and clerk of circuit court;
- Member of the Board of Governors of the State University System;
- Member of a board of trustees for a state university;
- Member of a district school board;
- Member of a state, county, or municipal board or commission that exercises governmental authority and is not purely advisory in nature;
- Member of the Board of Governors for the Citizens Property Insurance Corporation;
- Member of the board of directors for the Florida Housing Finance Corporation;
- Member of the board of directors for the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, other than the member nominated by the Florida Association of Counties and appointed by the Chief Financial Officer;
- Administrator or manager of a county, a municipality, corporation or the director of a county or municipal emergency management agency who exercises in his or her own right any sovereign power or any prescribed independent authority of a government nature;

- State, county, or municipal law enforcement officer with the authority to arrest without a warrant; and
- Any position that meets all criteria enumerated in s. 112.31251(1)(a), F.S.

The bill also exempts ex officio⁴⁹ designations and employment positions from the definition of “office.” The bill defines “employment” to mean a relationship with a state, county, or municipal government where an individual does not exercise in his or her own right any sovereign power or any prescribed individual authority of a governmental nature.

Section 6 provides that the bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

Not applicable. The bill does not require counties or municipalities to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, or reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

Art. IX, section 7(d) of the State Constitution provides that the Board of Governors of the State University System will be comprised of fourteen *citizen members dedicated to the purposes of the state university system*. Similarly, Art. IX, section 7(c) of the State Constitution provides that each board of trustees of a state university will be comprised of six *citizen* members appointed by the governor and five *citizen* members appointed by the Board of Governors.

⁴⁹ A person serving in an ex officio capacity serves “by virtue or because of an office.” Black’s Law Dictionary (12th ed. 2024).

Art. II, section 5(b) of the State Constitution requires each state and county officer to affirm:

I do solemnly affirm that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and the State of Florida; that I am duly *qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the state*; and that I will well and faithfully perform the duties of *the office on which I am not about to enter*. So help me God.⁵⁰

Since the State Constitution explicitly places citizenship, dedication to the purposes of the state university system, and senate confirmation requirements on these appointees, it is unclear whether the legislature may add other qualifications (i.e., residency) that must be met for the officer.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

This bill is not expected to affect state or local government revenues or expenditures.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None identified.

VII. Related Issues:

None identified.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends sections 104.31, 110.233, and 112.61 of the Florida Statutes.

This bill creates sections 20.71 and 112.31251 of the Florida Statutes

⁵⁰ Article II, s. 5(b), Fla. Const. (emphasis added).

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)**CS/CS by Rules on April 21, 2025:**

The committee substitute:

- Makes clarifying changes to the residency requirements for public officers. Under this amendment, the department secretaries and executive officers and other chief administrative officers must maintain residency throughout the period each holds office but will not be required to live within close proximity of the department's official headquarters.
- Clarifies that officers who have a residency requirement for appointment will have the respective position vacated if the officer fails to maintain the residency requirement.
- Prohibits the payment of travel expenses for department secretaries and executive directors when they travel between the department's official headquarters and the officer's permanent residence.
- Repeals a current law exemption that allows officials appointed as the heads or directors of state administrative agencies, boards, commissions, or committees to engage in certain political activities. Such officials will be subject to the same standards as all other state, county, or municipal officers or employees, meaning he or she cannot use his or her official authority or influence to interfere with an election, nomination of office, or another's vote. The current exemption for elected officials or candidates for public office in the state or any county or municipality is maintained.
- Prohibits a state career service employee from using the influence of his or her position to (a) directly or indirectly coerce or attempt to coerce, command, or advise any other officer or employee to pay any part of his or her salary to any political purpose, and (b) directly or indirectly coerce or attempt to coerce, command, or advise any other officer or employee to purchase commodities or otherwise interfere with the with the person's personal right.

CS by Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government on April 15, 2025:

The committee substitute:

- Specifies effective dates for the bill's citizenship and residency requirements.
- As part of the citizenship and residency requirements:
 - Permits a secretary and executive director of a department, or the chief administrative officer of any unit of state government housed under a department for administrative purposes to reside within 75 miles of the department headquarters.
 - Allows a member of the State University System board of trustees to either be a graduate of the state university he or she oversees or a Florida resident.
 - Allows a member of the Board of Governors to either be a graduate of a state university or a Florida resident.

- Modifies the residency requirement for quasi-public entities to make them applicable only to the chairperson of the governing board or the chief executive officer.
- Removes local government attorneys from the dual-officeholding prohibition.

B. Amendments:

None.

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