

By Senator Simon

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Florida State University
3 Election Law Center; creating s. 1004.421, F.S.;
4 creating the center within the Florida State
5 University College of Law; defining the term "election
6 law"; providing the goals of the center; authorizing
7 the center to hire staff and develop courses;
8 authorizing the center to hold events and conduct,
9 aid, and sponsor specified research; authorizing the
10 center to provide training and continuing education;
11 authorizing the center to provide assistance to the
12 Legislature and other governmental entities;
13 authorizing the center to provide scholarships and
14 assistantships and to partner with specified entities;
15 authorizing specified entities to cooperate with the
16 center and share specified information; providing
17 mechanisms for the funding of the center; requiring
18 the dean of the college of law to appoint a faculty
19 director; providing the duties of the faculty and
20 executive directors; providing an effective date.

21
22 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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24 Section 1. Section 1004.421, Florida Statutes, is created
25 to read:

26 1004.421 Election Law Center at the Florida State
27 University.—The Florida State University Election Law Center is
28 hereby created at the Florida State University College of Law.

29 (1) (a) For purposes of this section, the term "election

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30 law" shall be construed broadly to include, but not be limited
31 to, issues related to:

32 1. Voting rights.

33 2. Election administration.

34 3. Election emergencies.

35 4. Election integrity.

36 5. Voter registration and voter registration databases.

37 6. Cyber or other technical issues relating to elections.

38 7. Federal, state, and local legal provisions governing the
39 electoral process.

40 8. Election contests for any federal, state, or local
41 office.

42 9. Matters relating to the Electoral College or the
43 casting, counting, or validity of electoral votes.

44 10. Federal and state campaign finance law.

45 11. Election audits.

46 12. Apportionment and redistricting.

47 13. Doctrines relating to justiciability, civil procedure,
48 and remedies which may arise in election-related cases.

49 (b) Election law includes the historical, empirical, and
50 comparative aspects of the topics specified in paragraph (a), as
51 well as philosophical and theoretical issues relating to
52 democracy, democratic theory, and republicanism more broadly.

53 (2) The goals of the center are to:

54 (a) Conduct and promote rigorous, objective, nonpartisan,
55 evidence-based research concerning important constitutional,
56 statutory, and regulatory issues relating to election law.

57 (b) Plan and host events to allow students, scholars,
58 legislators, judges, election administrators, attorneys, and

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59 members of the public to learn about the electoral process and
60 election law.

61 (c) Develop and sponsor publicly accessible materials and
62 resources concerning elections and election law.

63 (d) Assist students in learning about, gaining practical
64 experience with, and pursuing career opportunities relating to
65 election law.

66 (e) Enhance the Florida State University College of Law's
67 reputation as a nationally respected source for cutting-edge
68 legal scholarship and technical legal expertise.

69 (f) Serve as a credible, objective, nonpartisan resource to
70 address election law inquiries from federal, state, and local
71 election officials and the Legislature and legislative staff;
72 bolster understanding of the electoral process; and promote
73 public confidence in Florida's electoral system.

74 (g) Develop objective, evidence-based analysis, best
75 practices, and potential reforms to statutes, regulations, and
76 other policies governing elections to:

77 1. Enable electoral systems to deal more effectively with
78 natural disasters and other emergencies that can impede or
79 undermine an election;

80 2. Bolster public confidence in the electoral process;

81 3. Ensure that United States citizens who meet this state's
82 voter qualification requirements have a reasonable, adequate,
83 and safe opportunity to exercise their right to vote; and

84 4. Minimize the possibility of mistake, fraud, violations,
85 accidents, or other irregularities impacting elections.

86 (3) The center may do all of the following:

87 (a) Hire necessary faculty and staff and develop and teach

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88 courses relating to election law.

89 (b) Hold events, including workshops, symposia,
90 roundtables, interviews, public discussions, lectures, and
91 conferences.

92 (c) Conduct, aid, and sponsor research relating to election
93 law, to publish or otherwise make publicly available articles,
94 reports, analyses, databases, or websites relating to election
95 law issues.

96 (d) Provide training and continuing education for the
97 federal and state judiciaries and judicial organizations,
98 attorneys, Department of State personnel, supervisors of
99 elections and their employees, and other election
100 administrators.

101 (e) Provide formal or informal assistance to the
102 Legislature, as well as to governmental entities or officials at
103 the federal, state, or county levels, concerning elections or
104 election law, including, but not limited to, research, reports,
105 public comments, testimony, or briefs.

106 (f) Provide scholarships and research assistantships to
107 outstanding students interested in election law and sponsor
108 fellowships to pay for qualified students to work with the
109 center or at any local, state, or federal office or nonpartisan
110 entity that deals with election law.

111 (g) Partner with other centers, programs, institutes, and
112 associations, as appropriate, to promote the center's goals.

113 (4) The Department of State, supervisors of elections, the
114 State Library, and the State Archives may cooperate and share
115 with the center electronic copies of information or data in
116 their possession, custody, or control upon request of the

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117 center's faculty director to further the goals of the center,
118 provided that the center and its employees are subject to, and
119 store such information or data consistent with, confidentiality
120 and security requirements comparable to those that apply to the
121 department, supervisors of elections, and their employees.

122 (5) The center shall be funded through appropriations as
123 provided in the General Appropriations Act, charitable donations
124 and grants, and other university funds.

125 (6) The dean of the Florida State University College of Law
126 shall appoint a faculty director to lead the center. The faculty
127 director must be a tenured member of the faculty of the law
128 school. The faculty director shall hire an executive director to
129 conduct the center's day-to-day operations. The faculty
130 director, in consultation with the executive director, shall do
131 all of the following:

132 (a) Establish programs that promote the center's goals.

133 (b) Develop the budget and disburse the funds appropriated,
134 donated, or provided to the center.

135 (c) Hire employees for the center.

136 (d) Oversee the center's research, education, and training
137 programs, events, and work product.

138 (7) The center's research, work, activities, filings,
139 speakers, events, and operations shall be subject to academic
140 freedom protections. The center or any of its full-time faculty
141 or staff may not be compelled to conduct, consult on, or
142 otherwise assist any research or initiatives by any outside
143 federal, state, or local official or agency or private person or
144 entity. The center shall seek to promote intellectual freedom
145 and viewpoint diversity as defined in s. 1001.706(13) (a)1.

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Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.