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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

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Floor: 1/AD/RM

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Senator Brodeur moved the following:

1 **Senate Amendment to House Amendment (240687) (with title**
2 **amendment)**

3
4 Delete lines 5 - 107

5 and insert:

6 Section 1. Section 265.0042, Florida Statutes, is created
7 to read:

8 265.0042 Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame.-

9 (1) There is created the Florida Speech and Debate Hall of
10 Fame. The Department of Management Services shall set aside an
11 area on the Plaza Level of the Capitol Building and shall



12 consult with the Florida Education Foundation and the
13 Commissioner of Education regarding the design and theme of the
14 area.

15 (2) The hall of fame shall do all of the following:

16 (a) Honor distinguished students, coaches, educators,
17 alumni, veterans, public servants, benefactors, and supporters
18 who have elevated speech and debate in this state.

19 (b) Preserve the history, impact, and cultural significance
20 of competitive debate.

21 (c) Inspire future generations of Florida students to
22 pursue speech, debate, public leadership, and civic excellence.

23 (3) The hall of fame shall convene a committee to establish
24 procedures to nominate and select individuals to be featured.

25 Section 2. Section 683.221, Florida Statutes, is created to
26 read:

27 683.221 Florida Speech and Debate Week.-

28 (1) February 1 through February 7 shall be annually
29 designated as "Florida Speech and Debate Week."

30 (2) Florida Speech and Debate Week shall be observed for
31 all of the following purposes:

32 (a) To recognize the academic, civic, and leadership value
33 of competitive speech and debate.

34 (b) To honor educators, coaches, judges, and school
35 districts that support debate programming.

36 (c) To inspire students statewide to participate in debate
37 as a pathway to civic engagement.

38 (d) To promote Florida's role as the national leader in
39 scholastic speech and debate.

40 (3) Public and charter schools, state agencies, and other



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41 entities may observe Florida Speech and Debate Week.

42 Section 3. Section 1000.09, Florida Statutes, is created to
43 read:

44 1000.09 Competitive speech and debate.-

45 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.-

46 (a) The Legislature finds that speech and debate
47 significantly improve literacy, critical thinking, research
48 ability, civic knowledge, and leadership for students of this
49 state.

50 (b) The Legislature also finds that this state's civics and
51 debate expansion has become a national model, increasing access
52 to this instruction in all regions. Sustaining and improving
53 this success requires a permanent statewide organization with
54 specialized expertise, program capacity, and year-round
55 operational support.

56 (c) The Legislature further finds that the Florida Debate
57 Initiative has demonstrated statewide effectiveness and is
58 uniquely positioned to ensure continuity, equitable access,
59 quality programming, tournament infrastructure, and
60 instructional rigor.

61 (d) It is the intent of the Legislature to establish a
62 comprehensive statewide infrastructure, under the Florida Debate
63 Initiative's direction, which expands, supports, and elevates K-
64 20 speech and debate education.

65 (2) CREATION, DESIGNATION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES.-In
66 alignment with, and in support of, the Department of Education
67 and the program it operates called the Florida Civics and Debate
68 Initiative (FCDI), the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., (FDI) is
69 established as this state's nonprofit statewide speech and



70 debate organization that manages, develops, and expands K-20
71 civics, speech, and debate programs.

72 (a)1. FDI shall support and expand access to statewide
73 civic literacy and speech and debate programs by undertaking the
74 following, which list is not exhaustive:

- 75 a. Educating and training coaches and students.
- 76 b. Training judges and volunteers.
- 77 c. Promoting educational competition opportunities.
- 78 d. Leading training and leadership development experiences.
- 79 e. Establishing competition standards.
- 80 f. Maintaining statewide data reporting.
- 81 g. Assisting the FCDI, upon request, in civics-focused
82 education, training, and programming initiatives.

83 2. This paragraph may not be construed to prohibit schools,
84 districts, or students from participating in civics, speech and
85 debate activities, leagues, or competitions not operated or
86 supervised by FDI.

87 (b) FDI may establish and maintain partnerships with school
88 districts, charter schools, state agencies, postsecondary
89 institutions, nonprofit organizations, private entities, and
90 national or international organizations to achieve the purposes
91 of this section, including collaborative efforts with FCDI. In
92 such collaboration:

93 1. FCDI and FDI shall jointly host and operate the annual
94 National Civics and Debate Championship known as The Great
95 Debate, a nationally recognized synthesis of civics education
96 and debate competition that challenges students' civic
97 knowledge, debate skills, and endurance through multi-day,
98 multi-event competition.



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99 2. FCDI shall lead specific civics immersion events,
100 including FCDI Day at the Capitol and the Great American Civics
101 Challenge, which includes the Ronald Reagan Presidential Debates
102 and the We The People Civics Showdown.

103 3. FDI shall provide logistical support, debate tournament
104 operations support, and tournament coordination support for The
105 Great Debate and other collaborative initiatives to advance
106 statewide speech and debate opportunities.

107 (3) AUTHORIZED USES OF FUNDS.—FDI may expend program funds
108 on all of the following:

109 (a) Administrative operations, including staffing,
110 insurance, compliance, reporting, and statewide infrastructure.

111 (b) Programmatic operations, including curriculum,
112 training, summer programs, workshops, camps, and mentorship
113 programs.

114 (c) Tournament operations, including logistics, staff,
115 judge training, technology, awards, and regional team
116 operations.

117 (d) Travel, lodging, training, and transportation for
118 participants, including local, state, and national travel to
119 competitions hosted by FDI, FCDI, or other civics, speech, and
120 debate organizations.

121 (e) Public-private partnership development, including
122 sponsorship and philanthropic support.

123 (f) Memberships, affiliations, and participation fees
124 related to civics education, speech, debate, leadership, and
125 academic competition programs, provided such memberships,
126 affiliations, and participation advance the purposes of this
127 section.



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128 (4) REPORTING.—FDI shall make publicly available online and
129 submit, no later than December 31 of each year, an annual report
130 to the Department of Education which includes all of the
131 following:

132 (a) Student participation in statewide FDI programs, by
133 district and demographics.

134 (b) The number of active student teams in statewide FDI
135 speech and debate programs.

136 (c) Competitive and educational outcomes of statewide FDI
137 programs.

138 (d) A categorized summary of all expenditures.

139 (5) ENDORSEMENT IN SPEECH AND DEBATE.—Pursuant to s.
140 1012.56 and State Board of Education rule, a certified teacher
141 may earn an endorsement in speech and debate if he or she
142 demonstrates all of the following:

143 (a) Completion of coursework approved by the board in
144 argumentation, rhetoric, communication, or debate instruction.

145 (b) Completion of professional development offered by FDI
146 or equivalent professional development offered by a Florida
147 College System institution or state university.

148 (c) Competency, as determined by the board, in the rules,
149 events, and competitive standards of scholastic debate.

150 (6) REGIONAL TRAVELING DEBATE TEAMS.—The department shall
151 collaborate with FDI to establish regional traveling debate
152 teams to represent Florida in national competitions. Teams must
153 be accessible to students at Title I and rural schools. Teams
154 must provide competitive training and coaching for speech and
155 debate.

156 (a) All travel costs may be covered through legislative



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157 appropriation, public-private partnerships, and sponsorships.

158 (b) A school district may use school buses to transport
159 students to and from speech and debate competitions.

160 Section 4. Present subsection (29) of section 1001.42,
161 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (30), and a new
162 subsection (29) is added to that section, to read:

163 1001.42 Powers and duties of district school board.—The
164 district school board, acting as a board, shall exercise all
165 powers and perform all duties listed below:

166 (29) SPEECH AND DEBATE COMPETITION REPORTING.—Each district
167 school board shall annually make available online and submit to
168 the Department of Education, by a date set by the department, a
169 report that includes all of the following information:

170 (a) The number of active speech and debate teams.

171 (b) Student participation rates.

172 (c) Competitive performance and public service engagement.

173 (d) Transportation, facilities, and administrative support
174 provided.

175 (e) Resources needed to expand the program.

176 Section 5. Section 1004.0983, Florida Statutes, is created
177 to read:

178 1004.0983 Speech and debate training pathways.—The Board of
179 Governors and the State Board of Education shall develop
180 undergraduate and graduate coursework, certificates, and micro-
181 credentials in speech and debate education, coaching, and
182 tournament operations.

183 (1) Coursework may include all of the following:

184 (a) Rhetoric, argumentation, and communication theory.

185 (b) Coaching methods and competitive event instruction.



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186 (c) Tournament management and adjudication.
187 (d) Public speaking pedagogy.
188 (2) The Board of Governors and the State Board of Education
189 may collaborate with the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., to
190 develop coursework.

191 Section 6. The Department of Education shall approve
192 courses developed pursuant to s. 1004.0983, Florida Statutes,
193 for inclusion in dual enrollment programs under s. 1007.271,
194 Florida Statutes.

195 Section 7. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

196
197 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

198 And the title is amended as follows:

199 Delete lines 114 - 133

200 and insert:

201 creating s. 265.0042, F.S.; creating the Florida
202 Speech and Debate Hall of Fame; requiring the
203 Department of Management Services to set aside an area
204 in the Capitol Building for the hall of fame;
205 requiring the department to consult with the Florida
206 Education Foundation and the Commissioner of
207 Education; providing the duties for the hall of fame;
208 requiring the hall of fame to convene a committee for
209 specified purposes; creating s. 683.221, F.S.;

210 designating Florida Speech and Debate Week annually in
211 February; providing purposes of the annual observance;
212 authorizing specified entities to observe Florida
213 Speech and Debate Week; creating s. 1000.09, F.S.;

214 providing legislative findings and intent;



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215 establishing the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc.,
216 (FDI) as a statewide speech and debate organization
217 that performs certain functions in support of the
218 Florida Civics and Debate Initiative (FCDI) in the
219 Department of Education; providing the duties of FDI;
220 providing construction; authorizing FDI to establish
221 and maintain certain partnerships; specifying
222 activities for FDI and FCDI; providing authorized uses
223 of funds for FDI; requiring FDI to publish online and
224 submit annually by a specified date to the department
225 a specified report; specifying requirements for the
226 report; authorizing a certified teacher to earn an
227 endorsement in speech and debate; specifying
228 requirements for the endorsement; requiring the
229 department to collaborate with FDI to establish
230 regional traveling debate teams; authorizing a school
231 district to use school buses to transport students to
232 speech and debate competitions; amending s. 1001.42,
233 F.S.; requiring each district school board annually to
234 publish online and submit to the department a report;
235 specifying requirements for the report; creating s.
236 1004.0983, F.S.; requiring the Board of Governors of
237 the State University System and the State Board of
238 Education to develop specified undergraduate and
239 graduate coursework, certificates, and micro-
240 credentials; authorizing the Board of Governors and
241 the State Board of Education to collaborate with FDI
242 to develop coursework; requiring the department to
243 approve specified dual enrollment courses; providing



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an effective date.