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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
02/20/2026	.	
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The Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education (Brodeur) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause
and insert:

Section 1. Section 683.221, Florida Statutes, is created to
read:

683.221 Florida Speech and Debate Week.-

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

(2) Florida Speech and Debate Week shall be observed for



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11 all of the following purposes:

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

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

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

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

20 (3) Public and charter schools, state agencies, and other
21 entities may observe Florida Speech and Debate Week.

22 Section 2. Section 1000.09, Florida Statutes, is created to
23 read:

24 1000.09 Competitive speech and debate.-

25 (1) CREATION, DESIGNATION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES.-In
26 alignment with, and in support of, the Department of Education
27 and the program it operates called the Florida Civics and Debate
28 Initiative (FCDI), the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., (FDI) is
29 established as this state's nonprofit statewide speech and
30 debate organization that manages, develops, and expands K-20
31 civics, speech, and debate programs.

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

35 a. Educating and training coaches and students.

36 b. Training judges and volunteers.

37 c. Promoting educational competition opportunities.

38 d. Leading training and leadership development experiences.

39 e. Establishing competition standards.



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40 f. Maintaining statewide data reporting.
41 g. Assisting the FCDI, upon its request, in civics-focused
42 education, training, and programming initiatives.
43 2. This paragraph may not be construed to prohibit schools,
44 districts, or students from participating in civics, speech and
45 debate activities, leagues, or competitions not operated or
46 supervised by FDI.
47 (b) FDI may establish and maintain partnerships with school
48 districts, charter schools, state agencies, postsecondary
49 institutions, nonprofit organizations, private entities, and
50 national or international organizations to achieve the purposes
51 of this section, including collaborative efforts with FCDI. In
52 such collaboration:
53 1. FCDI and FDI shall jointly host and operate the annual
54 National Civics and Debate Championship known as The Great
55 Debate, a nationally recognized synthesis of civics education
56 and debate competition that challenges students' civic
57 knowledge, debate skills, and endurance through multi-day,
58 multi-event competition.
59 2. FCDI shall lead specific civics immersion events,
60 including FCDI Day at the Capitol and the Great American Civics
61 Challenge, which includes the Ronald Reagan Presidential Debates
62 and the We The People Civics Showdown.
63 3. FDI shall provide logistical support, debate tournament
64 operations support, and tournament coordination support for The
65 Great Debate and other collaborative initiatives to advance
66 statewide speech and debate opportunities.
67 (2) AUTHORIZED USES OF FUNDS.—FDI may expend program funds
68 on all of the following:



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69 (a) Administrative operations, including staffing,
70 insurance, compliance, reporting, and statewide infrastructure.

71 (b) Programmatic operations, including curriculum,
72 training, summer programs, workshops, camps, and mentorship
73 programs.

74 (c) Tournament operations, including logistics, staff,
75 judge training, technology, awards, and regional team
76 operations.

77 (d) Travel, lodging, training, and transportation for
78 participants, including local, state, and national travel to
79 competitions hosted by the FDI, FCDI, or other civics, speech,
80 and debate organizations.

81 (e) Public-private partnership development, including
82 sponsorship and philanthropic support.

83 (f) Memberships, affiliations, and participation fees
84 related to civics education, speech, debate, leadership, and
85 academic competition programs, provided such memberships,
86 affiliations, and participation advance the purposes of this
87 section.

88 (3) REPORTING.—FDI shall make publicly available online and
89 submit, no later than December 31 of each year, an annual report
90 to the Department of Education which includes all of the
91 following:

92 (a) Student participation in statewide FDI programs, by
93 district and demographics.

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

96 (c) Competitive and educational outcomes of statewide FDI
97 programs.



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98 (d) A categorized summary of all expenditures.

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100 No later than November 1 of each year, the FCDI shall provide
101 the FDI with the FCDI's most current reporting and data
102 regarding paragraphs (a)-(d) above in order for the FDI to
103 accurately report on the outcomes and expenditures related to
104 any joint programming.

105 Section 3. For the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the sum of \$2.4
106 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General
107 Revenue Fund to support the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc.'s
108 responsibilities assigned under s. 1000.09(1), Florida Statutes,
109 including administrative, programmatic, and tournament operation
110 duties.

111 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

112

113 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

114 And the title is amended as follows:

115 Delete everything before the enacting clause
116 and insert:

117 A bill to be entitled
118 An act relating to speech and debate education;
119 creating s. 683.221, F.S.; designating Florida Speech
120 and Debate Week annually in February; providing
121 purposes for the annual observance; authorizing
122 specified entities to observe Florida Speech and
123 Debate Week; creating s. 1000.09, F.S.; establishing
124 the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., (FDI) as a
125 statewide speech and debate organization that performs
126 certain functions in support of the Florida Civics and



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127 Debate Initiative (FCDI) in the Department of
128 Education; providing the duties of FDI; providing
129 construction; authorizing FDI to establish and
130 maintain certain partnerships; specifying activities
131 for FDI and FCDI; providing authorized uses of funds
132 for FDI; requiring FDI to publish online and submit
133 annually by a specified date to the Department of
134 Education a specified report; specifying requirements
135 for the report; requiring FCDI to provide certain data
136 to FDI by a specified date; providing an
137 appropriation; providing an effective date.