

HB 1251

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to the expenditure of public funds by local governments; creating s. 11.063, F.S.; providing a short title; providing definitions; prohibiting local governments from expending public funds for specified purposes; prohibiting the acceptance of public funds from local governments for lobbying; providing applicability; authorizing the filing of complaints with the Commission on Ethics alleging violations; requiring the commission to investigate and provide a report of its findings to certain entities; requiring the commission to adopt rules; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 11.063, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

11.063 Use of public funds for lobbying and discretionary expenditure prohibited.—

(1) This section may be cited as the "Federalism Protection Act."

(2) For purposes of this section, the term:

(a) "Elected official" means:

1. A member of the governing body of a county,

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26 municipality, or any other political subdivision of this state;

27 or

28 2. An elected official chosen by the governing body of a
29 county, municipality, or any other political subdivision of this
30 state.

31 (b) "Local government" means:

32 1. A county, municipality, or any other political
33 subdivision of this state.

34 2. Any department, agency, board, bureau, district,
35 commission, authority, or similar body of a county, a
36 municipality, or any other political subdivision of the state.

37 (c) "Public funds" has the same meaning as s. 106.113(1).

38 (3) (a) A local government may not expend public funds to
39 retain a lobbyist for representation before the legislative or
40 executive branch. In addition, a person may not accept public
41 funds from a local government for lobbying.

42 (b) An elected official of a local government may not
43 expend or enter into a contract requiring expenditure of public
44 funds for any purpose not itemized in the budget of the local
45 government.

46 (c) This subsection does not apply to the expenditure of
47 public funds by a local government or an elected official for
48 the purpose of hiring of in-house staff.

49 (4) A person may file a written complaint with the
50 Commission on Ethics alleging a violation of this subsection.

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51 The commission shall investigate and report its finding to the
52 President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of
53 Representatives, and the Governor and Cabinet. The commission
54 shall adopt rules necessary to conduct investigations under this
55 paragraph.

56 **Section 2.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.