

By Senator Davis

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to intellectual freedom and viewpoint
diversity; amending s. 1001.03, F.S.; deleting a
definition of the term "shield"; requiring the State
Board of Education to ensure that Florida College
System institutions are free from political influence
and interference; deleting a requirement that the
state board not shield Florida College System
institution students, faculty, or staff from protected
speech; amending s. 1001.706, F.S.; deleting a
definition of the term "shield"; requiring the Board
of Governors of the State University System to ensure
that state universities are free from political
influence and interference; deleting a requirement
that the board not shield state university students,
faculty, or staff from protected speech; creating s.
1004.022, F.S.; granting specified rights to students
of Florida College System institutions and state
universities; granting specified rights to faculty;
amending s. 1004.421, F.S.; conforming a cross-
reference; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraphs (a) and (c) of subsection (19) of
section 1001.03, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1001.03 Specific powers of State Board of Education.—

(19) INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY

ASSESSMENT.—

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(a) For the purposes of this subsection, the term:

~~1.~~ "Intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity" means the exposure of students, faculty, and staff to, and the encouragement of their exploration of, a variety of ideological and political perspectives.

~~2. "Shield" means to limit students', faculty members', or staff members' access to, or observation of, ideas and opinions that they may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or offensive.~~

(c) The State Board of Education shall ensure that ~~may not shield students, faculty, or staff at Florida College System institutions are free from undue political influence and interference in academic affairs, including curriculum design, faculty appointments, research activities, and administrative operations free speech protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, Art. I of the State Constitution, or s. 1004.097.~~

Section 2. Paragraphs (a) and (c) of subsection (13) of section 1001.706, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1001.706 Powers and duties of the Board of Governors.—

(13) INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY ASSESSMENT.—

(a) For the purposes of this subsection, the term:

~~1.~~ "Intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity" means the exposure of students, faculty, and staff to, and the encouragement of their exploration of, a variety of ideological and political perspectives.

~~2. "Shield" means to limit students', faculty members', or staff members' access to, or observation of, ideas and opinions~~

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that they may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or offensive.

(c) The Board of Governors shall ensure that ~~may not shield students, faculty, or staff at state universities~~ are free from undue political influence and interference in academic affairs, including curriculum design, faculty appointments, research activities, and administrative operations ~~free speech protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, Art. I of the State Constitution, or s. 1004.97.~~

Section 3. Section 1004.022, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1004.022 Academic freedom.—Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary:

(1) Every student in the State University System and Florida College System has the unalienable right to pursue education access across all academic disciplines without governmental or institutional interference, including, but not limited to, a student's prerogative to select, drop, or change courses and areas of study without facing pressure or restrictions based on political or ideological grounds.

(2) Faculty members in the State University System and Florida College System are entitled to full academic freedom in their teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activity. This includes the right to do all of the following:

(a) Investigate, discover, create, and disseminate knowledge without undue interference or restriction from political, ideological, or institutional forces.

(b) Determine the content of their courses, methods of instruction, and subject matter consistent with professional

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standards and the mission of the institution.

(c) Engage in extramural speech and professional discourse without institutional discipline or reprisal, provided such expression is consistent with their responsibilities as scholars and educators. Academic freedom for faculty shall be exercised in a manner consistent with the standards of the academic profession, institutional policies of shared governance, and the principles articulated by the American Association of University Professors.

Section 4. Subsection (7) of section 1004.421, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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

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

Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.