

By Senator Harrell

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to political activity at public institutions of higher education; creating s. 106.041, F.S.; defining the term "public institution of higher education"; requiring such institutions to promote specified discussion and debates; requiring such institutions to take specified actions relating to candidates for public office; requiring certain persons or entities to obtain prior approval from such institutions before conducting specified political activities on campus; prohibiting candidates for office from taking specified actions; authorizing such institutions to determine specified criteria for political discussions and debates; requiring certain nonpartisan organizations to provide certain information to such institutions; creating s. 1004.0972, F.S.; defining the term "public institution of higher education"; requiring such institutions to establish policies for political activities on the campuses of such institutions; specifying requirements for such policies; specifying requirements for political student organizations at such institutions; providing prohibitions on the use of certain institutional resources by employees; providing applicability and construction; requiring the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors of the State University System to monitor compliance with specified provisions and authorizing such boards to adopt rules and regulations, respectively; providing

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reporting requirements for such institutions to the
Department of State, the State Board of Education, the
Board of Governors, and certain county supervisors of
elections; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 106.041, Florida Statutes, is created to
read:

106.041 Political activity at public institutions of higher
education.—

(1) For purposes of this section, the term “public
institution of higher education” has the same meaning as in s.
1004.097(2).

(2) Each public institution of higher education shall make
reasonable and good faith efforts, through its office of public
policy or other designated department, to promote thoughtful and
engaging discussions and debates during federal, state, and
municipal election cycles, encouraging dialogue on a broad range
of political issues.

(3) When any candidate for public office requests access to
participate in a discussion, debate, or related event, the
public institution of higher education shall provide equitable
access to all qualified candidates for that same office. The
institution may also grant access to other political figures who
are not currently candidates for public office but who request
to engage in campus discussions or events. The following persons
must request and obtain prior approval from the institution
before engaging in any on-campus conversations, debates, or

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political activities:

(a) Candidates for public office in a current election cycle.

(b) Elected officials currently serving in office.

(c) Political committees.

(d) Political parties, whether major or minor.

(e) Lobbyists, as defined s. 11.045.

(f) Political organizations and websites.

(g) Campaign managers or staff for candidates for public office.

(4) Candidates for public office are strictly prohibited from holding partisan voter registration events on the campus of a public institution of higher education or using institution property, e-mails, websites, print or broadcast media, and all other communication methods of the institution for campaign-related activities.

(5) Each public institution of higher education may determine the format, timing, and structure of all political discussions and debates to ensure equitable representation and balanced visibility for candidates from all political parties.

(6) An organization maintaining that it is nonpartisan must provide the public institution of higher education, in advance of any campus activity, with a copy of its current and valid registration as a third-party voter registration organization.

Section 2. Section 1004.0972, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1004.0972 Public institutions of higher education requirements for political activities.—

(1) For purposes of this section, the term "public

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institution of higher education" has the same meaning as in s.
1004.097(2).

(2) Pursuant to s. 106.041 and state law, each public
institution of higher education shall establish policies for
political activities on the campus of the institution. Such
policies must:

(a) Allow for voter registration drives on campus by all of
the following if the institution makes the campus available in a
fair and equal manner to each political party and candidate:

1. A political party.

2. A political committee.

3. A candidate for public office, if such voter
registration drive is not partisan.

4. A nonpartisan political committee, a political
organization, or any other partisan entity. The nonpartisan
political committee, political organization, or other partisan
entity must be approved in advance by the institution.

(b) Prohibit political parties, political committees, and
candidates for public office from campaigning, speaking, or
appearing on campus in any partisan political manner unless
equal access and time is given to each political party, and each
political committee and candidate running for such public office
appears simultaneously, or if unavailable, appears with equal
access and an equal timeframe at an alternative event. This
paragraph does not apply to a candidate engaging in a non-
campaign related event or visiting on a personal basis.

(c) Prohibit registered student organizations, including,
but not limited to, Florida College Democrats, Florida
Federation of College Republicans, and all other partisan

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117 political organizations, from engaging or intervening in
118 political campaigns or appearing with a candidate for public
119 office on campus, unless such event is previously registered
120 with and approved in advance by the institution.

121 (d) May impose additional restrictions on the number and
122 location of signs political candidates may place on the campus.

123 (e) Prohibit the use of institution-issued e-mails for use
124 by political campaigns, political messaging, and all other forms
125 of communication by candidates for public office, current
126 elected officials, campaign managers, members of their staff,
127 volunteers for political campaigns, or any other political
128 entity. An institution's e-mail is the property of the
129 institution and funded with taxpayers' dollars. The use of such
130 e-mail for political gain on behalf of a candidate for office or
131 a campaign constitutes fraud and is subject to state and federal
132 law.

133 (f) Prohibit the use of institution property, including
134 classrooms, lecture halls, offices, electronic and nonelectronic
135 signage, golf carts, and furniture, whether borrowed, leased, or
136 rented, for political campaigns, voter registration drives,
137 transporting voters to voting locations, and all other political
138 activities by candidates for public office, elected officials,
139 political committees, partisan political campaigns and their
140 staff, or any other political entity.

141 (g) Allow the distribution of flyers freely, spontaneously,
142 and contemporaneously without individuals needing prior approval
143 if such distribution takes place in an outdoor area. An
144 institution may enforce reasonable restrictions on the time,
145 place, and manner of distribution of such flyers if they are to

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146 be distributed indoors. Such restrictions must be content-
147 neutral and narrowly tailored to a significant institutional
148 interest.

149 (h) Prohibit the use of the institution's logos, broadcast
150 or print media, websites, social media platforms, university
151 press publications, university journals, pamphlets, and all
152 other forms of communication by candidates for public office,
153 elected officials, political committees, political parties, or a
154 political party's campaign manager, staff, or volunteers for the
155 purpose of debates, voter registration drives, voting location
156 transportation, candidate meet and greets, or any other
157 political activity unless equal access and time is given to each
158 candidate for public office, elected official, political
159 committee, or political party simultaneously. Publishing or
160 transmitting, by any of the above communication methods,
161 coverage of a candidate for public office or an elected official
162 for a nonpolitical purpose shall include a disclaimer that the
163 media coverage is the personal opinion of the writer and does
164 not constitute an official endorsement or support for such
165 candidate or official by the institution.

166 (i) May allow political events such as lectures, debates,
167 and conversations to be held by the institution during the
168 election cycle. Such events must be conducted through an
169 institution's office of public policy or other designated
170 department, must follow state and federal law to conduct
171 nonpartisan activities, and include all qualified candidates for
172 specific public offices. If not all candidates are available,
173 the institution must provide equal access to other candidates at
174 an alternative time, without which the event may not be held.

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175 (j) Provide a mechanism for oversight of voter registration
176 drives, debates, meet and greets, and any other political
177 events. The policy must provide a process for the institution to
178 make available to the student population all such voter
179 registration drives, debates, meet and greets, and any other
180 political events to ensure full nonpartisan conversations,
181 engagement, and compliance with state and federal law.

182 (k) Provide annual training to the institution's
183 administration, faculty, and staff regarding this section and
184 state and federal laws relating to the activities listed in this
185 section.

186 (3) If a student organization for one of the two major
187 political parties is organized at a public institution of higher
188 education, then the other major political party must be
189 organized on equal terms. The institution shall approve a staff
190 member to sponsor each organization or designate two students to
191 cosponsor the organization.

192 (4) An employee of a public institution of higher
193 education, including, but not limited to, an administrator, a
194 faculty member, and a staff member, who files as a candidate for
195 any federal, state, or municipal elected office may not use e-
196 mail, offices, or time during working hours for campaign-related
197 activities, including campaigning, displaying campaign materials
198 on campus, or using institution property, equipment, or
199 communications to solicit political support or to campaign or
200 use his or her position of power or state media platforms for
201 political advancement on campus. An institution employee's
202 participation in the political process is limited only when he
203 or she is performing his or her professional duties as an

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employee of the institution. This subsection does not apply to the rights of an institution's employee who is engaging in political activities during his or her personal time, unless such activities take place on campus.

(5) (a) This section does not apply to a county supervisor of elections who uses a public institution of higher education's campus facilities as a polling place during any scheduled or special election cycle.

(b) This section does not apply to a student residing on campus. He or she may post signage in his or her personal rented rooms and spaces.

(c) This section may not be construed to infringe on any rights under s. 1004.097.

(6) The State Board of Education and the Board of Governors shall monitor compliance with this section and state and federal law with an emphasis on equal access to both major political parties and any other minor parties relating to elections, campaigns, voter registrations, and voter transportation drives.

(7) Following each election cycle, each public institution of higher education shall provide a report of its campaign activities, including confirming that no political activities took place on the institution's campuses, to the Department of State, the State Board of Education, or the Board of Governors, as appropriate, and its county supervisor of elections to provide proof of compliance with this section and state and federal law.

(8) The State Board of Education and the Board of Governors shall adopt rules and regulations, respectively, to administer this section.

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Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.