

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [HB 461](#)

**TITLE:** Volunteering at Polling Locations

**SPONSOR(S):** Michael and Valdés

**COMPANION BILL:** [SB 564](#) (Yarborough)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

### Committee References

[Government Operations](#)

18 Y, 0 N

[Student Academic Success](#)

16 Y, 0 N

[State Affairs](#)

## SUMMARY

### Effect of the Bill:

The bill provides an exception to the ban on using private funds or services for election-related activities to allow high school students, who are registered or preregistered to vote, to volunteer at polling places for community service hours.

### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

None.

[JUMP TO](#)

[SUMMARY](#)

[ANALYSIS](#)

[RELEVANT INFORMATION](#)

[BILL HISTORY](#)

## ANALYSIS

### **EFFECT OF THE BILL:**

The bill provides that the [prohibition on the use of private funds for election-related expenses](#) does not ban high school students who are registered or [preregistered to vote](#) from volunteering to assist poll workers for the purpose of receiving [community service hours](#). (Section [1](#))

The bill is effective on July 1, 2026. (Section [2](#))

## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### **SUBJECT OVERVIEW:**

#### [Prohibition on Use of Private Funds for Election-related Expenses](#)

Current law prohibits an agency or state or local official responsible for conducting elections<sup>1</sup> from soliciting, accepting, using, or disposing of any donation in the form of money, grants, property, or personal services from an individual or a nongovernmental entity for the purpose of funding any type of expenses related to election administration.<sup>2</sup> This prohibition does not apply when an individual or nongovernmental entity donates space to be used for a polling room or an early voting site.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [S. 97.0291, F.S.](#), provides that an example of an agency responsible for conducting elections includes a supervisor of election.

<sup>2</sup> [S. 97.0291, F.S.](#), provides that expenses related to election administration may include costs associated with voter education; voter outreach; voter registration programs; or any litigation related to election administration.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

**STORAGE NAME:** h0461c.SAS

**DATE:** 1/21/2026

## Preregistered to Vote

A person may preregister to vote if he or she is at least 16 years old and meets all the general voter registration qualifications.<sup>4</sup> The preregistration becomes an active registration on or after a person's 18th birthday.<sup>5</sup> Then, the appropriate Supervisor of Elections is required to mail the registrant a voter registration card and the person is deemed eligible to vote.<sup>6</sup>

## Community Service Hours

Every year Florida's high school students may participate in various programs that have a community service hour component. One such program is the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (Bright Futures), which is a lottery-funded initiative that supports high school graduates pursuing degrees, certificates, or applied technology programs at eligible postsecondary institutes.<sup>7</sup> The Bright Futures initiative has four distinct scholarship awards that require volunteer service hours, paid work hours, or a combination of both:<sup>8</sup>

- Florida Academic Scholarship: Requires an applicant to complete 100 volunteer hours; 100 paid work hours; or a combination of 100 total hours of volunteer and work hours.
- Florida Medallion Scholarship: Requires an applicant to complete 75 volunteer hours; 100 paid work hours; or a combination of 100 total hours of volunteer and work hours.
- Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship: Requires an applicant to complete 30 volunteer hours;<sup>9</sup> 100 paid work hours; or a combination of 100 total hours of volunteer and work hours.
- Goal Seal Cape Scholarship: Requires an applicant to complete 30 volunteer hours;<sup>10</sup> 100 paid work hours; or a combination of 100 total hours of volunteer and work hours.

## BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
<a href="#">Government Operations Subcommittee</a>	18 Y, 0 N	1/13/2026	Toliver	Walker
<a href="#">Student Academic Success Subcommittee</a>	16 Y, 0 N	1/21/2026	Sanchez	Blalock
<a href="#">State Affairs Committee</a>				

<sup>4</sup> [S. 97.041\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#), General voter registration qualifications include, but are not limited to, registering pursuant to the Florida Election Code; being 18 years old; being a United States citizen; being a legal resident of the State of Florida; and being a legal resident of the county in which registration is sought.

<sup>5</sup> [S. 97.041\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>6</sup> Department of State, [Florida Online Voter Registration System](#) (last visited Jan. 14, 2026).

<sup>7</sup> Florida House of Representatives, [Education and Employment Committee 2026 Fact Sheets](#) (last visited Jan. 14, 2026).

<sup>8</sup> Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, [Scholarship Awards](#) (last visited Jan. 14, 2026). See also Department of Education, [Bright Futures Student Handbook](#) (last visited Jan. 14, 2026).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* 75 volunteer service hours will be required for the Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship and the Gold Seal Cape Scholarship beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2024-2025 school year and thereafter.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*