

# 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 #:** [CS/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](#)

24 Y, 0 N, As CS

## 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 that count toward meeting high school graduation or scholarship program requirements.

### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

None.

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## 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](#) that count toward meeting high school graduation or scholarship program requirements. (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> [Section 97.0291, F.S.](#) provides that an example of an agency responsible for conducting elections includes a supervisor of election.

<sup>2</sup> [Section 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:** h0461e.SAC

**DATE:** 1/27/2026

## 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>	24 Y, 0 N, As CS	1/27/2026	Williamson	Walker
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	Specified that the community service hours that qualify for the exception to the ban on using private funds for election-related activities, are those that count toward meeting high school graduation or scholarship program requirements.			

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**THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.**  
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<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.* Beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2024-2025 school year, and thereafter, 75 volunteer service hours are required for the Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship and the Gold Seal Cape Scholarship.

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