

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee Education Pre-K -12

BILL: CS/SB 564

INTRODUCER: Education Pre-K-12 Committee and Senator Yarborough

SUBJECT: Student Volunteers at Polling Locations

DATE: January 29, 2026 REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Biehl	Roberts	EE	<b>Favorable</b>
2. Palazesi	Bouck	ED	<b>Fav/CS</b>
3. _____	_____	RC	_____

**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

## **I. Summary:**

CS/SB 564 revises an existing prohibition against use of private funds for election-related expenses by authorizing Florida high school students who are registered or preregistered to vote to volunteer to assist poll workers for the purpose of receiving community service hours to meet certain educational requirements.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

## **II. Present Situation:**

### **Poll Workers**

Poll workers are short-term employees of supervisors of elections who staff voting sites, assist voters, and work in the elections office. Before beginning service as a poll worker, a person must complete a training curriculum developed by the Department of State.<sup>1</sup>

### **Use of Private Funds for Election-Related Expenses**

Current law prohibits an agency or a state or local official responsible for conducting elections from soliciting, accepting, using, or disposing of any donation in the form of money, grants, property, or personal services from an individual or nongovernmental entity for the purpose of

<sup>1</sup> Section 102.014(1), F.S.

funding any type of expenses related to election administration. Such expenses include, but are not limited to, voter education, voter outreach, voter registration programs, or the cost of any litigation related to election administration.<sup>2</sup>

The prohibition does not include the donation and acceptance of space to be used for a polling room or an early voting site.<sup>3</sup>

## **Qualifications to Register or Vote**

A person may become a registered voter only if that person:

- Is at least 18 years of age;
- Is a citizen of the United States;
- Is a legal resident of the State of Florida;
- Is a legal resident of the county in which that person seeks to be registered; and
- Registers pursuant to the Florida Election Code.<sup>4</sup>

A person who is otherwise qualified may preregister on or after that person's 16th birthday and may vote in any election occurring on or after that person's 18th birthday.<sup>5</sup> Because registration books must be closed on the 29th day before each election and remain closed until after that election,<sup>6</sup> preregistration allows a person to ensure that he or she will be able to vote in an election that may occur soon after his or her 18th birthday.

## **Community Service Hours**

High school students in Florida may use community service hours to satisfy certain requirements for various educational programs. Florida law encourages school districts to initiate service learning which is a student-centered, research-based teaching and learning strategy that engages students in meaningful service activities in their schools or communities.<sup>7</sup> Service hours that high school students devote to course-based service-learning activities may be counted toward meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and community service requirements for participation in the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program. School districts are also encouraged to include service learning as part of any course or activity required for high school graduation.<sup>8</sup> Some school districts require community service or service learning hours as part of their high school graduation requirement. For example, Broward County Public Schools and the School District of Palm Beach County require students seeking a standard high school diploma to complete 40 and 20 hours of community service hours, respectively.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Section 97.0291, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 97.0291, F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 97.041(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 97.041(1)(b), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 97.055(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1003.497,(1), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at (3)(b).

<sup>9</sup> Broward County Public Schools, *Student Activities and Volunteer Service Learning Hours*, available at <https://www.browardschools.com/bcps-departments/student-activities/student-activities-and-volunteer-service-learning-hours> (last visited Jan 21, 2026). The School District of Palm Beach County, *Community Service*, available at <https://www.palmbeachschools.org/studentsparents/grades-and-graduation-requirements/graduation-requirements/community-service> (last visited Jan 21, 2026).

Another educational program with a community service component is the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (BFSP). The Florida BFSP is a lottery-funded initiative that supports high school graduates pursuing degrees, certificates, or applied technology programs at eligible postsecondary institutes.<sup>10</sup> The BFSP has four distinct scholarship awards that require volunteer service hours, paid work hours, or a combination of both:<sup>11</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; 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; 100 paid work hours; or a combination of 100 total hours of volunteer and work hours.

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

CS/SB 564 revises the prohibition against the use of private funds for election-related expenses. Specifically, the bill provides that the section does not prohibit high school students in this state who are registered or preregistered to vote from volunteering to assist poll workers for the purpose of receiving community service hours to meet community service requirements for high school graduation or postsecondary financial aid.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

#### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

#### **B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

#### **C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

#### **D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

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<sup>10</sup> Section 1009.53, F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, *Scholarship Awards*, available at <https://floridabrightfutures.gov/#Scholarship%20Awards> (last visited Jan. 21, 2026).

**E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 97.0291, Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**CS by Education Pre-K -12 on January 27, 2026:**

The committee substitute clarifies that community service hours that students earn volunteering to assist poll workers can be used to meet community service requirements for high school graduation or postsecondary financial aid.

**B. Amendments:**

None.