

Committee on Education Postsecondary

CS/CS/SB 846 — Agreements of Educational Entities with Foreign Entities

by Rules Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Senator Avila

The bill (Chapter 2023-34, L.O.F.) establishes requirements specific to state universities and Florida College System institutions (state colleges) with respect to receiving foreign gifts and entering into international cultural agreements.

The bill prohibits state universities, state colleges, and their employees and representatives, from soliciting or accepting any gift in their official capacities from a college or university based in a foreign country of concern specified in law, or from a foreign principal, which is an individual or entity associated with a foreign country of concern.

The bill also prohibits state universities and state colleges from accepting any grant from or participating in either of the following with a foreign country of concern, or with any foreign principal:

- An agreement, defined as a written statement of mutual interest in academic or research collaboration, beginning July 1, 2023.
- A partnership, defined as a faculty or student exchange program, study abroad program, articulation program, recruiting program, or dual degree program, beginning December 1, 2023.

A state university or college may only participate in an agreement or partnership with a college or university based in a foreign country of concern, or with a foreign principal, if authorized by the Board of Governors (BOG) or the State Board of Education (SBE), respectively, and if the agreement satisfies certain other criteria required of all state agency cultural agreements.

The bill also:

- Authorizes the BOG or the SBE to impose statutory sanctions on, and withhold performance funding from, state universities or state colleges for unapproved partnerships or agreements.
- Requires the BOG and the SBE to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature, annually by December 1, to include data on grants, agreements, partnerships, contracts, or physical locations with any foreign country of concern.

Lastly, the bill prohibits the ownership or operation of any private school participating in the state's school choice scholarship program, by a person or entity domiciled in, owned by, or in any way controlled by a foreign country of concern or a foreign principal.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect on July 1, 2023.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 119-0