

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 Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government

BILL: CS/SB 820

INTRODUCER: Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senator Yarborough

SUBJECT: Office of Faith and Community

DATE: April 14, 2025 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>White</u>	<u>McVaney</u>	<u>GO</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Davis</u>	<u>Betta</u>	<u>AEG</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
3.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:
COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 820 creates the Office of Faith and Community within the Executive Office of the Governor. The purpose of the Office of Faith and Community is to connect with Florida’s faith and community networks and provide administrative support to the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council.

The bill may have an indeterminate impact on state government expenditures. See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement below.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

II. Present Situation:

Executive Office of the Governor

The Executive Office of the Governor (EOG) is a statutorily created entity headed by the Governor. The function of the office is to assist the Governor in meeting statutory and constitutional duties. Key responsibilities include administering executive planning and budgeting functions and assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of state programs. The EOG

includes the Citizen’s Assistance Office,¹ Office of Adoption and Child Protection Services,² and Office of Policy and Budget.³

Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council

In 2006, the Legislature created the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council (Council)⁴ and administratively housed it in the Executive Office of the Governor.⁵ The Council is supported by the Governor’s Faith and Community Initiative Office, with a Liaison for Faith and Community staff member within the EOG, as well as six other staff (including a director.)⁶

The Council is composed of 25 members that include representatives from various faiths, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, foundations, corporations, and municipalities.⁷ The Council’s purpose is to advise the Governor and the legislature on policies, priorities, and objectives for the state’s comprehensive effort to enlist, equip, enable, empower, and expand the work of faith-based, volunteer, and other community organizations to the full extent permitted by law.⁸ The Council also submits an annual report⁹ that recommends, among other things:

- Best practices for ensuring that state policy decisions consider the capacity of faith-based and other community-based initiatives to assist in the achievement of state priorities.
- Best practices relating to the delivery of services by faith-based and other community-based organizations.¹⁰

Faith and Community Initiative

Created in 2019, the Governor’s Faith and Community Initiative supports faith and community organizations of Florida. The initiative is led by a liaison and is tasked with the following:

- Hosting statewide faith calls, events, and special programming with the Governor, First Lady, and others to better connect faith and community networks with state leaders.
- Operating the Florida Faith and Community Red Phone, which is a direct line specifically created for Florida faith and community leaders to connect with the Executive Office of the Governor.

¹ Section 14.26, F.S.

² Section 39.01, F.S.

³ Section 288.095, F.S.

⁴ An “advisory council” is “an advisory body created by specific statutory enactment and appointed to function on a continuing basis for the study of problems arising in a specified functional or program area of state government and to provide recommendations and policy alternatives.” Section 20.03(7), F.S.

⁵ Ch. 2006-9, L.O.F.

⁶ Florida Faith and Community Advisory Council, *Annual Report* (Feb. 1, 2024), <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7739/urlt/2024-FBCBAC-Annual-Report.pdf> (last visited Apr. 8, 2025)..

⁷ Section 14.31(3)(b), F.S.

⁸ Section 14.31(2), F.S.

⁹ Florida Faith and Community Advisory Council, *Annual Report* (Feb. 1, 2024), <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7739/urlt/2024-FBCBAC-Annual-Report.pdf> (last visited Apr. 8, 2025)..

¹⁰ Section 14.31(5), F.S.

- Utilizing the CarePortal, a technology platform that allows faith institutions, non-profits, businesses, and individuals to see real time, verified, and vetted needs in his or her community.¹¹

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 creates s. 14.311, F.S., to establish the Office of Faith and Community (Office) within the Executive Office of the Governor (EOG). The Office is required to act as a liaison for faith and community to serve the most vulnerable persons in Florida by connecting with Florida's faith and community networks and providing administrative support to the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council.

The Office must:

- Advocate for faith- and community-based organizations to obtain access, direction, and support from state agencies;
- Establish and operate the Florida Faith and Community Phone, dedicated to connecting faith-based and community-based leaders to the EOG;
- Establish meaningful lines of communication to connect with, and provide resources to, faith-based and community-based organizations in Florida;
- Develop and provide resources for enhanced connections between civil service systems, state agencies, and faith-based and community-based organizations in Florida;
- Develop and provide technology to connect faith-based ministries and nonprofits with local faith-based and community-based organizations to address identified needs of a community;
- Identify, in conjunction with heads of the executive agencies, bureaucratic or regulatory burdens that unnecessarily burden faith-based or community-based organizations; and
- Provide administrative support to the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advocacy Council.

The bill provides that the Office will be led by a liaison, appointed by the Governor, who serves as a senior advisor to the Governor and connects with state agencies.

Section 2 provides that the Office will provide administrative support to the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council established in s. 14.31, F.S.

Section 3 provides that the bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

Not applicable. The bill does not require counties or municipalities to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, or reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

¹¹ Governor Ron Desantis' Faith and Community Initiative, *About Us*, <https://faithandcommunityflorida.com/AboutUs.htm> (last visited Apr. 8, 2025).

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None identified.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None identified.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None identified.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

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

None identified.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None identified.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill may have an indeterminate impact on state government as it creates an additional office within the Executive Office of the Governor, which may require additional funding and positions to support its duties. However, it appears that this office is currently operating and staffed with the personnel required by the bill, so no new positions or appropriated funds are provided in this bill.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None identified.

VII. Related Issues:

None identified.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 14.31 of the Florida Statutes.

This bill creates section 14.311 of the 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 Governmental Oversight and Accountability on April 1, 2025:

- Conforms language throughout the bill to refer to state agencies instead of state agencies and executive agencies; and
- Provides that the liaison must serve as the head of the Office of Faith and Community and cannot appoint another individual to do so.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.