

**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.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Accountability

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BILL: SB 820

INTRODUCER: Senator Yarborough

SUBJECT: Office of Faith and Community

DATE: March 31, 2025      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	White	McVaney	GO	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.	_____	_____	AEG	_____
3.	_____	_____	AP	_____

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**I. Summary:**

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 cost on state government.

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,<sup>1</sup> Office of Adoption and Child Protection Services,<sup>2</sup> and Office of Policy and Budget.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 14.26, F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Section 39.01, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 288.095, F.S.

## Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council

In 2006, the Legislature created the Florida Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council (council)<sup>4</sup> and administratively housed it in the Executive Office of the Governor.<sup>5</sup> 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 6 other staff (including a director.)<sup>6</sup>

The council is composed of 25 members that include representatives from various faiths, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, foundations, corporations, and municipalities.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> The council also submits an annual report<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

## 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.
- 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.<sup>11</sup>

## 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

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Ch. 2006-9, L.O.F.

<sup>6</sup> Florida Faith and Community Advisory Council, *Annual Report* at 2, *supra* note 8.

<sup>7</sup> Section 14.31(3)(b), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 14.31(2), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> 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 Mar. 26, 2025).

<sup>10</sup> Section 14.31(5), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Governor Ron Desantis’ Faith and Community Initiative, *About Us*, <https://faithandcommunityflorida.com/AboutUs.htm> (last visited Mar. 25, 2025).

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- 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 this state;
- Develop and provide resources for enhanced connection between civil service systems, state agencies, and faith- and community-based organizations in this state;
- Develop and provide technology to connect faith-based ministries and nonprofits with local faith- 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- or community-based organizations; and
- Provide administrative support to the Florida Faith-based Advocacy Council.

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

**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.

##### **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 cost on state government as it creates an additional office. The Office may require additional funding 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:

The bill uses the term “state agencies” at lines 64, 73, and 103 but uses the term “executive agencies” at lines 81-82 and 102. It is unclear whether the two terms refer to the same or different entities. It may be worth clarifying the definition of these terms, such as defining state agencies to align with the definition in s. 20.055, F.S.

The bill currently permits the liaison to either serve as or appoint a director. It is unclear whether the liaison could delegate his or her responsibility as the director. Article IV, section 6 of the State Constitution provides in relevant part that the administration of each executive department “must be placed by law under the direct supervision of the Governor...” Inherent in the Governor’s direct supervisory authority over all executive departments is the power to appoint executive officers.<sup>12</sup> Legislation similarly provides that the administration of any executive branch department or entity placed under the direct supervision of an officer or board appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Governor must remain at all times under the constitutional executive authority of the Governor, in accordance with the state constitution, and such officer or board generally remains subject to oversight, direction, and supervision by the Governor.<sup>13</sup> The term “office” implies a delegation of some portion of the sovereign power of the state in making, executing, or administering the law.<sup>14</sup> The sponsor of the bill may wish to amend the language permitting the liaison to delegate his or her duty as an officer by appointing another to serve as

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<sup>12</sup> *Jones v. Chiles*, 638 So. 2d 48, 50 (Fla. 1994)

<sup>13</sup> 48A FLA. JUR. 2D STATE OF FLORIDA s. 64 *Organization of executive branch* (2024) (citing s. 20.02(3), F.S.).

<sup>14</sup> *Rubin v. Shapiro*, 198 So. 2d 854, 856 (Fla. 3rd DCA 1967). See *In re Advisory Opinion to Governor*, 153 Fla. 650, 652 (1943) and *State v. Sheats*, 78 Fla. 583, 587-88 (1919) for differentiation between the authority of an officer as opposed to a public employee; additionally, for the discussion of deputies and assistants to officers compared to actual officers, see 9 FLA. JUR. 2D CIVIL SERVANTS s. 10 *Deputies and assistants as aides to public officers* (2025).

the director of the Office of Faith and Community; instead requiring the liaison to serve as the director.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None identified.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill creates section 14.311 and amends section 14.31 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:**

**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

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

None.

**B. Amendments:**

None.