

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to political activity on public
3 institutions of higher education; creating s. 106.041,
4 F.S.; defining the term "public institution of higher
5 education"; requiring such institutions to promote
6 specified discussion and debates; requiring such
7 institutions to take specified actions relating to
8 candidates for public office; requiring certain
9 persons or entities to obtain prior approval from such
10 institutions before conducting specified political
11 activities on campus; prohibiting candidates for
12 office from taking specified actions; authorizing such
13 institutions to determine specified criteria for
14 political discussions and debates; requiring certain
15 nonpartisan organizations to provide certain
16 information to such institutions; creating s.
17 1004.0972, F.S.; defining the term "public institution
18 of higher education"; requiring such institutions to
19 establish policies for political activities on the
20 campuses of such institutions; providing requirements
21 for such policies; providing requirements for
22 political student organizations at such institutions;
23 providing prohibitions on the use of certain
24 institutional resources by employees; providing
25 applicability and construction; requiring the State

Board of Education and the Board of Governors to monitor compliance with specified provisions and authorizing such boards to adopt rules and regulations, respectively; providing reporting requirements for such institutions to the Department of State, the State Board of Education, the Board of Governors, and certain county supervisors of elections; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 106.041, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

106.041 Political activity at public institutions of higher education.—

(1) For purposes of this section, the term "public institution of higher education" has the same meaning as in s. 1004.097(2).

(2) Each public institution of higher education shall make reasonable and good faith efforts, through its office of public policy or other designated department, to promote thoughtful and engaging discussions and debates during federal, state, and municipal election cycles, encouraging dialogue on a broad range of political issues.

(3) When any candidate for public office requests access

51 to participate in a discussion, debate, or related event, the
52 public institution of higher education shall provide equitable
53 access to all qualified candidates for that same office. The
54 institution may also grant access to other political figures who
55 are not currently candidates for public office but who request
56 to engage in campus discussions or events. The following persons
57 must request and obtain prior approval from the institution
58 before engaging in any on-campus conversations, debates, or
59 political activities:

60 (a) Candidates for public office in a current election
61 cycle.

62 (b) Elected officials currently serving in office.

63 (c) Political committees.

64 (d) Political parties, whether major or minor.

65 (e) Lobbyists, as defined s. 11.045.

66 (f) Political organizations and websites.

67 (g) Campaign managers or staff for candidates for public
68 office.

69 (4) Candidates for public office are strictly prohibited
70 from holding partisan voter registration events on the campus of
71 a public institution of higher education or using institution
72 property, e-mails, websites, print or broadcast media, and all
73 other communication methods of the institution for campaign-
74 related activities.

75 (5) Each public institution of higher education may

76 determine the format, timing, and structure of all political
77 discussions and debates to ensure equitable representation and
78 balanced visibility for candidates from all political parties.

79 (6) An organization maintaining that it is nonpartisan
80 must provide the public institution of higher education, in
81 advance of any campus activity, with a copy of its current and
82 valid registration as a third-party voter registration
83 organization.

84 **Section 2. Section 1004.0972, Florida Statutes, is created**
85 **to read:**

86 1004.0972 Public institutions of higher education
87 requirements for political activities.—

88 (1) For purposes of this section, the term "public
89 institution of higher education" has the same meaning as in s.
90 1004.097(2).

91 (2) Pursuant to s. 106.041 and state law, each public
92 institution of higher education shall establish policies for
93 political activities on the campus of the institution. Such
94 policies must:

95 (a) Allow for voter registration drives on campus by all
96 of the following if the institution makes the campus available
97 in a fair and equal manner to each political party and
98 candidate:

99 1. A political party.

100 2. A political committee.

101 3. A candidate for public office, if such voter
102 registration drive is not partisan.

103 4. A nonpartisan political committee, a political
104 organization, or any other partisan entity. The nonpartisan
105 political committee, political organization, or other partisan
106 entity must be approved in advance by the institution.

107 (b) Prohibit political parties, political committees, and
108 candidates for public office from campaigning, speaking, or
109 appearing on campus in any partisan political manner unless
110 equal access and time is given to each political party, and each
111 political committee and candidate running for such public office
112 appears simultaneously, or if unavailable, appears with equal
113 access and an equal timeframe at an alternative event. This
114 paragraph does not apply to a candidate engaging in a non-
115 campaign related event or visiting on a personal basis.

116 (c) Must prohibit registered student organizations,
117 including, but not limited to, Florida College Democrats,
118 Florida Federation of College Republicans, and all other
119 partisan political organizations, from engaging or intervening
120 in political campaigns or appearing with a candidate for public
121 office on campus, unless such event is previously registered and
122 approved in advance with the institution.

123 (d) May impose additional restrictions on the number and
124 location of signs political candidates may place on the campus.

125 (e) Must prohibit the use of institution-issued e-mails

126 for use by political campaigns, political messaging, and all
127 other forms of communication by candidates for public office,
128 current elected officials, campaign managers, members of their
129 staff, volunteers for political campaigns, or any other
130 political entity. An institution's e-mail is the property of the
131 institution and funded with taxpayer's dollars. The use of such
132 e-mail for political gain on behalf of a candidate for office or
133 a campaign constitutes fraud and is subject to state and federal
134 law.

135 (f) Must prohibit the use of institution property,
136 including classrooms, lecture halls, offices, electronic and
137 nonelectronic signage, golf carts, and furniture, whether
138 borrowed, leased, or rented, for political campaigns, voter
139 registration drives, transporting voters to voting locations,
140 and all other political activities by candidates for public
141 office, elected officials, political committees, partisan
142 political campaigns and their staff, or any other political
143 entity.

144 (g) Must allow the distribution of flyers freely,
145 spontaneously, and contemporaneously without needing prior
146 approval if such distribution takes place in an outdoor area. An
147 institution may enforce reasonable restrictions on the time,
148 place, and manner of distribution of such flyers if they are to
149 be distributed indoors. Such restrictions must be content-
150 neutral and narrowly tailored to a significant institutional

151 interest.

152 (h) Must prohibit the use of the institution's logos,
153 broadcast or print media, websites, social media platforms,
154 university press publications, university journals, pamphlets,
155 and all other forms of communication by candidates for public
156 office, elected officials, political committees, political
157 parties, or a political party's campaign manager, staff, or
158 volunteers for the purpose of debates, voter registration
159 drives, voting location transportation, candidate meet and
160 greet, or any other political activity unless equal access and
161 time is given to each candidate for public office, elected
162 official, political committee, or political party
163 simultaneously. Publishing or transmitting, by any of the above
164 communication methods, coverage of a candidate for public office
165 or an elected official for a nonpolitical purpose shall include
166 a disclaimer that the media coverage is the personal opinion of
167 the writer and does not constitute an official endorsement or
168 support for such candidate or official by the institution.

169 (i) May allow political events such as lectures, debates,
170 and conversations to be held by the institution during the
171 election cycle and shall be conducted through an institution's
172 office of public policy to facilitate such lectures, debates,
173 and conversations. Such events shall follow state and federal
174 law to conduct nonpartisan activities and include all qualified
175 candidates for specific public offices. If not all candidates

176 are available, the institution shall provide equal access to
177 other candidates at an alternative time, without which the event
178 may not be held.

179 (j) Must provide a mechanism for oversight of voter
180 registration drives, debates, meet and greets, and any other
181 political events. The policy must provide a process for the
182 institution to make available to the student population all such
183 voter registration drives, debates, meet and greets, and any
184 other political events to ensure full nonpartisan conversations,
185 engagement, and compliance with state and federal law.

186 (k) Must provide annual training to the institution's
187 administration, faculty, and staff regarding this section and
188 state and federal laws relating to the activities listed in this
189 section.

190 (3) If a student organization for one of the two major
191 political parties is organized at a public institution of higher
192 education, then the other major political party must be
193 organized on equal terms. The institution shall approve a staff
194 member to sponsor each organization or designate two students to
195 co-sponsor the organization.

196 (4) An employee of a public institution of higher
197 education, including, but not limited to, an administrator, a
198 faculty member, and a staff member who files as a candidate for
199 any federal, state, or municipal elected office may not use e-
200 mail, offices, or time during working hours for campaign related

activities, including campaigning, displaying campaign materials on campus, or using institution property, equipment, or communications to solicit political support or to campaign or use his or her position of power or state media platforms for political advancement on campus. An institution's employee's participation in the political process is only limited when he or she is performing his or her professional duties as an employee of the institution. This subsection does not apply to the rights of an institution's employee who is engaging in political activities during his or her personal time, unless such activities take place on campus.

(5) (a) This section does not apply to a county supervisor of elections that uses a public institution of higher education's campus facilities as a polling place during any scheduled or special election cycle.

(b) This section does not apply to a student residing on campus. He or she may post signage in his or her personal rented rooms and spaces.

(c) This section may not be construed to infringe on any rights under s. 1004.097.

(6) The State Board of Education and the Board of Governors shall monitor compliance with this section and state and federal law with an emphasis on equal access to both major political parties and any other minor parties relating to elections, campaigns, voter registrations, and voter

226 transportation drives.

227 (7) Following each election cycle, each public institution
228 of higher education shall provide a report of its campaign
229 activities, including confirming that no political activities
230 took place on the institution's campuses to the Department of
231 State, the State Board of Education, or the Board of Governors,
232 as appropriate, and its county supervisor of elections to
233 provide proof of compliance with this section and state and
234 federal law.

235 (8) The State Board of Education and the Board of
236 Governors shall adopt rules and regulations, respectively, to
237 administer this section.

238 **Section 3.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.