HB 311 2023

1 A bill to be entitled 2 An act relating to postsecondary intellectual freedom 3 and viewpoint diversity; amending ss. 1001.03 and 4 1001.706, F.S.; removing provisions relating to an 5 intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity 6 assessment within Florida College System institutions 7 and state universities; removing a prohibition against the State Board of Education and Board of Governors 8 9 from shielding specified individuals from free speech; amending s. 1004.097, F.S.; removing a prohibition 10 11 against the State Board of Education and Board of Governors from shielding specified individuals from 12 access to or observation of certain ideas and 13 opinions; removing an authorization for students to 14 15 record video or audio of class lectures for specified 16 purposes; removing an authorization to bring specified 17 actions related to injuries from such video or audio 18 recordings; providing an effective date. 19 20 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida: 21 22

Section 1. Subsection (19) of section 1001.03, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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1001.03 Specific powers of State Board of Education. -

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(19) INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY

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CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.

ASSESSMENT .-

(a) For the purposes of this subsection, The term:

1. "Intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity" means the exposure of students, faculty, and staff to, and the encouragement of their exploration of, a variety of ideological and political perspectives.

2. "Shield" means to limit students', faculty members', or staff members' access to, or observation of, ideas and opinions that they may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or offensive.

(b) The State Board of Education shall require each Florida College System institution to conduct an annual assessment of the intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity at that institution. The State Board of Education shall select or create an objective, nonpartisan, and statistically valid survey to be used by each institution which considers the extent to which competing ideas and perspectives are presented and members of the college community, including students, faculty, and staff, feel free to express their beliefs and viewpoints on campus and in the classroom. The State Board of Education shall annually compile and publish the assessments by September 1 of each year, beginning on September 1, 2022. The State Board of Education may adopt rules to implement this paragraph.

(c) The State Board of Education may not shield students, faculty, or staff at Florida College System institutions from

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free speech protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, Art. I of the State Constitution, or s. 1004.097.

ASSESSMENT.

Section 2. Subsection (13) of section 1001.706, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1001.706 Powers and duties of the Board of Governors.—
(13) INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY

(a) For the purposes of this subsection, The term:

1. "Intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity" means the exposure of students, faculty, and staff to, and the encouragement of their exploration of, a variety of ideological and political perspectives.

2. "Shield" means to limit students', faculty members', or staff members' access to, or observation of, ideas and opinions that they may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or offensive.

(b) The Board of Governors shall require each state university to conduct an annual assessment of the intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity at that institution. The Board of Governors shall select or create an objective, nonpartisan, and statistically valid survey to be used by each state university which considers the extent to which competing ideas and perspectives are presented and members of the university community, including students, faculty, and staff, feel free to

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express their beliefs and viewpoints on campus and in the classroom. The Board of Governors shall annually compile and publish the assessments by September 1 of each year, beginning on September 1, 2022.

- (c) The Board of Governors may not shield students, faculty, or staff at state universities from free speech protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, Art. I of the State Constitution, or s. 1004.97.
- Section 3. Paragraph (f) of subsection (2), paragraphs (f) and (g) of subsection (3), and subsection (4) of section 1004.097, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:
  - 1004.097 Free expression on campus.-

- (2) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the term:
- (f) "Shield" means to limit students', faculty members', or staff members' access to, or observation of, ideas and opinions that they may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or offensive.
  - (3) RIGHT TO FREE-SPEECH ACTIVITIES.-
- (f) A Florida College System institution or a state university may not shield students, faculty, or staff from expressive activities.
- (g) Notwithstanding s. 934.03 and subject to the protections provided in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g, and ss. 1002.22 and 1002.225, a student may record video or audio of class lectures

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for his or her own personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the public institution of higher education where the recording was made, or as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. A recorded lecture may not be published without the consent of the lecturer.

- (4) CAUSE OF ACTION.—A person injured by a violation of this section may bring an action  $\div$
- (a) against a public institution of higher education based on the violation of the individual's expressive rights in a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain declaratory and injunctive relief and may be entitled to damages plus court costs and reasonable attorney fees, which may only be paid from nonstate funds.
- (b) Against a person who has published video or audio recorded in a classroom in violation of paragraph (3)(g) in a court of competent jurisdiction to obtain declaratory and injunctive relief and may be entitled to damages plus court costs and reasonable attorney fees, with the total recovery not to exceed \$200,000.
  - Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.

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