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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate . House

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The Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education (Brodeur) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment (with title amendment)

Delete everything after the enacting clause and insert:

Section 1. Section 683.221, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

683.221 Florida Speech and Debate Week.—

(1) February 1 through February 7 shall be annually designated as "Florida Speech and Debate Week."

(2) Florida Speech and Debate Week shall be observed for

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all of the following purposes:

(a) To recognize the academic, civic, and leadership value of competitive speech and debate.

(b) To honor educators, coaches, judges, and school districts that support debate programming.

(c) To inspire students statewide to participate in debate as a pathway to civic engagement.

(d) To promote Florida's role as the national leader in scholastic speech and debate.

(3) Public and charter schools, state agencies, and other entities may observe Florida Speech and Debate Week.

Section 2. Section 1000.09, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1000.09 Competitive speech and debate.—

(1) CREATION, DESIGNATION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—In alignment with, and in support of, the Department of Education and the program it operates called the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative (FCDI), the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., (FDI) is established as this state's nonprofit statewide speech and debate organization that manages, develops, and expands K-20 civics, speech, and debate programs.

(a)1. FDI shall support and expand access to statewide civic literacy and speech and debate programs by undertaking the following, which list is not exhaustive:

a. Educating and training coaches and students.

b. Training judges and volunteers.

c. Promoting educational competition opportunities.

d. Leading training and leadership development experiences.

e. Establishing competition standards.

f. Maintaining statewide data reporting.

g. Assisting the FCDI, upon its request, in civics-focused education, training, and programming initiatives.

2. This paragraph may not be construed to prohibit schools, districts, or students from participating in civics, speech and debate activities, leagues, or competitions not operated or supervised by FDI.

(b) FDI may establish and maintain partnerships with school districts, charter schools, state agencies, postsecondary institutions, nonprofit organizations, private entities, and national or international organizations to achieve the purposes of this section, including collaborative efforts with FCDI. In such collaboration:

1. FCDI and FDI shall jointly host and operate the annual National Civics and Debate Championship known as The Great Debate, a nationally recognized synthesis of civics education and debate competition that challenges students' civic knowledge, debate skills, and endurance through multi-day, multi-event competition.

2. FCDI shall lead specific civics immersion events, including FCDI Day at the Capitol and the Great American Civics Challenge, which includes the Ronald Reagan Presidential Debates and the We The People Civics Showdown.

3. FDI shall provide logistical support, debate tournament operations support, and tournament coordination support for The Great Debate and other collaborative initiatives to advance statewide speech and debate opportunities.

(2) AUTHORIZED USES OF FUNDS.—FDI may expend program funds on all of the following:

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(a) Administrative operations, including staffing, insurance, compliance, reporting, and statewide infrastructure.

(b) Programmatic operations, including curriculum, training, summer programs, workshops, camps, and mentorship programs.

(c) Tournament operations, including logistics, staff, judge training, technology, awards, and regional team operations.

(d) Travel, lodging, training, and transportation for participants, including local, state, and national travel to competitions hosted by the FDI, FCDI, or other civics, speech, and debate organizations.

(e) Public-private partnership development, including sponsorship and philanthropic support.

(f) Memberships, affiliations, and participation fees related to civics education, speech, debate, leadership, and academic competition programs, provided such memberships, affiliations, and participation advance the purposes of this section.

(3) REPORTING.—FDI shall make publicly available online and submit, no later than December 31 of each year, an annual report to the Department of Education which includes all of the following:

(a) Student participation in statewide FDI programs, by district and demographics.

(b) The number of active student teams in statewide FDI speech and debate programs.

(c) Competitive and educational outcomes of statewide FDI programs.

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(d) A categorized summary of all expenditures.

No later than November 1 of each year, the FCDI shall provide the FDI with the FCDI's most current reporting and data regarding paragraphs (a)-(d) above in order for the FDI to accurately report on the outcomes and expenditures related to any joint programming.

Section 3. For the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the sum of $2.4 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to support the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc.'s responsibilities assigned under s. 1000.09(1), Florida Statutes, including administrative, programmatic, and tournament operation duties.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

========== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T ==========

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete everything before the enacting clause and insert:

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to speech and debate education; creating s. 683.221, F.S.; designating Florida Speech and Debate Week annually in February; providing purposes for the annual observance; authorizing specified entities to observe Florida Speech and Debate Week; creating s. 1000.09, F.S.; establishing the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., (FDI) as a statewide speech and debate organization that performs certain functions in support of the Florida Civics and

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Debate Initiative (FCDI) in the Department of Education; providing the duties of FDI; providing construction; authorizing FDI to establish and maintain certain partnerships; specifying activities for FDI and FCDI; providing authorized uses of funds for FDI; requiring FDI to publish online and submit annually by a specified date to the Department of Education a specified report; specifying requirements for the report; requiring FCDI to provide certain data to FDI by a specified date; providing an appropriation; providing an effective date.