



## POLICY BRIEF | HB 613 HIGHER EDUCATION

State university and college students should feel free to express their viewpoints in a marketplace of diverse ideas.

**HB 613 (Rodriguez) HIGHER EDUCATION:** Requires all state universities and colleges to survey students and faculty, and publish a report on the status of intellectual diversity at their schools.

- A study by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute found a dramatic leftward shift in the composition of faculty today with progressives at 60% and conservatives at only 13%<sup>1</sup>. Given this dire lack of political diversity, conservative students may have real fears about expressing their opinions.
- The University of Florida's student government made national news after attempting to impeach<sup>2</sup> its president Michael Murphy for hosting Donald Trump Jr. as a speaker, proving the trend of intolerance toward conservative views on college campuses has reached Florida.
- HB 613 reinforces the protections of the First Amendment by helping expose suppression of diverse speech and opinions at Florida's higher education institutions. Growth, understanding, and unity stems from hearing all sides of an issue.

As a comprehensive higher education package, **HB 613** also:

- Creates state universities of distinction and repeals emerging preeminent state research universities. This change will encourage state universities to earn a national distinction by excelling in a core competency area unique to their school and to Florida's workforce needs.
- Revises the data source used for academic and research excellence standards of preeminent institutions to capture more timely performance information.
- Requires legislative budget requests to include five-year trend data at the university to ensure that the growth rate of administrators is lower than the growth rate of faculty.
- Offers universities the ability to offer students a cost-saving opt-out option on textbooks and instructional materials.
- Modifies state university performance funding metrics to focus on the success rate of Pell Grant-eligible students and "2+2" Associate in Arts (AA) degree transfer students.
- Removes outdated prohibitions on certain university board members from serving slightly beyond their term to maintain quorum.

<sup>1</sup> American Institute for Economic Research, <https://www.aier.org/article/the-reason-for-the-leftist-hegemon-on-campus/>

<sup>2</sup> Miami Herald, <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/state/florida/article237674724.html>