



RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

May 31, 2019

Secretary Laurel Lee
Secretary of State
R.A. Gray Building, Room 316
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Dear Secretary Lee:

I have signed into law Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill 741, which defines anti-Semitism for purposes of Florida law and requires Florida's public education systems to treat anti-Semitism the same way as they treat racism. This approach represents a sensible way for educational institutions to combat anti-Semitism, and, given the troubling rise in Anti-Semitic incidents, it was wise for the Florida Legislature to make this a priority.

My administration will implement CS/CS/HB 741 in accordance with subsection 7(c) of the bill, which requires the provisions to be construed consistent with the rights protected by the federal and state constitutions. Accordingly, I direct the Florida Department of Education, and advise any public school system that may issue policies or regulations pursuant to CS/CS/HB 741, to ensure that implementation is consistent with First Amendment freedoms.

With this in mind, CS/CS/HB 741 permits regulation to combat anti-Semitism within the realm of government institutions - such as an institution's anti-Semitic hiring or admissions policies, an instructor's indulgence of bizarre theories or pedagogical perversions, and student behavior that is harmful or disruptive. The legislation would, however, not apply to areas, such as lawful demonstrations and public-forum student speech, that fall within the free speech protections of the First Amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ron DeSantis", written over a horizontal line.

Ron DeSantis
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

2019 MAY 31 PM 4:02

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