

Free to Learn Act
Based on South Dakota's HB 1087 (2019)

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF [STATE]:

Section 1. That [STATE CODE] be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read: As used in this Act:

- (1) "Expressive activity," protected under the provisions of this Act includes any lawful noncommercial verbal or written means by which one person communicates ideas to another, and includes peaceful assembly, protests, speeches, distribution of literature, the carrying of signs, and the circulation of petitions; and
- (2) "Intellectual diversity," denotes a learning environment that exposes students to and encourages exploration of a variety of ideological and political perspectives.

Section 2. That [STATE CODE] be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

The [SYSTEM BOARD] shall require each institution under its control to maintain a commitment to the principles of free expression and encourage the timely and rational discussion of topics in an environment that is intellectually and ideologically diverse. Neither the [SYSTEM BOARD] nor any institution under its control may attempt to shield individuals from constitutionally protected speech, including ideas and opinions they find offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical, or wrong-headed.

Section 3. That [STATE CODE] be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

Any outdoor area within the boundaries of a public institution of higher education constitutes a designated public forum for the benefit of students, faculty, administrators, other employees, and their invited guests, to engage in expressive activity, unless access to the area is otherwise properly restricted. A public institution of higher education may maintain and enforce lawful reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions regarding the use of the outdoor areas described in this section, if such restrictions are clear, narrowly tailored in the service of a significant institutional interest, published, content- and viewpoint- neutral, and provide alternate means of engaging in the expressive activity. Any such restrictions shall allow students, faculty, administrators, and other employees to spontaneously and contemporaneously assemble, as long as their conduct is not unlawful and does not materially and substantially disrupt the functioning of the institution. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as limiting the right of students, faculty, administrators, and other employees to engage in protected expressive activity elsewhere within the boundaries of the institution. An institution may not designate any area within its boundaries as a free speech zone or otherwise restrict expressive activities to particular areas within its boundaries in a manner that is inconsistent with this section.

Section 4. That [STATE CODE] be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

A public institution of higher education, its faculty, administrators, and other employees, may not discriminate against any student or student organization based on the content or viewpoint of their expressive activity. Funds allocated to student organizations shall be distributed in a nondiscriminatory manner in accordance with applicable state and federal authority. Access to, and use of, facilities at a public institution of higher education shall be equally available to all student organizations, regardless of the ideological, political, or religious beliefs of the organization.

An institution may not prohibit an ideological, political, or religious student organization from requiring that its leaders or members of the organization affirm and adhere to the organization's sincerely held beliefs, comply with the organization's standards of conduct, or further the organization's mission or purpose, as defined by the organization.

Section 5. That **[STATE CODE]** be amended by adding a NEW SECTION to read:

On or before December first of each year, the **[SYSTEM BOARD]** shall prepare and submit to the Governor and each member of the legislature a report that:

- (1) Sets forth all actions taken by each institution to promote and ensure intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas; and
- (2) Describes any events or occurrences that materially and substantially impeded intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas.