

American Civic Education (ACE) Act
Based on Tennessee H.B. 2517/S.B. 2410 (2022)

Be it enacted by the [STATE] legislature

Section 1. Establishment of a center for American civics

- a) There is established a center for American civics at the [INSTITUTION]. The [INSTITUTION'S GOVERNING BOARD] may rename the center consistent with its philanthropic naming governance procedures.
- b) It is the purpose of the center to:
 - i) Foster a deeper understanding of the structures and institutions of federal, state, and local government;
 - ii) Further the understanding of the principles and philosophies that contributed to the foundation and development of the United States and the state of [STATE];
 - iii) Promote civil discourse and constructive debate;
 - iv) Enhance education in the fields of politics, economics, philosophy, American history, American government, and other related fields as appropriate, with a focus on the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship; fundamental democratic principles; and the ways in which those principles are expressed in and through our federal, state, and local institutions;
 - v) Provide nonpartisan resources to students, faculty, state government agencies, educators, and the general public regarding civic affairs;
 - vi) Foster civic engagement through full and fair discussions that promote civil dialogue among those holding conflicting points of view; and
 - vii) Assist in ensuring that the [INSTITUTION] serves as a robust marketplace of ideas for all students and faculty.
- c) In order to carry out the purposes set forth in subsection (b), the center of American civics is authorized to:
 - i) Hire faculty and staff;
 - ii) Enroll students;
 - iii) Develop and offer courses in new undergraduate major and minor programs;
 - iv) Offer general education and honors courses;
 - v) Provide and facilitate internships and other relevant experiences for students and the general public;
 - vi) Hold events; and
 - vii) Take other actions as appropriate, subject to the supervision of the [PRESIDENT].
- d) Upon its establishment, the center may be physically housed in the [RELEVANT COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS] on the campus of [INSTITUTION].
- e) The center shall operate as an independent academic unit within the [INSTITUTION].

- f) The center shall provide programming addressing American civics and related topics for other public institutions of higher education in [STATE].

Section 2. Board of fellows

- a) The [PRESIDENT], in consultation with the governor, the president pro tempore of the senate, and the speaker of the house of representatives, shall appoint initial members to serve on a board of fellows for the center. Members of the initial board of fellows must be appointed by [DATE].
- b) The board of fellows must consist of nine (9) members, of which:
 - i) At least five (5) members must be, or have been, tenured professors or administrators or professors of practice at an institution of higher education in the United States;
 - ii) Two (2) members must be distinguished former elected or appointed officials in the United States, and, while serving in their former elected or appointed position, must have been affiliated with different political parties; and
 - iii) Two (2) members must be members of the board of the [INSTITUTION GOVERNING BOARD]. If a member appointed under this subdivision (b)(3) vacates the member's position on the board of [INSTITUTION GOVERNING BOARD], then the member vacates the member's position on the board of fellows and must be replaced by the [PRESIDENT].
- c) In order to establish staggered terms for members of the board, two (2) of the initial members must be appointed to serve a term of two (2) years; two (2) of the initial members must be appointed to serve a term of four (4) years; and five (5) of the initial members must be appointed to serve a term of six (6) years. After the initial appointments expire, the term for each member of the board appointed to succeed an initial member of the board of fellows is six (6) years. Board members may continue to serve on the board after their term expires, but only until a new member is appointed to replace the board member. Board members may be reappointed to multiple terms.
- d) The [PRESIDENT] may remove a member from the board of fellows for misconduct or neglect of duty.
- e) Except as provided in subdivision (b)(3), when a member's term expires or when a vacancy on the board arises, the board of fellows shall, with the approval of the [PRESIDENT], and in consultation with the governor, the president pro tempore of the senate, and the speaker of the house of representatives, appoint a new member to serve on the board. If the board appoints a new member to fill a vacancy, then the new member serves for the remainder of the unexpired term.
- f) The [PRESIDENT] shall designate a member of the board of fellows to serve as the chair for a term of two (2) years. At the expiration of the chair's term, the [PRESIDENT] shall appoint another member to serve as chair. There is no limitation on the number of terms a chair may serve. If the chair resigns from the position of chair, or resigns from the board of

fellows, then the **[PRESIDENT]** may designate another member to serve the remainder of the former chair's two-year term.

- g) The board of fellows shall advise the director on matters related to the center, including, but not limited to, staffing, curriculum, policy, and programming, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the **[INSTITUTION]** and **[STATE CODE]**. The director retains final discretion as to all such decisions for the center, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the **[INSTITUTION]**.

Section 3. Director, Faculty, and staff

- a) By **[DATE]**, the board of fellows, or a committee of the board selected by the board, shall conduct a national search and transmit to the **[PRESIDENT]** a list of finalists for the position of director. The **[PRESIDENT]** shall provide all necessary administrative support for the search. The **[PRESIDENT]** shall appoint the director from the list of finalists provided by the board of fellows. If the position of director becomes vacant, then the same process must be followed to appoint a new director. During the period beginning when the position of director becomes vacant and when a new director is appointed, the **[PRESIDENT]** may designate a member of the center's faculty to serve as acting director. The **[PRESIDENT]** may remove the director in accordance with the policies and procedures of the **[INSTITUTION]**.
 - i) The director shall report to the **[PRESIDENT]**.
 - ii) Except for the appointment of the director as provided in subsection (a), the director shall make all faculty and staff hiring decisions. The director shall operate the center in accordance with the policies and procedures of the **[INSTITUTION]**.
 - iii) Faculty of the center may be awarded tenure subject to the tenure policies of the **[INSTITUTION]** as adopted by the **[INSTITUTION'S GOVERNING BOARD]** and shall not be required to gain joint appointment in another division of the **[INSTITUTION]**.
 - iv) By September 1, and by each September 1 thereafter, the director shall develop and provide an annual strategic plan for the center to the **[PRESIDENT]** and the board of fellows.

Section 4. Funds appropriated to the center shall not supplant any existing state funding or private or external donations to the **[INSTITUTION]**. Appropriated funds and all private and external donations to the center may only be used for the direct operation of the center.

Section 5. Annual report

- a) By October 1, and by each October 1 thereafter, the **[PRESIDENT]** shall, in consultation with the director of the center and the board of fellows, submit an annual report to the governor, the president pro tempore of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the chairs of the finance committees of the senate and house of representatives.
- b) The report must include:
 - i) The total amount of funding received by the center in the previous year;

- ii) A description of current faculty positions and the names and qualifications of the faculty members currently holding such positions;
- iii) The names and titles of the members of the board of fellows;
- iv) The total undergraduate and graduate student enrollment of the center;
- v) A description of the courses and degrees offered by the center;
- vi) A description of significant community events, initiatives, and publications provided by the center during the previous year;
- vii) A description of programs at the [INSTITUTION] supported by the center; and
- viii) A copy of the center's most recently issued strategic plan.

Section 6. If a provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, then the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this act that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end, the provisions of this act are severable.

Section 7. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.