

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to the Florida Ethics Center;  
3           providing a short title; creating the Florida Ethics  
4           Center within the Office of Chief Inspector General in  
5           the Executive Office of the Governor; establishing the  
6           mission and duties of the center; requiring the center  
7           to be located in the Capitol Complex; providing for  
8           appropriations; providing an effective date.

9  
10           WHEREAS, the vitality of our constitutional form of  
11           government, a beacon of hope for several generations, requires  
12           adherence to the principles of honesty, integrity, truth, trust,  
13           and transparency in public service, and

14           WHEREAS, our representative democracy cannot endure without  
15           people engaging with their elected officials, and

16           WHEREAS, civic engagement is fostered by goodwill, honesty,  
17           and transparency, must be free of corrupting conflicts of  
18           interest and self-dealing, and must nurture a deep understanding  
19           of the responsibilities of public service, and

20           WHEREAS, Florida, as one of the largest, most diverse, and  
21           most prosperous states, has the opportunity and responsibility  
22           to lead other states in the study of government ethics, and

23           WHEREAS, there must be a concerted effort to develop a  
24           higher level of ethical leadership and to restore the people's  
25           trust in government, and

26           WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of state government to

27 | make government honest, transparent, uncorrupt, and free of  
 28 | undue influence as evidenced by the existence of the offices of  
 29 | inspectors general, the Commission on Ethics, cases brought by  
 30 | state attorneys, and laws, rules, and regulations intended to  
 31 | address illegal and unethical government activity, and

32 |       WHEREAS, knowledge, study, debate, and contemplation of  
 33 | these issues can change attitudes, approaches, and actions that  
 34 | cannot be changed by law and its processes alone, NOW,  
 35 | THEREFORE,

36 |  
 37 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 39 |       Section 1. (1) This act may be cited as the "Florida  
 40 | Ethics Center Act."

41 |       (2) The Florida Ethics Center is created within the Office  
 42 | of Chief Inspector General in the Executive Office of the  
 43 | Governor. The mission of the center is to help elected  
 44 | officials, persons seeking office, and other persons who  
 45 | interact with government to study applied ethics, the impact of  
 46 | conflicts of interest, and other issues. This mission will help  
 47 | disseminate a deep understanding of ethics as applied to  
 48 | government and business interests.

49 |       (3) The Florida Ethics Center shall:

50 |       (a) Train and educate candidates and elected and appointed  
 51 | state and local government officials about ethical concerns that  
 52 | arise in government, that affect relationships among business

53 interests, and that promote the public good.

54 (b) Be available to other states and their local  
55 governments as a training, education, and study center, allowing  
56 Florida to emerge as a leader among states in ethical government  
57 practice and to offset the operating costs of the center.

58 (c) Fund two resident ethics scholar positions selected  
59 from preeminent state research universities, as designated  
60 pursuant to s. 1001.7065, Florida Statutes.

61 (d) Fund three rotating ethics scholar positions selected  
62 from state colleges and universities.

63 (e) Fund visiting scholars and lecturers who periodically  
64 make presentations on ethical issues.

65 (f) Fund and produce an online newsletter and journal to  
66 disseminate applied ethics and civic engagement knowledge and to  
67 encourage study, discussion, and debate. The costs of producing  
68 these publications may be offset by subscription income derived  
69 from entities and individuals beyond state and local  
70 governments.

71 (g) Fund and create an annual national and international  
72 conference on government ethics.

73 (h) Provide, for a fee, online and traditional educational  
74 courses, pamphlets, and training materials relating to  
75 government and applied ethics for elected officials and  
76 candidates in this state and other states. The proceeds raised  
77 from selling such materials and offering such training to  
78 entities outside this state may be used to offset production and

HB 1315

2015

79 training costs and to benefit the center.

80 (i) Provide adequate staffing and supervision of the  
81 center's functions.

82 (4) The Florida Ethics Center shall be situated within the  
83 Capitol Complex to take advantage of the Capitol location for  
84 simulated training sessions. The center shall be designated with  
85 clear signage for easy location and recognition as an integral  
86 part of the Capitol Complex.

87 (5) The Florida Ethics Center shall be funded annually by  
88 the Legislature.

89 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.