



## **Sunshine Law Exemption – University/College Presidential Searches** **VOTE NO ON HB 997**

**Florida’s University and College Presidents are the most powerful non-elected public servants in Florida.** Collectively, they control billions of dollars in tax revenue and foundation dollars, the lives of tens of thousands of faculty and staff and the futures of our young people.

**Currently the process for hiring them is in the sunshine** but this bill will exempt any identifying information about candidates for the jobs from our open records/meeting laws until the final phase of the process.

- **Supporters say we can’t get the best candidates in the sunshine – WRONG**  
Florida has had 5 successful searches since 2017. These searches produced excellent candidates including, university presidents, state system chancellors, provosts from Research One institutions and some of the top academic minds in the country. **Hiring a new president is currently a process involving the entire university community, this bill will destroy that collaboration** – A hiring process conducted in the Sunshine involves students, staff, faculty, community members and local business leaders. Keeping the names of those being considered secret until the last minute, removes all of those vital stakeholders from the process.
- **Florida’s higher education system was ranked NUMBER ONE by U.S. News and World Report just last year**– Florida’s elected officials at all levels have celebrated this achievement, one that was accomplished by university presidents who were all hired in the sunshine.
- **University and College Trustees are political appointees, not accountable to the people** – An open search process is the only way that faculty, staff, students, parents and community partners can weigh in on these critical decisions. Allowing these decisions to be made by political appointees behind closed doors shuts out the stakeholders and hurts the university/college community.
- **Stakeholders and taxpayers have a right to know who wasn’t selected** – information about the candidates not selected is just as important as knowing who made the final cut for the people to support the eventual leaders. The open hiring process is a vital first step in building trust and confidence in our university presidents and it should remain open.

**Florida’s Constitution Requires Exemptions to our Sunshine Laws to be based on a compelling case...there is no compelling case here!**

**PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF TAXPAYERS**  
**PROTECT OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

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