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## Governor DeSantis Signs Legislation to Provide Additional Resources to Students

KISSIMMEE, Fla.—Today, Governor Ron DeSantis signed legislation to enable schools to host chaplain programs and patriotic organizations on campus.

“Faith leaders and civic organizations are important additional resources for students who may be facing challenges or need to build community and camaraderie,” said Governor Ron DeSantis. “I’m pleased to be able to expand the variety of options that students have at their disposal in school and we have no doubt that these options will enhance the experiences of our students.”

“I’d like to thank Governor DeSantis for signing HB 1317,” said Representative Berny Jacques. “This is an important piece of legislation that allows patriotic organizations in our schools, organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters — a mentoring organization that I’ve been involved with for over 10 years, starting back when I was a young prosecutor. Big Brothers Big Sisters works well with many of our schools, but this legislation will help us double down on our efforts so kids will turn out to be productive members of society, and not as a file on a prosecutor’s desk.”

“This legislation provides yet another option to serve all students in Florida,” said Commissioner of Education Manny Diaz, Jr. “Volunteer chaplains offer faith-based support and are uniquely suited to serve students and families throughout our state and I’m pleased that we are providing another valuable resource for our schools.”

“I want to applaud Governor DeSantis for signing House Bill 931,” said Representative Stan McClain. “At a time when much of the country is facing a mental health crisis, having volunteer chaplains for K-12 schools is a common sense solution. We are selling our kids short if we only focus on meeting their intellectual needs but fail to make provision for their spiritual and emotional needs. Once again, Florida and Governor DeSantis lead the nation in a policy change that will make public education better for everyone.”

Governor DeSantis signed HB 931 and HB 1317.

HB 931 establishes a statewide school chaplain program, which:

- Authorizes school districts and charter schools to allow volunteer chaplains to be on school campuses and provide additional counseling support to students.
  - Chaplains will be assigned by the district school board or charter school governing board.
  - A student may only receive support offered by school chaplains with written parental consent.

HB 1317 authorizes districts to allow civic and patriotic organizations to visit schools to encourage student participation and involvement. These organizations include:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
- The Boy Scouts of America
- The Boys & Girls Clubs of America
- The Civil Air Patrol
- Future Farmers of America
- The Girl Scouts of the United States of America
- Little League Baseball
- The Marine Corps League
- The Navy Seal Cadet Corps

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