

S.201

Introduced by Senators Lyons, Baruth, Chittenden, Hardy, Harrison, Ram  
Hinsdale, Watson and White

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; postsecondary education; academic freedom; freedom of  
expression; First Amendment

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require  
postsecondary schools operating in Vermont to adopt an academic freedom  
policy.

An act relating to academic freedom in Vermont's postsecondary schools

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. § 187 is added to read:

§ 187. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

(a) It is the policy of the State of Vermont to maintain and encourage full  
freedom of inquiry, teaching, and research and the free exchange of ideas in  
postsecondary schools that operate in Vermont in order to ensure such schools  
allow for robust and uninhibited discussion of issues.

1       (b) Postsecondary schools that operate in Vermont shall adopt an academic  
2       freedom policy that complies with the State policy contained in subsection (a)  
3       of this section and that:

4             (1) provides faculty with the freedom of discussion of any material  
5       relevant to any course that a faculty member has been assigned to teach;

6             (2) places no unreasonable restrictions upon instructional methods; and

7             (3) provides faculty with the same freedom of expression and speech  
8       outside the workplace as private citizens are afforded; provided, however, that  
9       the faculty member shall disclaim any representation on behalf of the  
10       postsecondary school when such representation could reasonably be perceived  
11       within the community where the utterance is made.

12       Sec. 2. POLICY ADOPTION

13       Postsecondary schools operating in Vermont shall adopt an academic  
14       freedom policy consistent with Sec. 1 of this act on or before August 1, 2027.

15       Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

16       This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.