November 16, 2022

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to address questions raised during the recent Faculty Senate meeting regarding the new Institute of American Civics (IAC), as well as a few questions that have arisen after that date. I have information from last month’s meeting only secondhand, but I will do my best to answer questions as I understand them. I will be present during the full senate meeting on November 21 to answer additional questions.

Let me begin by referencing the legislation that created the Institute for American Civics. The Tennessee General Assembly voted nearly unanimously (120-6) for this legislation, with the few “no” votes distributed equally by party. The legislation is also attached to this letter, along with transcripts of the floor debates from the state house and state senate. If you have any concerns about whether this Institute had a partisan founding, please read the floor debates in their entirety.

The purpose of the IAC, as described in the enabling legislation is to:

1. Foster a deeper understanding of the structures and institutions of federal, state, and local government.
2. Further the understanding of the principles and philosophies that contributed to the foundation and development of the United States and the State of Tennessee.
3. Promote civil discourse and constructive debate.
4. 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 our federal, state, and local institutions.
5. Provide nonpartisan resources to students, faculty, state government agencies, and the general public regarding civic affairs.
6. Foster civic engagement through full and fair discussions that promote civil dialogue among those holding conflicting points of view.
7. Assist in ensuring that the University of Tennessee serves as a robust marketplace of ideas for all students and faculty.

If you are interested in learning more about the Institute’s mission in the context of civic education in higher education, I invite you to read the white paper my team wrote this summer. I am currently participating in a working group of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences dedicated to renewing civic education on college campuses. UT is fortunate to be part of the working group, which is chaired by Ben Vinson III, Provost & Executive Vice President at Case Western Reserve University and David Campbell, Packey J. Dee Professor of American Democracy at the University of Notre Dame. There is a movement afoot for universities to help address our civic health, and the Institute is UTK’s contribution to that effort.

As you may have heard, the campus will seek approval of the creation of the Baker School of Public Policy at the February Board of Trustees meeting. The IAC will be a sub-unit with the Baker School. THEC approval for
the IAC was granted on November 7, and approval for the School is expected to follow approval by the Board of Trustees in late February or early March. Faculty teaching courses for the Institute will be housed within the School or borrowed from other departments.

The Baker School (once approved) and the IAC are being designed to avoid competition with other academic units. The mission of these two units is to offer our students opportunities to study and research theories, policies, and traditions of civic engagement and public service from a particular disciplinary perspective. The Institute is designed not only to enhance the civic knowledge, skills, and engagement of UT students and faculty, but also to promote civic knowledge, skills, and engagement statewide. There is not another entity on campus with that mission. To the extent that the mission of the Institute intersects with other academic units on campus, that intersection has the potential for deep collaboration. We are collaborating with Political Science on specific courses already, and we have an exciting project with History and English in the works. We look forward to collaborating with other departments.

Let me now address the two new courses we are proposing: IAC 201, “Construction and Reconstruction of the American Republic,” and IAC 202, “Civil Society and the State.” We constructed these courses with three goals in mind:

1. Meet our legislative mission and provide quality instruction to undergraduates.
2. Complement, but do not replicate, courses already taught on campus.
3. Structure courses in such a way that faculty from a variety of disciplines can choose to teach and partner with us.

The courses we proposed do all three of these things. The course entitled Construction and Reconstruction of the American Republic weaves together subject matter from History, Philosophy, and Political Science to provide a broad introduction to the history, politics, and philosophy of the founding and formative years of our country in a way that is intended to avoid duplication of any course taught in those departments. The course entitled Civil Society and the State addresses questions long considered by political scientists and political sociologists. Here, too, we have taken care to ensure that our approach is different and unique enough to justify a new course offering.

In developing syllabi for these courses, our team examined syllabi from other institutions and consulted with faculty both here at UTK and at other universities. We are proposing these courses as 200-level additions to the Vol Core curriculum. The material covered in these courses should be of interest to students University-wide, but also should stimulate students to explore these topics in greater depth by taking more specialized courses in History, Philosophy, Political Science, and Sociology.

If other units on campus see ways of contributing to those courses, that is an opportunity for collaboration with the Institute.

I am happy to answer any further questions and appreciate your assistance in helping us move forward on this exciting initiative.

Best,

Marianne Wanamaker, Executive Director and Professor of Economics
Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy
Responses to specific questions from Senator McAlpin:

1) **What is the process by which these new courses were developed?**

Appendix A of the Curricular Approval Guide ([https://ugcouncil.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2021/08/Curricular-Submission-Guide-2021-2022.pdf](https://ugcouncil.utk.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/64/2021/08/Curricular-Submission-Guide-2021-2022.pdf)) describes the process as follows: Faculty members submit proposals, that are then reviewed by the faculty of the respective departments; and again at the college level, before submission to the Undergraduate Council and the Senate. The Institute for American Civics does not yet exist, other than as a Board that contains many non-faculty members. Who is proposing and who is vetting these courses before they go to the Undergraduate Council?

The provost’s office granted approval for academic status to the IAC in July 2022. THEC granted academic unit status to the IAC on November 7, 2022.

The Baker Center has a curriculum committee comprised of an interdisciplinary group of UT faculty, and that committee approved these courses for further consideration by the undergraduate council.

In addition, although not required, IAC 201 was vetted with:
- Bill Mercer, Senior Lecturer in History and Law, UTK
- Michael Jones, Associate Professor of Political Science, UTK
- Brian Krumm, Professor of Law, UTK
- Tina Shepardson, Professor of Religious Studies, UTK
- Stephen Smith, Professor of Political Science, Yale University
- Dan Cullen, Professor of Philosophy, Rhodes College

IAC 202 was vetted with
- Will Jennings, Distinguished Lecturer, Political Science
- Chris Anderson, US Department of State

2) **What makes these courses unique?** Duplication issues regarding both IAC courses were raised at the last Senate meeting, including by the Dean of Arts and Sciences. For example, IAC 202 would seem to duplicate much of the content of Sociology 344, Political Sociology: “Sociological analysis of the formation and application of nation state policies. Examination of who gets what, why, and how. Emphasis on contrasting explanations of the control of the state and the relative autonomy of the state.”

Both the curriculum committee and the UG Council considered the issue of duplication. Neither found enough significant overlap to cause concern. In addition, the leadership of the College of Arts and Sciences did not raise the concern. I did not understand Dean Lee’s comments in Exec Committee to reflect concerns about overlap. She did mention cross-listing, but cross-listing occurs when another (secondary) department requests of a primary department that its course be cross-listed.

SOC 344 is an upper-division course; IAC 202 is an introductory course that is aimed at providing a foundation for further study in civics. IAC focuses on culture and civil society. SOCI 344 focuses on the nation state. The only term that the two courses have in common is the state. There are courses in most social sciences and humanities disciplines that focus on the state. It is such a central concept that it benefits from a variety of disciplinary approaches.

In general, the IAC has been directed to construct a curriculum that meets the statute’s goals (see attached for those goals) and builds on existing disciplinary strengths at UT. Current units on campus *should* recognize material in IAC courses, but they do not duplicate content or approach. Both IAC 201 and 202 were designed by Baker Center faculty to avoid duplicating the work of other units. The goal is that the courses could ultimately be taught by faculty from multiple disciplinary backgrounds, including from other departments currently at UT, as the IAC takes shape. That both sociology and political science see their disciplines in this course proposal.
means the Baker Center faculty who developed the course have been successful in meeting their design goals.

3) IAC 201: Construction and Reconstruction of the American Republic (3)
   The Rationale—which will of course not appear in the catalog—states: “The course takes into account not only the contributions of elites, but [also] the experience, perspectives, and contributions of women, Native Americans, and people of color (both enslaved and free) in the life of the new republic.” Why make far more than half of the population of the “new republic” an afterthought in the Rationale, rather than part of the course description? In addition, there were many women among the “elites” during the period in question; the language used here seems awkward and inappropriate.

   Women are not an afterthought. We’d be more than happy to receive additional suggestions as to which women (and readings) should be discussed in this regard.

4) IAC 202: Civil Society and the State (3)
   a) The question posed by this course might be described as: “Are certain cultures just not ready for democracy?”
      That approach seems an ill-advised manner in which to introduce students to comparative cultural studies (it is a 200-level class).

      This is not the question of the course, and the syllabus was very careful to construct a learning experience for students to have a nuanced understanding of the way that culture and political systems interact. In fact, students will be encouraged to challenge the idea that cultures are fixed or that any particular cultural traits are incompatible with particular systems. The (hypo)thesis that cultural variables are driving the resurgence in authoritarianism we are currently witnessing, including in the United States, is worth having a course about in a civics institute.

   b) The Rationale for this course claims that the “wide variety of cultures” mentioned in the course description will be examined from “a variety of disciplines including Anthropology, Geography, Economics, History, Literature, Philosophy, Sociology, Political Science, and Psychology.” How could all of these disciplinary approaches to be meaningfully treated in one semester?

      This course is not a study of those disciplines. This course applies concepts and approaches from these disciplines to help answer questions. Civics courses will routinely need to rely on multiple disciplines to be successful. (The IAC is, again, interdisciplinary in nature.) Please note, also, that the rationale does not say that all the listed disciplines will be applied in every instance. The list was intended to be descriptive rather than prescriptive or exhaustive.
by deleting all language after the enacting clause and substituting instead the following:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 9, is amended by adding the following as a new part:


(a) There is established an institute of American civics at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The board of trustees for the University of Tennessee may rename the institute consistent with its philanthropic naming governance procedures.

(b) It is the purpose of the institute to:

(1) Foster a deeper understanding of the structures and institutions of federal, state, and local government;

(2) Further the understanding of the principles and philosophies that contributed to the foundation and development of the United States and the state of Tennessee;

(3) Promote civil discourse and constructive debate;

(4) 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;

(5) Provide nonpartisan resources to students, faculty, state government agencies, educators, and the general public regarding civic affairs;
(6) Foster civic engagement through full and fair discussions that promote civil dialogue among those holding conflicting points of view; and

(7) Assist in ensuring that the University of Tennessee 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 institute is authorized to:

(1) Hire faculty and staff;

(2) Enroll students;

(3) Develop and offer courses in new undergraduate major and minor programs;

(4) Offer general education and honors courses;

(5) Provide and facilitate internships and other relevant experiences for students and the general public;

(6) Hold events; and

(7) Take other actions as appropriate, subject to the supervision of the chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and the general supervision of the president of the University of Tennessee system.

(d) Upon its establishment, the institute may be physically housed in the Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center on the campus of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

(e) The institute shall operate as an academic unit within the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

(f) The institute shall provide programming addressing American civics and related topics for the University of Tennessee system.

49-9-1102. Board of fellows.

(a) The president of the University of Tennessee, in consultation with the governor, the speaker of the senate, and the speaker of the house of representatives,
shall appoint initial members to serve on a board of fellows for the institute. Members of
the initial board of fellows must be appointed by September 1, 2022.

(b) The board of fellows must consist of thirteen (13) members, of which:

(1) At least nine (9) members must be, or have been, tenured professors
or administrators or professors of practice at an institution of higher education in
the United States;

(2) 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

(3) Two (2) members must be members of the board of the Howard H.
Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. If a
member appointed under this subdivision (b)(3) vacates the member's position
on the board of the Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy, then the
member vacates the member's position on the board of fellows and must be
replaced by the president of the University of Tennessee.

(c) In order to establish staggered terms for members of the board, four (4) of
the initial members must be appointed to serve a term of two (2) years; four (4) 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 of the University of Tennessee 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 of the University of Tennessee, and in consultation with the governor, the speaker 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 of the University of Tennessee 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 of the University of Tennessee 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 of the University of Tennessee 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 appointed pursuant to § 49-9-1103 on matters related to the institute, including, but not limited to, staffing, curriculum, policy, and programming, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the University of Tennessee. The director retains final discretion as to all such decisions for the institute, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the University of Tennessee.

49-9-1103. Director - Faculty and staff.

(a) By March 1, 2023, the board of fellows, or a committee of the board selected by the board, shall conduct a national search and transmit to the chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville a list of finalists for the position of director. The chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville shall provide all necessary administrative support for the search. The chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville 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 chancellor of the
University of Tennessee, Knoxville may designate a member of the institute’s faculty to serve as acting director. The chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville may remove the director in accordance with the policies and procedures of the University of Tennessee.

(b) The director shall report to the chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

(c) 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 institute in accordance with the policies and procedures of the University of Tennessee.

(d) Faculty of the institute may be awarded tenure subject to the tenure policies of the University of Tennessee as adopted by the board of trustees, and shall not be required to gain joint appointment in another division of the University of Tennessee.

(e) By September 1, 2023, and by each September 1 thereafter, the director shall develop and provide an annual strategic plan for the institute to the chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; the president of the University of Tennessee system; and the board of fellows.

49-9-1104. Use of funds.

Funds appropriated to the institute shall not supplant any existing state funding or private or external donations to the Howard H. Baker, Jr. Center for Public Policy or to the University of Tennessee. Appropriated funds and all private and external donations to the institute may only be used for the direct operation of the institute.

49-9-1105. Annual report.

(a) By October 1, 2023, and by each October 1 thereafter, the president of the University of Tennessee shall, in consultation with the director of the institute, the board of fellows, and the chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, submit an annual report to the governor, the speaker 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:

(1) The total amount of funding received by the institute in the previous year;

(2) A description of current faculty positions and the names and qualifications of the faculty members currently holding such positions;

(3) The names and titles of the members of the board of fellows;

(4) The total undergraduate and graduate student enrollment of the institute;

(5) A description of the courses and degrees offered by the institute;

(6) A description of significant community events, initiatives, and publications provided by the institute during the previous year;

(7) A description of programs at the University of Tennessee supported by the institute; and

(8) A copy of the institute’s most recently issued strategic plan.

SECTION 2. 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 3. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.
Senate Session - 66th Legislative Day

April 12th, 2022

Lt. Governor and Speaker of the Senate Randy McNally: Speaker

Russell Humphrey: Clerk

Sen. Brian Kelsey, R-Germantown: B.K.

Sen. Jon Lundberg, R-Bristol: J.L.

Sen. Becky Massey, R-Knoxville: B.M.

Sen. Frank Niceley, R-Strawberry Plains: F.N.

Sen. Ramesh Akbari, D-Memphis: R.A.

Sen. Art Swann, R-Maryville: A.S.

Sen. Jeff Yarbro, D-Nashville: J.Y.

Clerk: Senate Bill 2410 by Senator Kelsey on final consideration.

Speaker: Senator Kelsey, you’re recognized on Senate Bill 2410.

B.K.: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move passage of Senate Bill 2410 on third and final consideration for the purposes of bringing forth an amendment that fixes the bill.

Speaker: That promotion is properly seconded. Amendments, Mr. Clerk.

Clerk: Amendment No. 1: Education Committee to the amendment.

Speaker: Senator Lundberg, on Amendment 1.

J.L.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Amendment 1 does make the bill and establishes an institute of American Civics at the University of Tennessee - Knoxville. I move adoption and yield to the sponsor for further explanation.

Speaker: Senator Lundberg moves adoption, seconded by Senator Kelsey. Senator Kelsey on further explanation of the Amendment.
B.K.: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This Amendment creates the institute of American Civics at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville which will be housed at the Baker Center. That institute may hire faculty and staff as well as to enroll students in a degree-granting program, provide general education courses to other students at the University of Tennessee, and host other events and do other things that are necessary to put forward its mission. Its mission will be as follows: “Among other things, the institute will further the understanding of the principles and philosophies that contributed to the foundation and development of the United States and the State of Tennessee and our constitutions, promote civil discourse and constructive debate, foster civic engagement through full and fair discussion that is intentional and promoting civil dialogue, and assisting in assuring that the University of Tennessee serves as a robust marketplace of ideas for all students and faculty. Mr. Speaker, we have seen, unfortunately, that on other college campuses across this country that there has been an erosion of these values of civil discourse. We’ve seen speakers, even ironically speakers talking about about freedom of speech who have been shouting down, but this bill will do the opposite. It will promote the classical ideas that are bedrocks of American Civics like the freedom of speech, and I certainly appreciate the Governor for bringing forth this bill as an administrative priority this year and am pleased with the leader from Williamson County for allowing me to carry it on behalf of the Governor, so I move adoption of and second Amendment No. 1 adoption.

Speaker: Amendment No. 1 has been seconded and moved to discussion. I see none. All in favor say “Aye”, all those opposed say “no.” Amendment No. 1 is adopted. On the bill as amended open to discussion. Senator Massey.

Massey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I really rise in support of this legislation. I’ve discussed it with the University, and over the years have worked closely with the Baker Center. Of course,
Senator Baker was a close friend of our family’s, and this just continues on the tradition that he set. I know Senator Gilmore and Senator Akbari participated in a session for him in here last week on civil discourse, and they just do a great job bringing people together with the diversity of thought and the diversity of opinion, and I think this is a great place for it to be housed, and I look forward to the fruitions. This takes it beyond just a political science; yes, we have the political science majors, but we don’t have something that really just focuses on that broader civics degree, and it probably would have been something I would have considered majoring in when I was at UT, so I’m excited for it. Thank you.


F.N.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I graduated from UT in 1969. The only D I made was in political science. We had a liberal political science teacher. I lived within 20 miles of the University of Tennessee my entire life. I’ve kept up with the University of Tennessee all down through the years and I’ve watched them waste money and waste money and turn more liberal as time went on. This bill at the end of 10 years will have spent $60 million on basically nothing. Now, if you want to have more conservative and Republican ambassadors at UT, all the President has to do is start hiring a few of them. Check their voting record. Interview them. Check them out. These professors have tenure, and regardless of what this little institute, this $60 million institute here at the Baker Center, regardless of what it does, it can’t fire one of these liberal professors. The only thing you can do is start plugging in more conservative professors into the system, and that’s where the President could come in at. I like diversity. I like balance. I don’t want all Republican professors. I want some Democrats and Liberals, but I want some Conservatives. The only way you can do that is quit hiring the liberal, democratic professors. I’m all about diversity. What the University of Tennessee needs is diversity. We need some Republican professors, and
this is not going to do it. This is going to hire a bunch of people over there at the Baker Institute, and at the end of 10 years, they will have spent $60 million and we will be no better off than we are right now. Naturally, I am voting against this bill.

Speaker: Chairman Akbari.

R.A.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this legislation. Now, initially, I was skeptical because I think that politics unfortunately is far too large of a role in our discussion in everyday life and certainly in the academic world. But, the Baker Center is an institute that I trust. I trust the leadership of the University of Tennessee. This institute is not about republicans or democrats. This institute is about strong civics-based education for those who want to make this world a better place, who want to be able to talk to each other and not see the R or the D next to the person’s name, who want to focus on policy and not always politics. So, I think this is great for our young people. I think it will be an excellent addition to our university system, and I think that the University of Tennessee, specifically the Baker Center, has proven to be a non-partisan, outstanding institution. It is the perfect place to house it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Senator Swann.

A.S.: I’m with UT-Martin, and Mike Fog was too; we were President and Vice President of the Student Government there. It changed my life going into student government, and I don’t believe that the professors that were liberal there changed anything about my Republican values that I took care of when I was a boy. My parents were Republicans all the way back to Lincoln, and I am too, but this has nothing to do with politics. Motivation is what it does. It motivates that person to get involved with the system. We’re gonna worry about how they motivate because they experience things out in life that we’re not going to like them experiencing. That’s not our business, and we’re not here to judge this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
Speaker: Thank you, Senator Swann. Leader Yarbro.

J.Y.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that was, the speech we just heard, was exactly why I rise in support of this legislation. I think this is - there’s plenty of room for fighting about left and right ideas, but I think all of us know that we definitely need people to fight well together, to work well together and that is, that can be in short supply. I was glad that the gentlelady from Knoxville mentioned Howard Baker. My university was involved in a different type of institute but had a similar mission, and my first mentor was a Republican U.S. Senator who recounted Howard Baker as his mentor, and like Senator Swann said, he didn’t change my mind on everything, but he did teach me a lot about how to work with people, how to fight with people, how to find agreement and how to disagree. Lord knows we need that. I appreciate the university and I also appreciate the work of the Majority Leader approving this legislation, that it’s gone through our process because I think we have ensured that there is going to be a commitment to robust debate, but also a commitment to being non-partisan and ensuring that this can be a feather in the cap of the University of Tennessee and something that will move Tennessee forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Senator Yarbro. Further discussion. Objection to the question? None.

Senator Kelsey, you wish to close?

B.K.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To reiterate the comments of my colleagues, this bill has bipartisan support, and in fact, it is a requirement that the Board include a member from each of the two major political parties here in this state. I want to thank those colleagues that have spoken in support of this bill, and I also want to thank the Speaker and President Randy Boyd for this program at the Baker Center and I would urge a positive vote. Thank you.
Speaker: We will be voting on Senate Bill 2410, on third and final consideration. Those members in favor of Senate Bill 2410 as amended will vote “Aye” when the bell rings, those opposed will vote “No.” Let every member cast their vote when the bell rings. Has every member voted? Does any member wish to change their vote? Mr. Clerk, take the vote.

Clerk: AYES 30, 3 NAY

Speaker: Senate Bill 2410 is amended. I declare pass without objection. Motion reconsidered is here on the table.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker the Senate Bill is on the desk.

S.H.R.: Leader Gant, you are recognized

R.G.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to substitute and conform to Senate Bill 2410.

S.H.R.: Leader Gant moves to substitute and conform Senate Bill 2410 without objection, so order. Leader Gant.

R.G.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move passage of Senate Bill 2410 on third and final consideration.

S.H.R.: Leader Gant moves passage of Senate Bill 2410 on third and final consideration. Clerk, call first amendment.
Chairman White, you’re recognized.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move to withdrawal.

Without objection, Amendment No. 1 withdrawn. Next Amendment, Mr. Clerk.

No further amendments, Mr. Speaker.

Leader Gant, you’re recognized.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This piece of legislation is brought by Governor Bill Lee. What this does is this bill creates an institute for American Civics at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. The institute will initially be housed at the Baker Center at UT Knoxville and will operate as an academic unit within the University of Tennessee. The institute may enroll students into a degree-granting program provide general education courses to other students at the University of Tennessee. Higher faculty and staff host events, provide internships, and other relevant experiences to students and the general public. The institute will foster a deeper understanding of structures and institutions of federal, state, and local government. Further the understanding of principles and philosophies that contributed to the foundation and development of the United States. The State of Tennessee promotes civil discourse and constructive debate, 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 how those principles are expressed in our federal, state, and local institutions. It also provides non-partisan resources to students, faculty, state government agencies, and the general public regarding civic affairs. Foster civic engagement through full and fair discussion that is intentional and promoting civil dialogue among those holding conflicting points of view. It also assist in ensuring the University of Tennessee serves as a robust marketplace of ideas for all students and faculty. The amendment
that was put on in committe; I’m going to go through a summary of the amendment. It makes
technical changes such as editing the University of Tennesse-Knoxville to The University of
Tennessee at Knoxville. Clarification of the administrative and oversight roles of the UTK Chatt,
UTK Chancellor versus the President. Chancellor provides administrative support for director
search. Chancellor appoints director from a list of finalists provided by the board, President
designates the Chair of the Board. And as a a requirement for the institute to providing program
for the UT System, changes to the Board of Fellows requiring Governor and Speakers’ approval
consultation with the Governor and Speakers. Also adds staggered terms for the Board of
Fellows. It also does not have any connection to Hillsdale College. The fiscal note concerns that
may be out there, there’s 56 salary positions. That’s an estimate based on similar programs that
other schools over 20 positions are interns and student-workers. The director can move funding
around depending on enrollment. This bill will be part of the College of Arts and Sciences. That
still could be determined. The bill will just authorize the institution to certain degrees. There’s
nothing specific on that yet. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move passage of Senate Bill 2410.
Y.H.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sponsor, would you yield?
Y.H.: I rise in support of this bill. I am pleased to see that we are utilizing one of our premier
universities to bring about greater understandings about civics within our state. It is needed in
this day and time and I ask my colleagues to giving support in this calling. With that, thank you.
S.H.R.: Leader Gant.
R.G.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, my friend, representative from Chattanooga. This has
been a very bipartisan bill from the very beginning. You’ve supported it from the very beginning.
The Senate has had bipartisan support, so it’s actually good to see democrats and republicans supporting a good piece of legislation. So, I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for supporting this.


B.M.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sponsor, I applaud you for making it clear that some extremist university or college from Michigan would not be part of this. You listed several things that they were going to do within this institute, and it sounded like they were going to be debating a lot of maybe divisive topics. So, I don’t know from previous legislation we passed this year, if their goals can be met by what you described. I don’t think it would be legal anymore, would it?

S.H.R.: Leader Gant.

R.G.: Representative, I’m sorry. I don’t understand your question. If you can put it in a bit more clearer terms, I’ll try to answer it.


B.M.: Okay, we passed legislation here earlier, this session, on this floor, that more or less said “any divisive topics that would make someone feel bad about their heritage or any other civic discord would be illegal to teach on college campuses. From what you described, what you read, and I know this is not your legislation, it laid out more or less, you used the word debate those critical topics, and I don’t think they can meet that mission statement with what we passed on the floor earlier this year.

S.H.R.: Was that a question or a statement?

B.M.: It’s a question.

S.H.R.: Alright, I was just making sure.

B.M.: I want to know if it’s going to be legal or not.
S.H.R.: Alright, there’s the question. Leader Gant.

R.G.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you from my good friend from Nashville. This legislation does not stifle any free exchange of ideas, and actually, this legislation promotes, in a civil way of how we should act in debating an issue. That’s the whole purpose of establishing this institute is to bring a civil dialogue to a room. So, I think you made my point, so thank you for bringing that up.


B.M.: And I totally agree with you. I agree we should not ever interfere with the first amendment, and handcuff people and make people think they’re committing, breaking the law for discussing their first amendment rights, so I agree with you. Thank you.

S.H.R.: Representative Clemmons.

J.C.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Sponsor, I thank you for carrying this legislation. I share some of the concerns of my colleague, but also share the support of my good friend from Hamilton County. You know, this is one of those pieces of legislation that is badly needed. This is the type of academic setting which will benefit our state and could benefit our state in years to come as long as we’re facilitating civil discourse. And I am comfortable with the language of this bill; it ensures non-partisan, neutral, both-sided discourse which I think is vital. And just as it is on this floor, it is vital in educational and academic setting. But you know, it’s one of those things that you could go either way, and the leadership of this entity and the guidance that this body provides, and I see in here that the members of this board are going to be appointed in consultation with legislative leadership. I don’t know what exactly that means, or how that’s going to play out, but I hope it will play out for the benefit for which I think this legislation is intended. Now, in years past, as it was said, we passed some legislation up here that I think
unduly and unlawfully limit discourse in certain ways or steer discourse in some ways, one way or the other has had the impact, maybe not the intended impact, but the effect of muting some populations about certain topics, so I am in support of this legislation, but I just wanted to really stand up and say let’s make sure that we accomplish the stated aims of this, and not let it go from one lined shoulder of the highway or the other. Let’s keep it in between the lines. Let’s make sure everyone is heard, every viewpoint is heard, appreciated, and thoughtfully discussed. So, with that, I thank you, thank you to the supports of this, and I wish this body and the academic institution that is up here, which is of vital importance to our Republic, I wish you the best of luck and I hope it gets carried out for the intended at stated purposes. Thank you, Mr. Sponsor and Speaker.

S.H.R.: Leader Gant, anything?

R.G.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank my good friend from Nashville for your comments. I look forward to working with you in the future on how we can continue to work on this and make it better. So, thank you.

S.H.R.: Representative Parkinson.

A.P.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and leaders, thank you for this legislation. This is, what I would consider, an awesome piece of legislation. But keep in mind though, let’s honestly, members, in fact I am going to sign onto this bill, but let’s keep in mind that we have passed legislation down here that could create a little bit of push and pull in interpretation as to how these programs will be played out. So, Senator Gant, I just want you to be cognizant of that. Because under the some of the CRT legislation, it could make it so that we cannot have those real and robust conversations and discussions under this program which we need to have. Again, and example: you know how a lot of you may not know, and I realize that even some of our Founding Fathers
wanted to continue with anarchy, wanted to have a king for the colonies. And that is something that will be discussed possibly under these programs, and the importance of the institution of slavery when it came into the economy - those are some of the things that could be discussed under these programs. Which is good, I think that some of these things should be discussed. Right? But we don’t want our previous legislation to mute this program which, to me, is probably one of the most important pieces of legislation that we’re passing on this floor today, this year. Because, you have to ask yourself, members, and I want you to think about this - how is it that we build our next generation of leadership if they do not know how our system of government works? I think this legislation is amazing and great and long overdue. I think, leader with your help also, that we need to push to make sure that local civics is put into the 6th grade, state civics into the 7th grade, and federal civics into the 8th grade for the next year to be able to prep our kids to go into programs like this when they get into college, because it is almost too late if we are going to be starting them from the beginning of learning what our system of government and how it works and the mechanics of it. I applaud your legislation. Thank you for bringing it. And I hope we can adjust whatever needs to be adjusted, so that they can have the real conversations, discussions, and debates in these college programs. Thank you. Thank you Leader Gant, I appreciate you.

S.H.R.: Leader Gant.

R.G.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to my good friend from Memphis. I look forward to working with you on how we can make this better and in K-12. So thank you very much. S.H.R.: Chairman Dixie.

V.D.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I think my colleague spoke before, he actually echoed what I wanted to say. I think this is an important piece of legislation, but I think when it starts getting to
the higher education, we can expand it to get our younger people involved in a political process early on in their educational experience because it’s very important that they understand how to vote, why they’re voting, and who they’re voting for and the reason why we have this political process in the first place, so I would hope we could give some consideration as we move forward to next year that we can put some legislation into a place where civics can be taught in high schools, because right now they have to pass a civics test, but it’s just a part of a class that they take for a little while of a semester. This way, if we have a civics class, hopefully it will peak their interest and would make them want to continue their education as they further their education towards the higher education. But, thank you for this piece of legislation. And I look forward to getting to work with you to put in civics as a required course.

S.H.R.: Leader Gant.

R.G.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Chairman. I look forward to getting to work with you. It looks like we already are accomplishing what this bill was intended to do - bring people together and work on ideas in a civil way, so thank you.

S.H.R.: Representative Towns.

J.T.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sponsor yield?

S.H.R.: Leader Gant?


J.T.: Sponsor, in this rare kumbaya moment we’re having on the house floor. I’d like to say thank you, and encourage that we have more kumbaya moments. Before we go too far down the line, in my opinion, obviously civics is very important and critical to the context in which we live in this country. There are many forces around the world that are trying to influence our children - that’s a fact, and we know that. If we don’t fill the void properly those influences will take over it.
That’s a fact as well because people are gullible, especially when they’re young. And some older ones are gullible as well. But, I implore upon you that we make sure that everything is taught - the good, the bad, and the ugly, all of it still has to be taught. The worst thing in the world for our people is to be blind-sided, pearl-harbored if you will as it relates to our history. So, with the 56 members that you’re talking about, 56, I guess that’s going to be 56 instructors, that’s where the rubber meets the road for me. How are we going to select those instructors? Is it going to be diverse enough that it can properly address our history. That’s the question I pose to you now. How will we select? Is it going to be diverse enough to address those challenges and concerns we have about teaching civics?

S.H.R.: Leader Gant.

R.G.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is done through the internal part of the UT system - the director of the institute, working with the chancellor, and so forth. So that’s done internally. This legislation does not address that.

S.H.R.: Representative Towns.

J.T.: If the legislation doesn’t address that, does that mean we’re not going to monitor it to be sure it’s a balance? That’s not unilateral. We need to make sure we balance it, because if we don’t have the cabinet of people that are diverse enough to teach it, we’re gonna skew the facts. It’s something that human beings do. How do we make sure that it’s balanced?

S.H.R.: Leader Gant.

R.G.: The institute is required to send an annual report to the Governor, in consultation with them. So, there is feedback that’s going to come back from the institute to the General Assembly.

S.H.R.: Representative Towns.
J.T.: Mr. Representative, I’d like to have your word that as we go forth and if this legislation passes, that if it is not properly balanced, that we look and try to make sure that they make sure there’s room for people that are going to be controlling the knowledge of our children’s minds - that it’s balanced. I’d like to have your word on that, that we’ll go back and try to look at making it proper, properly balanced.

S.H.R.: Leader Gant.

R.G.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s actually in the legislation.

S.H.R.: Representative Towns.

J.T.: I’m sorry, I didn’t understand you.

S.H.R.: Leader Gant.


S.H.R.: Representative Towns.

J.T.: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Representative, thank you.

S.H.R.: Representative Love.

H.L.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, Sponsor for bringing this legislation. You and I have talked about the importance of having to have discussions about civics, how are government works, how we work down here. So, I support the legislation. I think it is vitally important to have students understand, have the general public understand how policy is made and how governing occurs. So again, I thank you for bringing the legislation.

S.H.R.: Leader Gant.

R.G.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have had many conversations with the Representative and look forward to having those discussions this summer. We’ve got several ideas that we’ve talked
about. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we’ve planned to bring you in those discussions as well as the Governor. So, thank you.

S.H.R.: Representative Boyd.

C.B.: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move previous question.

S.H.R.: Previous question’s been called. Any objection? Seen none. We are voting. All those in favor of Senate Bill 2410 vote “AYE” when the bell rings. Any members may change their vote. Mr. Clerk, please take the vote.

**ON SCREEN: AYE 90 NAY 3 PNV 0**