



Katie Worthington &lt;katie@winterhavenchamber.com&gt;

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## Call to Action: Support Polk State, Preserve Access to Higher Education

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Katie Worthington <katie@winterhavenchamber.com>  
Reply-To: katie@winterhavenchamber.com  
To: katie@winterhavenchamber.com

Fri, Mar 27, 2015 at 2:40 PM

### Call to Action: Support Polk State College, Protect Access to Higher Education

Dear Chamber Members,

There is a bill going through Senate committees now (SB 1252) that could affect Polk State College's ability to provide access to higher education to our community. Higher education = workforce development = economic development = a supported business-friendly community. *We are sending this out to all of you as we believe this could affect our entire business community, not just Polk State.*



Senate Bill (SB) 1252 as amended during committee meetings this week would restrict "total upper-level, undergraduate baccalaureate enrollment to **5%** of the combined lower-level and upper-level full-time equivalent enrollment." Spring 2015 upper-level FTE enrollment at Polk State is **already at 9.6% and rising**. IF SB 1252 PASSES, NEXT SEMESTER POLK STATE WOULD HAVE TO DENY ENROLLMENT TO 722 CURRENT UPPER LEVEL STUDENTS.

SB 1252 also requires that Polk State College remove the word "state" from its name. Polk State College's name was chosen with the help and input of the community, through a process outlined in Florida Statute. This bill would arbitrarily and unnecessarily undo an extensive rebranding that has raised awareness of, and the community's pride in, the College.

We are asking all Winter Haven Chamber members that agree this bill would be harmful to the business community and quality of life in the county to please [CONTACT THOSE SENATORS ON THE COMMITTEE by clicking here](#) and ask them to [OPPOSE SB 1252 as amended](#).

Members can view the discussion on capping baccalaureate enrollment at state colleges in the [Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education](#) starting at 9:00 am on April 2, 2015 by clicking [here](#).

Below is sample email for you to use or you may click on the links above to populate an email:

*Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education  
201 The Capitol  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100*

*Dear Senator and Staff,*

*Senate Bill 1252 threatens not just Polk State College, but also businesses like mine. At issue in this bill are Polk State College's baccalaureate degree programs. Each of Polk State's bachelor's degrees were developed in response to local workforce demands. The Polk County business community initiated, helped to develop, and continue to refine each of these degree programs. Polk State's graduates are in high demand and businesses work closely with the College to ensure that curriculum is tied to job readiness.*

*SB 1252 would restrict "total upper-level, undergraduate full-time equivalent enrollment to 5% of the combined total lower-level and upper-level full-time equivalent enrollment" at Polk State College. Spring 2015 upper-level FTE enrollment at Polk State is 9.6% and rising. If SB 1252 passes in its current form, next semester Polk State would have to severely restrict upper-level enrollments.*

*Furthermore, restrictions on enrollment, would ensure that Polk State would not be able to pursue additional, and much-needed, baccalaureate degrees, without first making the decision to terminate an existing program.*

*Put another way, if this bill passes, Polk State will have to turn away students and will not be able to respond to local workforce needs - and every facet of the local economy will be adversely affected.*

*Lastly, this bill would eliminate the word "state" from Polk State College's name. Polk State College is a highly-regarded brand known for its service to the community. The name was chosen with the help and input of the community, through the process outlined in Florida Statutes. This bill would arbitrarily and unnecessarily undo an extensive rebranding that has raised awareness of, and the community's pride in, the College.*

*As an employer who wants to continue doing business here in Polk County, I urge you to consider the tremendous harm this bill will do not just for a college, but for an entire county's economic well-being.*

*Thank you for your support and service to our community.*

*Sincerely,*

Greater Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce  
[info@winterhavenchamber.com](mailto:info@winterhavenchamber.com) | [www.winterhavenchamber.com](http://www.winterhavenchamber.com)  
401 AVE B NW | PO Box 1420 | Winter Haven, FL 33882 | 863-293-2138



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