

March 14, 2026

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Cord Byrd, Esq. Secretary of State  
State of Florida  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

AND

Division of Arts and Culture  
Florida Department of State  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

**RE: Public Inquiry — Facial Inconsistency Between Florida Department of State Cultural Grant Programs and the Policy Framework of SB 1134 / Section 166.04971, Florida Statutes**

Dear Secretary Byrd:

I write to pose a question the Legislature appears not to have asked before passing SB 1134 on March 10, 2026.

On that date, the Florida Legislature prohibited every county and municipality in the state from funding, promoting, or taking official action in support of programming "designed or implemented with reference to race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation." Officials who violate the prohibition face misfeasance charges and potential removal from office. Any resident may sue in circuit court for declaratory relief, injunctions, and damages.

On that same date, the Florida Department of State continued to operate the following grant programs:

- The Folklife Program, authorized under § 267.16, Florida Statutes, which statutorily mandates the state to support "traditional arts of ethno-cultural groups."
- The Specific Cultural Projects program, authorized under § 265.286, Florida Statutes, which in the most recent grant cycle awarded public funds to the 7th South Dade Haitian Heritage Celebration, Puerto Rican Folk Music and Dance Festivals, the 11th Annual Little Havana Carnival, the Nicaraguan Heritage Festival "La Gritería," and the Ibero-American Film Festival, among others.
- The General Program Support program, under the same authority, which funds the Black Archives History and Research Foundation and the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe.
- Visit Florida, operating under § 288.1226, Florida Statutes, which provides marketing grants for festivals targeting specific ethnic travelers.

The structural problem is this: under SB 1134, a City of Miami official who approves a \$5,000 permit fee waiver for the Little Havana Carnival faces misfeasance charges and potential removal from office. The Florida Department of State can simultaneously write a \$6,000 check to that same carnival under § 265.286. The Legislature has built a two-tier system in which the state funds what it has prohibited cities from funding.

I am not arguing that SB 1134 binds the Department of State. It does not. I am asking a simpler question: does the Department of State intend to reconcile its existing grant portfolio with the policy framework the Legislature just enacted? Specifically:

1. Does the Department of State intend to continue funding ethnicity-referenced heritage programming under §§ 265.286 and 267.16 after January 1, 2027?
2. Does the Department of State intend to issue any guidance to grant recipients regarding SB 1134's potential effect on their municipal co-funding relationships —

given that many state-funded festivals rely on city permits, fee waivers, police services, and promotional support that are now legally precarious?

3. Does the Folklife Program's statutory mandate under § 267.16 to support "traditional arts of ethno-cultural groups" remain Department of State policy, or does the Department intend to seek legislative amendment to align that mandate with SB 1134's framework?

I am not the Legislature's problem. I am its field test. The same methodology that forced a rewrite of Florida's book-restriction law is now being applied to SB 1134 — city by city, county by county, and now at the door of the agency that funds what the Legislature just banned everyone else from funding.

A written response within thirty days is requested. In the absence of a response, I intend to make the absence itself part of the public record of this campaign.

Very respectfully submitted,

**Chaz Stevens, MSc, CLE Faculty**

Deerfield Beach, Florida Resident, Broward County

REVOLT Insights

chaz.stevens@revolt.training

954-901-0971

**cc:** Florida Attorney General's Office