



HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE DANE EAGLE, MAJORITY LEADER

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Florida House Approved House Budget

The full House passed the House's recommended budget for FY 2019-2020. The \$89.9 billion budget plan amounts to \$4,194.25 per capita – slightly less than the spending level in 2018-19. The budget continues the House's conservative approach of responsibly funding our state's critical needs, including significant investments in hurricane response and preparedness, education, and the environment. The House budget also provides tax relief by covering the cost of property value growth in the K-12 funding formula and preventing property tax increases. Finally, the budget responsibly plans for the future by placing over \$3.3 billion in reserves to prepare for any unforeseen future economic uncertainty.

The House budget covers important elements that will positively affect all Floridians while also securing long-term budget surpluses for the future.

Florida House Ways & Means Committee Discussed Tax Relief Proposals

Last week, the House Ways & Means Committee discussed tax relief proposals that will reduce taxes for Floridians. The Committee discussed several tax reductions and other tax-related modifications designed to directly impact both families and businesses. Below are some highlights of the proposals:

- Helps make education more affordable with a three-day **Back-to-School Tax Holiday**
- Reduces the **Business Rent Tax** for businesses
- Helps prepare Florida families and communities for potential disasters with a seven-day **Disaster Preparedness Tax Holiday**
- Clarifies and addresses **local property tax** issues to provide clarity and accountability to Floridians.

Florida House State Affairs Committee Voted for Taxation Transparency

Last week, the Florida House State Affairs Committee passed **CS/HB 7053** to bring accountability to both state and local taxation.

The bill requires select state and local "levies" to be identified as taxes, instead of their current titles as fees, surcharges, assessments or similar terms. Truth in taxation is critical for public accountability in the exercise of one of the most serious responsibilities of elected officials -- taxation.

Professional Deregulation Bill Headed to House Floor

The Commerce Committee passed a bill dealing with deregulating certain professions under the Department of Business and Professional Regulation. **HB 27** reduces or eliminates regulation that overly



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burdens Florida professionals, allowing more people to compete in an open market, while continuing to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

The bill allows certain professionals to practice their chosen profession without obtaining licensure, reduces the hours of training required to obtain certain licenses, and eliminates the requirement that certain licensed professionals obtain a separate license and pay additional fees for their businesses.

The bill also removes barriers for out of state professionals by allowing them to obtain a Florida license without further education, experience, or testing.

For a full list of the professions that will benefit from this bill, please refer to myfloridahouse.gov.

Private Property Right Bill Passed House Committee

The Commerce Committee passed a bill dealing with private property rights. The goal of the bill is to inform the public of their rights as property owners. The bill also protects the rights of property owners to maintain trees on their property.

HB 1159 requires county property appraisers to post a Property Owner Bill of Rights on their websites. The Property Owner Bill of Rights includes the right to acquire, possess, and protect property; use and enjoy property; exclude others from property; dispose of property; due process; just compensation for property taken for a public purpose; and relief when a new state or local government law, rule, regulation, or ordinance unfairly affects property. The website must state the Bill of Rights is not comprehensive and does not represent all property rights under Florida law.

The bill also gives residential property owners more power to prune, trim, or remove certain trees on their property by prohibiting local governments from requiring permits during natural disasters or when a tree is determined by a certified arborist to be damaged, diseased, pest infested or presents a danger to others or property. Further, the bill prohibits local governments from requiring the property owner to replant a tree that is pruned, trimmed, or removed under these specified conditions. The bill also allows a property owner adjacent to an electric utility right-of-way to request an electric utility to maintain the right-of-way without approval from the local government.

Florida House Committee Passed Teacher Preparation Bill

Last week, the Education Committee passed **HB 7061**, which enhances teacher preparation and retention by equipping teachers with the right tools and supports to be successful in the classroom.

HB 7061 addresses certification requirements by giving teachers more time to pass the General Knowledge Test (GK), reduces the financial burden associated with taking the GK test and provides more robust mentorship opportunities for first time teachers.



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The bill also enhances teacher preparation by improving the content of teacher preparation programs focusing on classroom management techniques, and improving the Department of Education's data collection function in order to monitor and respond more quickly to the needs of new teachers.

Appropriations Committee Approved Local Government Financial Reporting

The Appropriations Committee heard **HB 861**, which requires local governments to submit certain budget information to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) in "real time." The bill also requires the county and municipal tentative budgets and adopted final budgets to remain online for a specified period of time. **HB 861** will result in local governments reporting useful financial metrics to EDR that will show trends in government spending and debt and allow Floridians to more easily compare the budget and spending information for their local government with others.

Florida House Committee Passed Lottery Warning Bill

The Commerce Committee passed a bill dealing with the Florida Lottery. **HB 629** requires the Lottery to inform the public about the potential risks of gambling and ensures that Lottery games stay in paper form, as originally intended.

The Lottery is a state-run enterprise offering games that can cause addiction or compulsive behavior for some players. Currently, the Lottery urges customers to "Play Responsibly," and encourages problem gamblers to seek help, but it does not do enough to inform players about the potential risks associated with gambling. By requiring disclosures on tickets and in advertising, this bill ensures that Floridians and visitors to our state are better informed about the potential risks of gambling before deciding to play the Lottery. The bill also makes it clear that Lottery tickets and games are paper-based products that must be purchased in authorized retailers and cannot be purchased or played using smartphones or other electronic devices.

State Affairs Committee Passed Trade Secrets

The State Affairs Committee heard **HB 761** and **HB 759** relating to trade secrets. **HB 761** creates a public record exemption for trade secrets that applies to almost all agencies and entities that are subject to public records requirements, while **HB 759** repeals every agency-specific public record exemption for trade secrets. Together, these bills establish uniformity amongst agencies for protecting trade secret information.

Florida House Appropriations Committee Voted to Limit Hospital Monopolies

Last week, the House Appropriations Committee passed **HB 1243**, which limits hospital mergers and acquisitions.

The bill requires hospital acquisitions of physician practices to be reviewed by the Attorney General's office before they take place. It requires all hospitals intending to acquire a physician practice to report the acquisition to the Attorney General at least 90 days before the acquisition is complete. The bill also



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allows the Attorney General's Anti-Trust Division to review information for any anticompetitive behavior and act accordingly to prevent monopolies. The bill combats hospital mergers and acquisitions that can result in higher healthcare spending.

School Choice Bills Passed House Committees

Last week, House Committees passed two bills enhancing school choice. The goal of the bills is to increase school choice to provide a quality education to all students.

The PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee passed **HB 7095**, which allows Schools of Hope to open in "Florida Opportunity Zones" to provide quality educational options for students in low-income communities. The bill expands the traditional public school Schools of Hope grant program to reach more students, increases transparency by requiring school districts to report on controlled open enrollment applications, and strengthens background-screening requirements for private school personnel. The bill also allows a student to convert a Hope Scholarship to a transportation scholarship to a public school outside of their school district.

The Appropriations Committee passed **HB 1197**, which gives parents more options by allowing state universities and Florida College System (FCS) institutions to sponsor charter schools.

Florida House Health & Human Services Committee Voted to Improve the Healthcare Marketplace

The Florida House Health & Human Services Committee passed eight bills that improve critical aspects of the healthcare marketplace.

CS/HB 25 changes the allowable length of stay in Ambulatory Surgical Centers from less than one working day to no more than 48 hours. The bill also allows an Ambulatory Surgical Center to provide advanced birth services if it meets certain requirements. In addition, the bill creates a new license for Recovery Care Centers in Florida, which will be permitted to keep a patient up to 72 hours. The bill provides lower-cost, high-quality alternatives for Floridians.

HB 831 requires all prescriptions to be electronically transmitted by January 1, 2020. Electronic prescribing will prevent fraud, reduce abuse, and create an effective mode of access for Floridians to receive their healthcare.

HB 843 requires hospitals to notify primary care or specialty physicians when their patients are admitted, and allows patients to request their doctors to be consulted on their plan of care. The bill closes gaps in provider communication and promotes continuity of care from the inpatient to outpatient setting. A patient's own physician has the comprehensive knowledge of the patient's health history that can be vital during hospital admissions.

CS/HB 863 prohibits a health care provider from referring patients to any hospital in which the health care provider holds an investment interest. This bill eliminates the special exception in the law for hospitals and provides that an individual or entity participating in such referrals may now also be subject to the



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anti-kickback and patient brokering statutes. Closing the physician referral loophole ensures that physician recommendations are based on the patient's best interest and not provider's financial benefit.

HB 961 creates an independent commission to review innovative ideas that face statutory or regulatory barriers to implementation and grant exemptions from specific law and rules on a case-by-case basis. The bill allows innovations in healthcare to overcome governmental barriers to implementation.

HB 1295 requires hospitals to demonstrate they provide a level of charity that equals or exceeds their property tax liability in order to qualify for an existing property tax exemption. The bill ensures hospitals do not abuse the tax exemption available to charitable organizations.

HB 7117 sets out potency and supply limits for the medical use of marijuana, which will apply to flower (for smoking and vaping) and to edibles, but not to other marijuana products. The bill also limits children to low-THC cannabis, with an exception: a qualified physician may certify a patient under the age of 18 for high THC marijuana if that physician determines that it is the most effective treatment for the patient, and a second physician who is a board-certified pediatrician concurs. The bill also authorizes DOH to test all forms of marijuana under the program, to ensure safety and potency. Additionally, the bill waives the identification card fee for qualified patients who are veterans.

HB 7119 increases the minimum age to lawfully purchase and knowingly possess tobacco products, nicotine products, and nicotine dispensing devices in Florida from 18 years old to 21 years old. Similarly, it prohibits the sale, delivery, bartering, and furnishing, shipping, or giving tobacco products, nicotine products, or electronic nicotine dispensing devices to persons under the age of 21. The bill also prohibits a qualified physician from certifying a patient under the age of 21 for the medical use of marijuana in a form for smoking, with the same exception that currently applies to marijuana smoking for patients under the age of 18.

Florida House Committee Passed Career and Workforce Education Bill

The Education Committee passed a proposed committee substitute for **HB 7071**, which enhances career and workforce education in our state.

The bill incorporated the substance of **HB 7055**, relating to career education to provide a K-20 approach to developing career pathways and increase postsecondary credential attainment so that Florida can reach the Governor's goal of becoming #1 in workforce.

HB 7071 creates the "SAIL to 60" Initiative to increase postsecondary credential attainment for working age Floridians. The goal is to raise the percentage of working age adults with a high-value postsecondary certificate, degree, or training experience to 60% by 2030.

The bill renames the Higher Education Coordinating Council as the Florida Talent Development Council. The council will develop a coordinated, data-driven, statewide approach to meet Florida's needs for a 21st century workforce that employers and educators use as part of Florida's talent supply system.



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The bill requires the establishment of a reverse transfer agreement between the State University System and the Florida College System (FCS) and requires school districts and technical colleges to establish career pathways articulation agreements with the FCS institution in their area.

The bill creates the Florida Apprenticeship Grant Program to expand existing, and establish new apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs and requires the Department of Education to publish on its website an annual report to promote these programs and increase transparency.

The bill requires the Department of Education to review career education programs for alignment with market demands and to eliminate programs that do not address priority workforce demands.

Finally, the bill enables school districts to meet the academic needs of students and be responsive to labor market demands by providing flexibility to meet graduation requirements through career education, establishing career planning requirements for middle school students and increasing awareness of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

Florida House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee Voted for Hospital Billing and Collection Reform

Last week, the House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee passed **HB 999**, which empowers patients and eases the burden of the cost of medical bills on consumers.

The bill helps patients manage their healthcare costs in three ways: requires facilities to provide cost estimates for elective procedures and makes those estimates binding unless the reasons for the charge are expressed in writing; the bill requires facilities to establish a formal appeal process to contest charges on an itemized bill and increases consumer protection in debt collection proceedings.