



2025 Legislative Session

Week 2

The Senate voted its first bill off of the floor in 2025 Legislative Session this week- SB 112 Children with Developmental Disabilities by Sen. Harrell (detailed below.) President Albritton also advanced his priority "Rural Renaissance" package. A House subcommittee exercised subpoena powers and conducted a hearing with the current and immediate past Insurance Commissioner on a report flagging property insurance company activities. And a [large development package strike-all](#) is on the agenda for Monday of Week 3.

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Property Insurance

The House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee held a special additional meeting on Friday to conduct a hearing on insurance industry profits. The hearing is in response to news reporting of a draft 2022 OIR examination flagging \$14 billion in payments going out from insurance companies to affiliate companies, allowing for potentially billions in profits while insurance companies themselves showed losses. The report raised concerns that insurance companies may have been playing shell games with accounts to allow them to cry poor to the Legislature and OIR while raising premiums and advancing tort reform. The reporting was based on a 2021-2022 OIR-contracted examination based on 2017-19 data that was never finished, is still in draft form, and never given to the Legislature.

The subcommittee meeting began with a brief presentation by Florida Insurance Commissioner Michael Yaworsky on insurance company affiliates, Managing General Agents (MGAs), and the state's Holding Act policy. Then moved into a formal investigative hearing with Commissioner Yaworsky and Immediate Past Florida Insurance Commissioner David Altmaier giving testimony.

The subcommittee took the hearing seriously. The hearing was extended multiple times with each Republican and Democratic committee member asking several pointed questions. Both Commissioner Yaworsky and Former Commissioner Altmaier appeared very open and sincere in their responses. Below is a summary of the main questions-

The draft report itself: Committee members questioned how the report came about; why it was not shared with the Legislature when so many had asked for data in the 2022 Special Session; why it was still in draft form and marked confidential; who knew about the report; and why the report was left unfinished as the state faced an insurance crisis.

Yaworsky and Altmaier testified that OIR contracted with R&R for the report as an examination to enhance OIR analysts' understanding of insurance company solvency and financial practices on a global picture. It was not intended to address the issue of affiliates and holding companies specifically. Altmaier explained that they were aware of the potential of abuse with holding companies but lacked authority to fully examine affiliate and MGA data. They began advocating for increased authority in the area around 2014. Around 2016 or 2017 they thought they had been granted authority but when they requested information they got responses from insurance companies showing their authority wasn't airtight. They finally fixed the issue and were granted the full authority in July 2021 and shortly after began the examination. It was not shared with the legislature because it was an incomplete product and, therefore, inaccurate. They shared that the holding companies were massive and involved in more than just insurance, so the report didn't truly show where capital was going or whether the payments were inappropriate. They also shared that R&R consultants flagging payments as not meeting the "fair and reasonable" standard for fee structures as governed by the Holding Act was also problematic (more on that below). They stated that OIR is not allowed to share reports until they are fully completed. They both shared that it was unclear why the report was left unfinished. Some committee members questioned if it was finished and merely left as a draft to keep it confidential, but they pushed back on this affirming that it was not in place where it would have been appropriate to share. Altmaier testified that he believed when he left the agency in December 2022 that the work was continuing, but that he had since learned there was a miscommunication between R&R and OIR. He candidly admitted that he wished he would have done more to ensure Commissioner Yaworsky was aware of the report and the need to complete it. Committee members questioned why the state paid for an incomplete study and whether they should be trying to recoup funds from the vendor. Altmaier also testified that, while most examinations stay at a lower division until complete, he had placed such a big priority on this report that it's preliminary findings



were shared with him and discussed. He recalled his exact words were “there’s a lot of smoke here, we need to find out if there’s a fire.” While the findings were not shared with the Governor’s office or Legislature he did write a letter to the Legislature advocating for oversight.

Finally, when asked if the report would ever be updated or completed, Yaworsky testified that OIR would be happy to undertake completing the report from beginning to end at the direction of the Legislature.

OIR oversight and actions regarding insurance affiliates/MGAs:

Both Altmaier and Yaworsky stressed that, while the report was unfinished, it was part of broader effort and priority of OIR around improving accountability as it related to MGAs and affiliates. That work, they said, had continued and has been ongoing since 2014 as they sought to increase their oversight powers. The data point showing \$14 billion of payments and potentially billions in net profits had raised red flags that did not go unnoticed. Since the Legislature removed an exemption that had previously blocked OIR from compelling companies for information and looking into MGAs: OIR underwent a review of fee structures in MGA and affiliate contracts, they canceled or modified some contracts, and removed evergreen provisions. OIR was also asking the Legislature to pass language in the DFS package that would provide for a website where the contracts could be posted for public view (however, a company can mark anything trade secret and the agency has no power over that.) OIR was also asking for a clear definition of the “fair and reasonable” standard for affiliate payments. Yaworsky shared that the current standard was “circuitous” and “unenforceable” and made the agency liable to lawsuits. Yaworsky stated that it is a topic that is always on his mind and that he takes the job seriously.

Did the affiliate payments impact company solvency or insurance rates?

Committee members expressed frustration that rates had continued to increase despite the data point showing billions in net profits and questioned if some insurance companies had gone insolvent due to these accounting practices and payment transfers to holding companies. Commissioner Yaworsky said that that was not supported by what they had seen thus far. He said most insolvency reports and requests for rate increases focused on litigation costs and the reinsurance market. Vice Chair Hillary Cassel went over several insolvency reports from 2011-2014 that concluded insolvency of certain companies were specifically due to questionable affiliate payments and noted fines had been issued in past for this behavior. He shared that those were before the Holding Act was passed and OIR had been granted greater oversight powers. However, they would be thoroughly investigating and holding companies accountable.

Policy recommendations: The committee members asked both Commissioners if they felt they now had the authority they needed and they testified that they did. Aside from the policies in the DFS package the agency is asking for, committee members also asked if they felt the Legislature should be putting restrictions on affiliate payments or the amount of services that MGAs can provide to insurance companies. They responded that a very thorough investigation would need to be done as some of the arrangements actually maximize efficiencies and creating cost savings. They both defended the tort reform legislation as working and reiterated that the market was stabilizing, more companies were coming in, there was a reduction in Citizens policyholders, and Florida had the lowest increase in the country this year. In a public interview this week, Speaker Perez explained that he isn’t interested in regulating holding companies and the hearing was really focused on exposing the truth of insurance company practices and finding out if, in fact, they had cried wolf. President Albritton also participated in an interview where he also explained that the Senate planned to keep the promise that they would be closely watching insurance companies and planned to take the issue up in their Chamber as well. He cautioned against passing larger reforms that could reverse the improvements that they have seen so far. He did say that



he had heard reports of Hurricane Michael victims still waiting on receiving settled claims from 2018, and stated that if true, they would be “running into that fight.”

Economic Outlook

State economists met this week and forecasted the total general revenue funds available for the 2025-26 budget to be \$58 billion, down from last year's \$60.1 billion. These estimates, based largely on the state's 6 percent sales tax, will guide lawmakers as they craft the new budget. Revenue projections fluctuate with economic conditions, including real estate and tourism, but January collections were already \$31 million below previous estimates, signaling potential challenges ahead.

Legislative leaders have warned of tighter spending controls this session. While tax collections have often surpassed projections in recent years, uncertainty around tariffs and other factors may impact future revenue. At the same time, increased funding needs in Medicaid and state worker health insurance could put additional strain on the budget, making fiscal decisions more complex.

Intergovernmental Relations & Community Affairs

Succession to Office of Governor, Auditing, and Government Efficiency (DOGE Florida)

The House Government Operations Subcommittee advanced House Joint Resolution 1325 by a vote of 14-3. The HJR proposes a constitutional amendment to create the Commissioner of Government Efficiency as a Cabinet officer responsible for investigating and reporting on fraud, waste, and abuse. The proposed amendment also eliminates the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, the Government Efficiency Task Force, and the requirement that the legislature appoint an auditor to audit public records and perform related duties. If approved by the Legislature, the amendment would appear on the ballot for the 2026 general election. Some members questioned why a separate Cabinet position and agency is needed when, currently, the CFO has audit powers.

Remaining Committees:

- [SJR 1756](#): Governmental Oversight and Accountability; Appropriations; Rules
- [HJR 1325](#): State Affairs

Term Limits for County Commissioners and District School Boards

The Senate Ethics and Elections Committee temporarily postponed SB 802. The bill creates a new term limit of 8 consecutive years for county commissioner for terms commencing after November 3, 2026, and imposes a similar 8-year term limit for district school board members for terms starting after November 8, 2022. Any terms that started before specified dates do not count toward the limitations.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 802](#): Ethics and Elections; Community Affairs; Rules
- [HB 679](#): Intergovernmental Affairs; Education Administration; State Affairs

Finance & Tax

Local Business Taxes

The House Ways and Means Committee advanced HB 503 by a vote of 14-5. The bill creates a limitation on the amount of revenue a local government can collect from local business taxes based on the revenue



the local government received in the local Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2024, or September 30, 2025, whichever is greater. As new businesses come in, the local business tax rate would be readjusted to match this amount and any revenue collected above this base amount must be refunded to businesses.

Some committee members expressed concern on how the proposed cap would affect growing municipalities, essential infrastructure, and public services provided to businesses. At least two Republicans also asked that the sponsor continue working with local government stakeholders, including Rep. LaMarca. Rep. LaMarca explained that, while he likes tax reductions and has never voted for a tax increase, there's value in services provided to businesses. He questioned whether local business tax rates were a make or break deal for businesses. However, other committee members praised the bill and questioned the value of government services and investments provided to businesses.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 1196](#): Community Affairs; Finance and Tax; Appropriations
- [HB 503](#): Intergovernmental Affairs; State Affairs

Unrated Bonds

House Intergovernmental Affairs unanimously advanced HB 669. The bill prohibits local governments from requiring minimum bond ratings for investments in any bond where the state explicitly authorizes investing in unrated bonds. The state has specifically authorized investments in unrated Israeli bonds. The sponsor stated the bill would provide flexibility with unrated bonds while ensuring investment policies prioritize safety and liquidity. It mandates adherence to a written policy specifying authorized investments and maintains restrictions on unlisted investments, derivatives, and leveraging transactions. Debate focused on balancing financial returns with security, noting that Israeli bonds have a strong repayment history.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 669](#): Ways & Means Committee; State Affairs Committee
- [SB 1674](#): Community Affairs; Governmental Oversight and Accountability; Rules

Public Service Commission

Senate Regulated Industries voted 5-2 to advance SB 354. The bill is intend to bring more transparency and regulations to utility rate setting. It adds a certified public accountant and a chartered financial analyst to the PSC, requires utility returns on equity to stay close to the risk-free rate, and mandates detailed economic analyses and rationale for decisions in rate increases, cost-recovery, storm-recovery financing. It would require the PSC to set a schedule for when utilities can ask for rate increases. It also creates new requirements for an exemption for non-profit water and wastewater systems. The bill is supported by AARP.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 354](#): Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 1319](#) Economic Infrastructure; State Administration Budget; Commerce



Housing & Development

Condominium Associations

The House Housing, Agriculture, and Tourism Subcommittee unanimously advanced HB 913. The bill prohibits Citizens Property Insurance Corporation from insuring condominium units or associations without completed milestone inspections and structural integrity reserve studies (SIRS), if required. It allows associations to levy special assessments and obtain loans for necessary maintenance without member approval and permits reserve fund pooling. Amendments remove the requirement for majority board approval to pause contributions, define emergencies per FS. 252.34, and allow retroactive application of rights in pending adjudications. Condominium associations with 25 or more units must provide secure digital access to key documents, including financial reports and meeting minutes from the past seven years, with protections for sensitive information. Non-compliance with digital requirements does not invalidate board decisions. In a recent interview, Speaker Perez pointed out that the House and Senate bills are far apart and stated that that was a good thing as it provides for debate on critical issues.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 1742](#): Regulated Industries; Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Rules
- [HB 913](#): Budget Committee; Commerce Committee

Real Property and Condominium Flood Disclosures

The House Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee and Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously advanced HB 1015 and SB 948. The bill requires landlords to disclose prior flood damage to prospective tenants before or at the time of lease signing, including whether they filed insurance claims or received federal assistance for flood damage. Tenants may terminate the lease if disclosures are false, with a refund of prepaid amounts. Sellers of residential property and condominium developers must also disclose past flood damage, insurance claims, and assistance received. There was an amendment to the House Bill to clarify that landlords must report flood history from their ownership period and define "flooding" as partial or complete inundation under various conditions.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 948](#): Regulated Industries; Rules
- [HB 1015](#): Civil Justice & Claims; Commerce

Fire Prevention

The Senate Banking and Insurance Committee and House Industries and Professional Activities Subcommittee approved SB 1078 and HB 551. The bill streamlines fire alarm and sprinkler system permitting by requiring local governments to establish a simplified process for projects with 20 or fewer devices, setting permit deadlines, and allowing contractors to begin work immediately upon application submission. It clarifies contractor responsibilities for providing project plans and limits local enforcement agency documentation requests. The bill also nullifies local ordinances that conflict with the Florida Fire Prevention Code and restricts municipalities to enforcing only pre-approved ordinances. Additionally, it simplifies fire protection inspection reports by requiring only the total count of deficiencies instead of detailed descriptions.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 1078](#): Community Affairs; Rules
- [HB 551](#): Intergovernmental Affairs; Commerce



Affordable Housing

The Senate Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development and the House Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee advanced SB 184 and HB 247. The bill mandates local governments to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in single-family zones, including manufactured homes, without added parking requirements or owner-occupancy rules. It removes rental rate affidavits, counts ADUs toward affordable housing quotas, sets a one-month minimum lease, and exempts planned developments. The bill also supports military housing, protects homestead exemptions for ADU owners, and directs a study on mezzanine financing and tiny homes for affordable housing.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 184](#): Rules
- [HB 247](#): Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee; Commerce Committee

Issuance of Address and Individual Parcel Identification Numbers

The House Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee temporarily postponed HB 381. The bill requires local governments to issue street and mailing addresses and parcel identification numbers within 14 business days of plat recordation. If they fail, applicants may use private providers to generate them, which the government must verify within five business days or they are automatically approved.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 784](#): Community Affairs; Judiciary; Rules
- [HB 381](#): Housing, Agriculture & Tourism; Intergovernmental Affairs; Commerce

Development Permits and Orders

The House Housing, Agriculture, and Tourism Subcommittee unanimously advanced HB 579. The bill streamlines zoning and development applications by setting clear deadlines and requirements. It mandates accessible application criteria, confirms receipt within five business days, and completes reviews within 30 days. Decisions must be made within 120 days for standard applications and 180 days for those requiring hearings, with no limits on monthly hearings if they cause delays. Refunds of 10% to 100% of fees apply for missed deadlines, and substantive changes resetting timelines are defined as adjustments of 15% or more in density, intensity, or square footage. Denials must include specific legal justifications.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 1080](#): Community Affairs; Judiciary; Rules
- [HB 579](#): Intergovernmental Affairs; Commerce

Construction & Facilities

House Intergovernmental Affairs voted 12-2 to advance HB 569. The bill revises several provisions concerning the land use and construction requirements for charter schools, providing that charter schools are public facilities for the purposes of concurrency and prohibiting local governments from imposing additional building restrictions or requiring certain land use changes. The bill also allows a developer to receive a fee credit for education impact fees for making certain contributions subject to a contract with the school district or a charter school. The bill prohibits local governments for imposing or enforcing a vehicle stacking ordinance for drop-off and pick-up queues if the effect of the ordinance is to limit school enrollment.



Remaining Committees:

- [HB 569](#) Education Administration; State Affairs
- [SB 1188](#) Community Affairs; Transportation; Rules

Construction Regulations

The bill limits local government authority over synthetic turf in single-family residential properties under one acre, prohibiting bans or regulations on its installation. It defines synthetic turf, authorizes the Department of Environmental Protection to set rules, and imposes deadlines on local governments to approve or deny contractor change order price quotes. Noncompliance results in financial liability. The bill also prevents contracts from altering local government responsibilities and stops agencies from requiring extra documentation for building permits.

In committee, supporters emphasized property rights and regulatory efficiency, while opponents raised concerns about local autonomy and potential safety risks.

The bill was reported favorably, 16-1.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 683](#): Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee; Commerce Committee
- [SB 712](#): Community Affairs; Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Rules

Delivery of Notices from Landlords to Tenants

The bill amends Florida statutes to allow landlords to deliver notices to tenants via email under specific conditions. Landlords can send required notices by email if the tenant agrees in writing and provides a valid email address. A notice sent by email is considered delivered when sent, unless returned as undeliverable, and landlords must maintain proof of transmission. The bill clarifies that landlords can still use other legally authorized methods for delivering notices and aligns provisions for eviction, security deposit claims, and other landlord-tenant interactions with the new email notification option.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 1164](#): Community Affairs; Rules
- [HB 615](#): Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee; Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee; Judiciary Committee

Public Lodging and Food Service Establishments

The bill revises definitions and procedures related to public lodging and food service establishments, focusing on guest treatment and removal. Among other things, the bill clarifies the definitions of "public lodging establishment," "transient establishment," and "non-transient establishment" based on rental periods. The bill is in response to Carriage House in Tallahassee attempting to kick out a legislator over a vote. It allows operators to remove guests who violate specific conditions such as possession of illegal substances, failure to pay, or disturbing the peace, and specifies the notice requirements for removal. It also empowers law enforcement to remove or arrest guests who fail to leave after being asked. The bill reenacts several sections of Florida Statutes to ensure consistency in exemptions and regulations.

Remaining Committees:



- [SB 606](#): Criminal Justice; Rules
- [HB 535](#): Criminal Justice Subcommittee; Commerce Committee

Public Safety

Hands-free Driving

Senate Transportation unanimously advanced SB 1318. The bill amends road safety laws by mandating hands-free use of wireless devices while driving. It defines "handheld manner" as physically holding or supporting a wireless device, and specifies "hands-free accessories" as attachments allowing device use without hands. The bill prohibits operating a vehicle while using a wireless device in a handheld manner, except for minimal interactions, and requires the use of hands-free accessories for all wireless device functions. Penalties for violations include noncriminal traffic infractions for first offenses, with higher fines and points deductions for repeat offenses and violations in construction zones. First-time offenders can opt for a driving safety program to waive penalties and points. Fines are allocated to the Emergency Medical Services Trust Fund, and law enforcement must report the race and ethnicity of offenders.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 1318](#): Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development; Rules
- [HB 501](#): Government Operations Subcommittee; State Affairs Committee

Offenses Involving Motor Vehicles

House Criminal Justice unanimously advanced HB 253. The bill increases penalties for certain traffic-related offenses, including making it a third-degree felony to drive with prohibited lighting while attempting to stop another vehicle. It defines and criminalizes the possession, sale, and use of license plate obscuring devices, with penalties escalating from a second-degree misdemeanor to a third-degree felony if used to commit or evade detection of a crime.

In committee, Representative Bankson emphasized the bill's focus on deterring misuse of lighting and obscured plates. The measure received support with no opposition.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 253](#): Government Operations; Judiciary
- [SB 44](#): Criminal Justice; Rules

Aggravated Animal Cruelty

House Criminal Justice unanimously advanced HB 255. The bill, known as "Dexter's Law," enhances penalties for aggravated animal cruelty by introducing a sentencing multiplier in Florida's Criminal Punishment Code. If the primary offense involves intentional torture or torment that harms an animal, the sentencing points are multiplied by 1.25. The provision excludes animals used for agricultural purposes or captive wildlife. Members strongly supported the bill, citing the connection between animal cruelty and future violent behavior.

Remaining Committees:



- [HB 255](#): Judiciary Committee
- [SB 502](#): Criminal Justice; Agriculture; Fiscal Policy

Property Rights (Squatters)

Senate Rules unanimously advanced SB 322. The bill modifies procedures for removing unauthorized persons from residential and commercial properties, giving property owners and sheriffs legal grounds for removal. It allows property owners or their agents to submit a verified complaint to the sheriff for the immediate removal of unlawful occupants from residential properties and specifies the complaint contents. It also establishes a new statute for removing unauthorized persons from commercial properties under certain conditions, detailing the complaint process and requirements. The sheriff is authorized to serve a notice to vacate and may charge fees for service or standby during property lock changes. The bill outlines civil remedies for wrongful removal, including potential damages and attorney fees, and amends laws regarding criminal penalties for unlawful detention causing significant property damage. It also prohibits fraudulent property listings with specific penalties.

During the committee meeting, Senator Rodriguez explained the new nonjudicial procedure, with minimal debate and no opposition.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 322](#): No remaining committees
- [HB 213](#): Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee; Judiciary Committee

Minimum Age for Firearm Purchase or Transfer

House Criminal Justice voted 13-5 to advance HB 759. The bill lowers the minimum age for purchasing firearms from 21 to 18 while prohibiting licensed sellers from transferring firearms to individuals under 18. It removes previous exemptions for law enforcement, correctional officers, and service members under 21 and classifies violations as a third-degree felony. Supporters argued that 18-year-olds already handle firearms in the military, while opponents cited the post-Parkland age increase as a measure that helped reduce gun violence. The Senate President has come out publicly against repealing red flag laws and allowing open carry but noted the Senate may look at age. However, he also pointed out that it isn't illegal for an adult under 21 to possess a firearm, they just aren't allowed to purchase one so the infringement on any rights is minimal.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 759](#): Judiciary Committee
- [SB 920](#): Criminal Justice; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Rules

Carrying of Weapons by Law Enforcement Officers Attending Athletic Events

House Criminal Justice voted 16-1 to advance HB 1021. The bill amends Florida Statute 790.06 to permit certified law enforcement officers to carry concealed weapons at school, college, or professional athletic events when attending as private citizens. It applies to officers certified by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission while maintaining existing firearm restrictions in locations like police stations, jails, courthouses, and polling places.

During the hearing, members debated credential verification for off-duty officers, potential expansion to non-sporting events, and whether plainclothes officers should be identifiable when drawing a weapon. Discussion focused on balancing public safety with concerns over special treatment for law enforcement.



Remaining Committees:

- [HB 1021](#): Judiciary Committee
- [SB 1248](#): Criminal Justice; Judiciary; Rules

Restrictions on Firearms and Ammunition During Emergencies

House Criminal Justice voted 15-3 to advance HB 6025. The bill repeals Section 870.044 of the Florida Statutes, removing automatic firearm and ammunition restrictions during declared emergencies, effective immediately upon becoming law.

In committee, supporters criticized the existing statute as overly restrictive during crises, while opponents expressed concerns about local impacts and sought clarification on the status of waiting periods and background checks.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 6025](#): Judiciary Committee
- [SB 952](#): Community Affairs; Rules

Purchase and Possession of Firearms by Law Enforcement Officers, Correctional Officers, Correctional Probation Officers, and Servicemembers

The House Judiciary Committee unanimously passed HB 383. The bill expands the definition of a concealed weapons or firearms license holder to include law enforcement officers, correctional officers, correctional probation officers (CPOs), and servicemembers, exempting them from the three-day waiting period for firearm purchases after a background check. It also enhances CPOs' authority to carry concealed firearms by allowing off-duty carry at a superior officer's discretion, recognizing certain CPOs as qualified law enforcement officers under federal law, and requiring the Department of Corrections to establish guidelines if permitting off-duty concealed carry for correctional officers or CPOs.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 490](#): Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 383](#): Cleared all Committees

Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Law Enforcement Officer

The House Judiciary Committee advanced HB 113 19-1. The bill increases the ranking for specified fleeing or attempting to elude offenses on the offense severity ranking chart (OSRC) of the Criminal Punishment Code to reflect the severity of each specified offense, and provides a sentencing multiplier for second or subsequent fleeing or attempting to elude offenses.

Members sought clarification on whether unmarked patrol cars are captured under the new fleeing and eluding penalties, with concerns raised about potential confusion for the public and fears of "fake police" stops. Despite one representative expressing discomfort regarding unmarked cars in minority communities, most members agreed the stronger penalties are necessary and advanced the bill.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 468](#): Criminal Justice; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 113](#): Cleared all Committees



Peer Support for First Responders

The House Judiciary Committee unanimously passed HB 421. The bill adds law enforcement agency support personnel who are involved in investigating a crime scene or collecting or processing evidence to the definition of a “first responder” for the purpose of making such support personnel eligible for peer support for first responders and providing confidentiality to communications made by such support personnel while participating in peer support. As such, under the bill, specified support personnel will receive the same benefit of confidentiality with respect to peer support communications as law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders.

In brief discussion, Chair Brannan opened the floor for questions, and none were asked. Representative Maggard explained that the measure expands peer support eligibility to additional first responder support personnel, and no one spoke in opposition.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 86](#): Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Rules
- [HB 421](#): Second Reading

Aggravating Factors for Capital Felonies

The House Judiciary Committee unanimously advanced HB 693. The bill allows a jury to consider whether a victim was gathered with one or more persons for a school activity, religious activity, or public government meeting as an aggravating factor in determining whether a defendant who has been convicted of a capital felony is eligible to receive a death sentence and whether to recommend a sentence of death or life imprisonment for such a defendant.

During debate, members inquired about defining “religious activity” and weighed personal experiences alongside opposing views on capital punishment. Ultimately, the committee supported adding this new aggravating factor.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 984](#): Criminal Justice; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 693](#): Second Reading

Misuse of Emergency Communications Systems

The House Judiciary Committee unanimously advanced HB 279. The bill strengthens penalties for the misuse of emergency communication systems, making it a first-degree misdemeanor and elevating offenses to a third-degree felony if misuse results in injury, property damage, or follows four prior convictions. It also mandates full restitution for public safety agencies' response costs.

During committee discussion, no questions were raised, and the sponsor emphasized the importance of deterrence and accountability. The bill faced no opposition.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 279](#): Economic Infrastructure Subcommittee; Judiciary Committee
- [SB 278](#): Regulated Industries; Criminal Justice; Rules

Veterans Court

House Criminal Justice unanimously advanced HB 845. The bill streamlines veterans' treatment court admissions by allowing courts to determine eligibility without state attorney approval and permitting entry



at any stage of criminal proceedings. It removes the requirement for veterans to apply through the state attorney, instead granting courts direct approval authority. Eligible veterans must have service-related mental health or substance issues, and courts must consider factors such as offense type, character, and community impact. The bill also allows sentencing courts to place defendants into post adjudicatory treatment programs for certain nonviolent felonies, requiring completion as a condition of probation or community control.

The committee briefly discussed the role of judges and prosecutors, with Representative Berny Jacques advocating for maintaining prosecutorial involvement

Remaining Committees:

[HB 845](#): Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee; Judiciary Committee

[SB 1724](#) Criminal Justice; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Fiscal Policy

Use of Tracking Devices or Applications to Commit Dangerous Crimes

House Criminal Justice unanimously advanced HB 663. The bill increases penalties for using tracking devices or applications to commit dangerous crimes, elevating the offense to a second-degree felony. It prohibits unauthorized tracking, revokes prior consent in cases of divorce or protective orders, and provides exemptions for law enforcement, parents, caregivers, and vehicle owners under specific conditions.

During the Criminal Justice Subcommittee meeting, there were no questions or debate beyond the sponsor's explanation of a technical amendment, and the bill passed without opposition.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 663](#): Judiciary Committee
- [SB 1168](#): Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Rules

Age as an Element of a Criminal Offense

House Criminal Justice unanimously advanced HB 777. The bill strengthens penalties for offenses where the victim's age is a factor, stating that ignorance or misrepresentation of a victim's age is not a defense, except under s. 787.30. It increases penalties for luring or enticing a child under 12, making a first offense a third-degree felony and escalating subsequent offenses or cases involving prior convictions to a second-degree felony. The bill also updates the offense severity ranking chart to reflect these changes.

There were no questions from members, and debate was unanimously supportive, with calls to further raise the victim age threshold.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 777](#): Judiciary Committee
- [SB 1136](#): Criminal Justice; Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice; Fiscal Policy

Environment and Water

Preemption Over Utility Service Restrictions

The bill amends Florida Statute 366.032 to prevent local governments from regulating energy sources and appliances used for energy supply. It prohibits municipalities and other local entities from restricting the types of energy or fuel sources utility providers may use or banning specific appliances based on energy type. Additionally, it invalidates any conflicting local measures enacted before July 1, 2021.



During discussion, Representative Shoaf stated the bill clarifies existing preemption language, while Representative Eskamani, though opposing the broader preemption, supported the clarification. Representative Chambliss also backed the bill but noted he would have liked input from opposition groups.

The bill was reported favorably, 18-0.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 1137](#): Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee; Commerce Committee
- [SB 1002](#): Regulated Industries; Rules

Utility Services

House Economic Infrastructure voted 14-4 to advance HB 1523. The bill seeks to enhance public accountability and financial practices in providing municipal utility services to customers outside of municipal boundaries. It requires public meetings before initiating or amending service agreements, mandating written contracts, and defining roles for oversight. It caps non-utility municipal use of utility-revenue generated outside of its boundaries at 10%, directing excess funds to reinvestment or customer refunds. Prohibits any surcharge if the municipality owns/operates a water or sewer treatment facility located within the boundaries of a separate municipality and serves customers within the separate municipality. Municipalities must report service metrics and financial details to the Florida Public Service Commission, which will provide annual updates to the Governor and Legislature. The bill also prohibits local governments from restricting energy sources and appliances.

During discussion, members debated the 10% revenue cap and the removal of water surcharges, with proponents emphasizing fairness for outside ratepayers and opponents voicing concerns over infrastructure funding and municipal expansion. There was significant debate on the differences between this bill and HB 11 (below).

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 1523](#): Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee; Commerce Committee
- [SB 1704](#): Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Fiscal Policy

Municipal Water and Sewer Utility Rates

House Intergovernmental Affairs unanimously advanced HB 11 and Senate Regulated Industries voted 7-1 to advance SB 202. The bill requires municipal-owned water and sewer to charge customers outside of their boundaries the same as it charges customers in its own jurisdiction, so long as that municipality is using a water treatment plant located in the boundaries of the other jurisdiction. Members debated whether the uniform rates were fair or shifted financial burdens. Supporters argued it addressed "taxation without representation," while public testimony highlighted the need for surcharges to fund infrastructure and avoid raising costs for city residents.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 11](#): Commerce Committee
- [SB 202](#): Community Affairs; Rules

Stormwater Management Systems

Senate Environment and Natural Resources unanimously advanced SB 810. The bill mandates annual inspections of stormwater management systems by political subdivisions, requiring them to inspect systems under their control by June 1 each year. It directs the Division of Emergency Management to



develop a standardized inspection form, which officials must complete, sign, and submit. The bill also instructs the division to adopt rules for implementing these requirements, including the creation of the standardized form. Senators raised concerns about local governments bearing inspection costs and the bill's broad definition of "known works," and encouraged refining the legislation to focus on the highest-risk areas. Members generally supported the need for stronger accountability and planning.

Remaining Committees:

[SB 810](#): Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development; Senate Fiscal Policy

Building and Plumbing Permits for the Use of Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems

The House Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee unanimously advanced HB 287. The bill revises a provision that prohibits a municipality or political subdivision from issuing a building permit or a plumbing permit for a building that requires an onsite sewage treatment and disposal system (OSTDS), commonly referred to as a septic system, unless the owner or builder has received a construction permit for the OSTDS. Instead, the bill allows a municipality or political subdivision to issue a building or plumbing permit so long as the owner or builder has applied for the OSTDS construction permit.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 287](#): State Affairs
- [SB 1120](#) - Withdrawn

Mitigation Banking

Senate Environment and Natural Resources voted 8-1 to advance SB 492. The bill will revise the requirements for the release schedule of credits in mitigation banking while ensuring both accountability and flexibility. It will mandate that credits for freshwater wetland creation be released only after the specified success criteria in the mitigation bank permit are met. At the same time, it will establish that a mitigation bank's service area, once defined, must be accepted by all relevant authorities as meeting cumulative impact requirements. The bill will also allow the use of released credits to offset impacts, provided certain conditions are met, including for projects partially within the service area, linear projects, and small-scale impacts. Additionally, it will permit project applicants to use credits from outside the service area when local credits are insufficient, following a specific verification and multiplier application process. To enhance oversight, the bill will require mitigation banks to submit annual reports on available credits, which will be compiled into an annual assessment for legislative leaders. Lastly, it will stipulate detailed procedures for applicants seeking credits from outside their service area, including prompt contact and reporting by banks and regulatory bodies, ensuring transparency and regulatory compliance.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 492](#): Appropriations on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 1175](#): Natural Resources & Disasters; Agriculture & Natural Resources Budget; State Affairs

General Permits for Distributed Wastewater Treatment Systems

Senate Environment and Natural Resources unanimously advanced SB 796. The bill amends section 403.814, Florida Statutes, to establish general permit specifications for distributed wastewater treatment systems (DWTS) and their units (DWTU). It defines DWTS as integrated wastewater treatment systems



and DWTUs as remotely operated onsite systems meeting secondary treatment and nitrogen removal standards. The bill authorizes the Secretary of Environmental Protection to grant general permits for replacing existing onsite sewage systems with DWTS if owned and operated by the permittee. It allows permittees to install DWTUs without additional department action by providing certification 30 days in advance. Additionally, it mandates monthly reporting, annual inspections, recordkeeping, and biosolid management, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards while allowing electronic monitoring systems for site visits. In the committee meeting, no members raised questions on SB 796, and the bill sponsor highlighted how distributed wastewater treatment systems could expedite improvements in water quality by replacing failing septic tanks.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 796](#): Appropriations on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 645](#): State Affairs Committee

Regulation of Auxiliary Containers

The House Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee approved HB 565 by a vote of 13-5. The bill expressly preempts the regulation of auxiliary containers to the state. Additionally, the bill removes a provision requiring DEP to review and update its 2010 retail bags report that analyzed the need for new or different regulation of auxiliary containers, wrappings, or disposable plastic bags. The bill also removes a provision that prohibits a local government, local government agency, or state government agency from enacting any rule, regulation, or ordinance regarding the use, disposition, sale, prohibition, restriction, or tax of auxiliary containers until the Legislature adopts DEP's recommendations in the updated retail bags report.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 1822](#): Environment and Natural Resources; Community Affairs; Rules
- [HB 565](#): Intergovernmental Affairs; State Affairs

Requirements for Battery Manufacturers

Senate Environment and Natural Resources unanimously advanced SB 800. The bill is supported by the waste industry to address incidents with disposed lithium batteries catching on fire. It amends regulations on battery manufacturing and sales, focusing on portable and rechargeable batteries. It expands statutory definitions to include lithium, medium-format, portable, and primary batteries while prohibiting the sale of battery-powered products unless specific conditions are met. The bill requires consumer product batteries to be easily removable or housed in a separate battery pack and mandates similar removability for non-consumer products. Additionally, it enforces labeling requirements, including a recycling symbol, chemical composition indicators, and disposal instructions on packaging or in manuals.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 800](#): Commerce and Tourism; Rules
- [HB 1201](#): Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee; Commerce Committee

Nature-based Methods for Improving Coastal Resilience

The House Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee and Senate Rules Committee both unanimously advanced HB 371 and SB 50. The bill directs the Florida Flood Hub to develop guidelines for combining green and gray infrastructure to address sea level rise and storm surges. It requires DEP to



adopt rules promoting nature-based coastal resilience efforts, including mangrove restoration, shoreline protection, and green infrastructure projects like living seawalls. The bill mandates a feasibility study on nature-based flood risk reduction to lower insurance premiums. It allocates \$250,000 for the study from the Resilient Florida Trust Fund.

During the committee discussion, no questions were raised, and Senator García emphasized the bill's focus on green and gray infrastructure standards. Environmental organizations expressed support, and the bill passed without opposition.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 50](#): Cleared all Committees
- [HB 371](#): Agriculture & Natural Resources Budget; State Affairs

Anchoring Limitation Areas

The House Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee unanimously approved HB 481. The bill modifies vessel anchoring regulations by allowing local governments in counties with populations under 1.5 million to regulate anchoring outside mooring fields while maintaining restrictions in larger counties and critical state concern areas. It permits regulation of vessels anchored overnight for over 30 days in a six-month period in counties with 1.5 million or more residents. The amendment clarifies that live-aboard and commercial vessels (except commercial fishing vessels) are excluded from mooring field boundaries and allows exceptions for anchoring due to marine construction. It also expands designated anchoring limitation areas in Biscayne Bay, including new locations near Palm Island and State Road A1A.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 866](#): Environment and Natural Resources; Community Affairs; Rules
- [HB 481](#): State Affairs

Water Access Facilities

The House Natural Resources & Disasters Subcommittee and Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee unanimously approved HB 735 and SB 1162. The bill allows marine manufacturers to participate in DEP's Clean Marina Program. The bill also expands the Florida Boating Improvement Program (FBIP) to allow the program to provide grants for publicly-owned parking for boat-hauling vehicles and trailers.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 1162](#): Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 735](#): State Affairs

Health & Human Services

Child Welfare

The House Human Services Subcommittee and Senate Fiscal Policy Committee unanimously approved HB 1127 and SB 7012. The bill requires the DCF to create a pilot program for treatment foster care to serve foster children with high behavioral health needs in a family-like setting. It also requires DCF to develop and maintain a professional recruitment program to fill long-term vacancies in child protection investigator and case manager roles and to mitigate the effect of high turnover rates. DCF must convene



a case management workgroup to improve these professions. DCF must also commission a study to evaluate residential bed capacity and non-residential services for commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) victims and to enhance data collection and legislative reporting on the plight of CSEC victims.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 7012](#): Cleared all Committees
- [HB 1127](#): Health Care Budget; Health & Human Services

Fentanyl Awareness & Education Day

The House Government Operations Subcommittee unanimously approved HB 259, The bill designates August 21 of each year as “Fentanyl Awareness and Education Day” to increase awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and the potential for overdoses.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 214](#): Governmental Oversight and Accountability; Health Policy; Rules
- [HB 259](#): Health & Human Services Committee

Veterans

The bill revises procedures and programs related to veterans in Florida, including changes to the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame nomination process and enhancements to veterans' services. It limits the number of nominees for the Hall of Fame to five and mandates ongoing studies by the Department of Veterans' Affairs on veterans' needs and their awareness of available services, with findings included in annual reports. A 2025 report will evaluate veterans' health literacy and knowledge of programs.

The bill expands the Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program to include mental health training and revises definitions and collaborations in veteran services. It requires the development of a plan for veterans' adult day health care facilities, with a report due in November 2025. Additionally, up to 10% of Gadsden Flag license plate proceeds can be used for promotional and administrative costs. The bill allocates specific funding for studies and programs to improve veterans' services in the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

During the committee discussion, supporters, including Senators Wright and Harrell, as well as public speakers highlighted the bill's benefits particularly for the adult day health care program.

The bill was reported favorably, 25-0.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 116](#): No remaining committees
- [HB 1043](#): State Affairs Committee

Education

Senate Passes Autism Support Package

The first bill passed by the Senate in 2025, [SB 112](#), is a comprehensive autism package meant to provide greater support and opportunities for children with autism and their families. It would establish a research hub, expand no-cost screening and early detection, direct the state to apply for extended options in the Early Steps program to allow for intervention services up to age 4, provides teacher training, creates



special summer school programs, and provides grants for charter schools specifically for children with autism. President Albritton shared that he was touched by an interaction with autistic visitors in the capitol, which sparked years of personal research and conversations with Senators who have autistic family members, eventually leading to this priority legislation. The House companion, however, has four committee stops.

School Safety

The Senate Education Pre-K-12 Committee and House Education Administration Subcommittee unanimously advanced SB 1470 and HB 1403. The bill strengthens school safety by aligning security guard training with school guardian requirements, expanding security programs to private schools, and enhancing oversight of school security personnel. It mandates that security guards undergo psychological evaluations, report disciplinary actions to FDLE, and be trained by a sheriff. The bill clarifies that locked campus requirements apply only during supervision hours and allows the Office of Safe Schools to grant exceptions. It also authorizes school districts to use firearm detection canines and formalizes a partnership with the Florida Association of School Safety Specialists to improve training and certification for school safety personnel.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 1470](#): Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 1403](#): Criminal Justice; PreK-12 Budget; Education & Employment

Administrative Efficiency in Public Schools

The Senate Appropriations Committee on Pre-K-12 Education unanimously approved SB 166. The bill streamlines school district operations by reducing regulations, increasing flexibility, and improving financial and facilities management. It revises assessment policies by expanding acceptable tests for fourth-grade progression, eliminating the Algebra 1 and grade 10 ELA exam graduation requirement, and modifying the assessment calendar and exemption deadlines. It also prevents the value-added model (VAM) from being the sole factor in teacher hiring. The bill grants districts more control over personnel evaluations, expands teacher apprenticeship eligibility, introduces multi-year contracts, establishes a 10-year renewable professional certificate, and allows school districts to issue temporary educator certificates. Additionally, it exempts school boards from Administrative Procedures Act rulemaking while maintaining transparency, shortens absenteeism response times, eliminates obsolete class size compliance plans, and removes the requirement for some districts to employ internal auditors. It also extends instructional material purchase cycles and provides school boards with more flexibility in facility planning by eliminating specific long-term construction mandates and cost-per-student-station limits.

In school finance, the bill removes graphical budget representation requirements, expands Title I fund allocation discretion, and broadens the use of the 1.5 mill discretionary capital levy. It also requires charter schools to directly respond to expenditure questions from the Department of Education and allows districts to determine the need for emergency makeup days. For school choice, it lets school boards set controlled open enrollment capacity and reduces update frequency. It shifts oversight of public school Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) programs to school districts and allows electronic attendance verification.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 166](#): Fiscal Policy



Middle School and High School Start Times

The Senate Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education Committee approved SB 296 by a vote of 8-1. The bill removes the requirement set by a recently passed law that by July 1, 2026, the instructional day at all district and charter middle schools may not start before 8 a.m. and high schools may not start before 8:30 a.m.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 296](#): Fiscal Policy
- [SB 261](#): Education Administration; Education & Employment

Wireless Communications Devices on School Grounds

The House Education Administration Subcommittee unanimously approved HB 949. The bill prohibits students from using wireless communication devices during the school day, rather than just during instruction time, and eliminates the exception for the use of such devices when expressly directed by a teacher for educational purposes. The bill also removes the requirement for teachers to designate areas for use of a wireless communication device. The bill requires each district school board to adopt rules designating locations within school buildings where students may use their devices with a school administrator's permission.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 949](#): Education & Employment

Hazardous Walking Conditions

The Senate Transportation Committee and House Education and Employment Committee unanimously advanced SB 650 and HB 85. The bill revises the criteria for determining hazardous walking conditions for public school students. It defines hazardous conditions as situations where there is no walkway at least 4 feet wide adjacent to the road for safe pedestrian passage and deems walkways along freeways, expressways, or their ramps as hazardous, regardless of speed limits. The bill requires a minimum 3-foot distance from the road edge for walkways next to uncurbed roads with speed limits of 50 mph or higher. It also exempts roads from hazardous classification if traffic volume is under 180 vehicles per hour per direction during school commute times or if the road is in a residential area with a speed limit of 30 mph or less. An amendment was filed to address conditions under which walkways must meet certain standards, specifying that the standards apply if the surface is along a freeway.

During the committee discussion, members focused on clarifying the definitions of freeways and expressways, emphasizing the bill's impact on student safety and logistics.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 650](#): Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education; Rules
- [HB 85](#): Education & Employment

Exceptional Student Education

Senate Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education unanimously advanced SB 102. The bill mandates the Florida Department of Education to establish a workforce micro-credential program for students with disabilities by January 31, 2026, to verify career skills and enhance employment readiness. Each career and technical education course for these students must include at least one micro-credential



demonstrating mastery of five career practices, including workplace safety. The department will collaborate with the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities and OSHA to develop standards, with faculty and IEP teams validating student competencies before awarding credentials. Annual reports from 2026 to 2030 will track program outcomes, including employment data and participation rates.

During the hearing on HB 127, members strongly supported a strike-all amendment clarifying ESE transition programs while preserving IEP team decision-making. The bill advanced with no opposition.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 127](#): Human Services Subcommittee; PreK-12 Budget Subcommittee; Education & Employment Committee
- [SB 102](#): Fiscal Policy

[House PreK-12 Budget Subcommittee](#)

The House PreK-12 Budget Subcommittee meeting focused on school readiness programs in Florida, with presentations from three early learning experts: Erin Smeltzer, Molly Grant, and Cari Miller. They discussed the School Readiness program and the new School Readiness Plus program, highlighting significant improvements in supporting families and early childhood education.

The School Readiness program provides childcare services for economically disadvantaged children, with recent legislative changes improving provider reimbursement rates and program accessibility. A key innovation is the School Readiness Plus program, which helps families continue receiving childcare assistance as they approach economic self-sufficiency. The program allows families to receive support up to 100% of the state median income, addressing the previous "benefits cliff" that discouraged economic advancement.

The panelists emphasized the critical importance of early childhood education, noting that the program serves approximately 212,000 children and plays a crucial role in workforce development. They highlighted challenges such as workforce retention, provider reimbursement, and access to quality childcare. The discussion also explored potential improvements, including raising eligibility thresholds and reducing barriers for early learning professionals.

The committee members were particularly impressed with Florida's innovative approach to early learning, with the panelists noting that other states are watching Florida's programs. They stressed the long-term economic and educational benefits of investing in early childhood education, arguing that supporting young children and their families creates significant returns for the state's future workforce and economic development.

[Committee Packet](#)

[Child Care and Early Learning Providers](#)

Senate Children, Families, and Elder Affairs unanimously advanced SB 738. The bill amends child care and early learning regulations by refining licensing standards, personnel screening, and sanitation requirements. It exempts public and private preschools from certain municipal special assessments and revises child care facility standards to address health, safety, nutrition, and sanitation. The bill mandates the Department of Children and Families to screen child care personnel within three business days,



introduces a 40-hour mandatory training course with annual continuing education, and updates inspection procedures. It also defines “large family child care homes” and specifies insurance provisions, though some were removed during committee discussions. Exemptions are provided for religious-affiliated facilities while maintaining health and safety standards.

During the committee, Senator Gayle Harrell sought clarification on insurance provisions, which were subsequently removed. The sponsor emphasized streamlined licensing and faster background checks, and the bill was amended and reported favorably without opposition.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 738](#): Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 47](#): Health Care Budget Subcommittee; Health & Human Services Committee

Higher Education

The Senate Education Postsecondary Committee unanimously approved SB 1624. The bill requires state universities to set market-rate tuition for nonresident online students, shifts financial aid from targeting specific gender or ethnic minorities to supporting underrepresented students, and provides tuition waivers for active Florida State Guard members. The bill repeals the out-of-state tuition waiver for nonresident students with a Florida-resident grandparent. It also expands the duties of the Office of Ocean Economy at Florida Atlantic University to enhance collaboration with career centers, industry, and educational institutions, and mandates a catalog of ocean economy programs and credentialing opportunities. Changes to the Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program allow partnerships with online providers, modify age limits, and expand funding for marketing and outreach.

The bill also adjusts Institutional governance and workforce training policies. It renames Hillsborough Community College to Hillsborough State College, allows the Classical Learning Test (CLT) as an alternative to the SAT/ACT for preeminent research university eligibility, and removes requirements for reporting on student open access resources and job placement data. It shifts apprenticeship reporting deadlines, reduces the Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars credit hour requirement from five to three, and limits PIPELINE Fund grants to healthcare programs. Additionally, it authorizes the Office of Program and Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to contract with state universities for research support and allows the University of Florida president to appoint members to the Florida Center for Brain Tumor Research advisory council. The bill also replaces references to race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or marital status with “underrepresented populations” and renames the Florida Educational Equity Act as the Florida Educational Equality Act.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 1624](#): Appropriations Committee on Higher Education; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 1307](#): Education Administration; Careers & Workforce; Higher Education Budget; Education & Employment

Infrastructure & Commerce

Utility Relocation

House Economic Infrastructure unanimously advanced HB 703. The bill revises Florida’s utility relocation requirements to expedite public works and clarify when an authority must cover relocation costs. It mandates utility owners to submit a relocation schedule within 30 days of notice and begin work within 60 days, covering their own costs except in specific cases. Broadband, cable, and video service providers



must relocate upon notice, with expenses covered by the responsible authority. Supporters said that local governments were collecting Communications Services Tax (CST) revenues and that paying for relocation is proper use of those proceeds. The sponsor stated that he was open to continue working on updating CST statutes in future Sessions. During discussion, members focused on the bill's impact on broadband providers, potential cost burdens on local governments, and whether consumer savings might result.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 703](#): Commerce Committee

[SB 818](#): Transportation; Rules

Price Controls for the Removal and Storage of Electric Vehicles

Senate Transportation unanimously advanced SB 872. The bill requires counties to set price caps for the removal and storage of electric vehicles from accident scenes, allowing rates up to three times higher than those for gasoline or diesel vehicles under specific conditions. It authorizes wrecker operators to charge for the fair and reasonable costs of cleaning up an accident scene involving an electric vehicle, plus an additional 10 percent. The bill also allows municipalities to establish similar rates and permits wrecker operators to charge actual costs plus 15 percent for cleanup, including hazardous materials removal. Supporters emphasized that stricter storage guidelines add costs for towing operators. The bill is mainly being driving by one towing operator, Guardian. They argued the bill was reasonable at putting rates 3 times higher as added costs were actually 7-8 times higher. Insurance industry opposed the bill.

Remaining Committees:

- [SB 872](#): Community Affairs; Fiscal Policy
- [HB 577](#): Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee; Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee; State Affairs Committee

Indemnification and Insurance Obligations of Commuter Rail Transportation Providers

The bill creates Part III of Chapter 343, known as the "Coastal Link Commuter Rail Service Act," to address insurance and indemnification obligations for commuter rail services. It defines key terms, allows agencies to assume indemnification and insurance obligations under certain conditions, and authorizes liability insurance purchases up to \$323 million per occurrence. It also establishes a self-insurance retention fund capped at \$5 million while maintaining sovereign immunity and statutory liability limits. Additionally, it updates and reenacts FL Statute 341.302(17)(d) to align with new legislation, enabling the Department of Transportation to manage indemnification and insurance for rail services.

Amendment 294387 was adopted; it specifies the liability status of FECR and Brightline in relation to the state. The amendment declares that FECR and Brightline, along with their officers, agents, and employees, are not officers, agents, employees, or subdivisions of the state. It also states that FECR and Brightline do not qualify for sovereign immunity, unless otherwise specified by general law.

The bill was reported favorably, 18-0.

Remaining Committees:

- [HB 867](#): Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee; Commerce Committee
- [SB 916](#): Transportation; Judiciary; Fiscal Policy

