



February 2023 Activity Report

Overview

Lawmakers convened in Tallahassee last month for the sixth and seventh interim committee weeks. Legislators then headed back to their districts for one week at home before Session officially begins on March 7th.

Legislators will begin Session with 7 bills in the Senate and 1 bill in the House ready to be heard by their full chambers on second reading. While this number is slightly lower than in previous years, it's important to note that several key pieces of legislation has already passed during the two Special Sessions. One trend we are seeing is an increase in larger 'package' bills, which results in fewer bills passing overall.

HB 837, a tort reform bill, will be heard in its first committee today. Last week, the Governor and legislative leadership joined together to announce the package, which aims to reduce the number of suits and damages that businesses face in frivolous lawsuits.

Governor DeSantis unveiled further immigration policy plans this week. His proposed legislative package would include, among other provisions, adopting more stringent hiring protocols, increasing penalties for illegal immigration, preventing local governments from issuing IDs to undocumented immigrants, and preventing undocumented students who entered the country as children from receiving in-state tuition rates.

The Universal School voucher bill gained traction this week. HB 1 passed through its second committee, while its companion bill, filed by Senator Corey Simon, passed its first committee. Legislation that allows people to carry concealed guns in Florida without a permit began moving through the Senate this week. The bill, SB 150, filed by Tampa Senator Collins, also includes several provisions to bolster school security.

Two of Senate President Passidomo's priorities have passed their final committees and are ready for the Senate floor. This includes SB 102, the 'Live Local act' which expands affordable housing funding, programs, and prevents local governments from imposing rent controls while allowing them to increase the percentage of property tax breaks given to landlords proportional to the affordable housing units they offer.

Governor DeSantis also announced his plan to spend \$205 million on opioid and substance abuse treatment and prevention programs. The funding comes from a settlement in a lawsuit against opioid manufacturers.



Special Session

Last month Gov. DeSantis signed several bills from the February special session, including legislation that removes restrictions on universities and coaches from helping college athletes find 'name, image, and likeness (NIL) deals. He also signed into law the emergency response hurricane relief package, migrant transportation, and election prosecutor bills.

SB 2B- Emergency Response grants \$700 million to local governments for relief from hurricanes Ian and Nicole. Eligible local governments will receive interest free loans based on demonstrated need. In addition, it creates the Local Government Emergency Bridge Loan Program within the Department of Economic Opportunity. SB 2B - Statewide Prosecutor, clarifies that prosecutors can take on election related crimes if the crime affects, or has affected, two or more judicial districts.

The Intercollegiate Athlete Compensation and Rights Bill relaxes the rules on compensating intercollegiate athletes for their name, image, and likeness. It allows Florida universities to assist intercollegiate athletes in earning compensation or to find professional representation and includes requirements for financial literacy classes for athletes.

The Reedy Creek Improvement District, Orange and Osceola Counties Bill makes extensive revisions to the original Reedy Creek Improvement District charter, which governs Disney's land. Changes include renaming the district to the Central Florida Tourism Oversight District, replacing the landowner elected board with a five-person board elected by the Governor, and revises powers given to the district.

Lawmakers last year voted to abolish the district following a dispute between Gov. Ron DeSantis and Disney when the company publicly opposed legislation aimed at prohibiting instruction about sexuality and gender issues in schools. But the proposal passed last year didn't specify who would take over the services provided to Disney World, such as sewer service and fire response, or who would assume its debt obligations, and other local governments in the region expressed concern about being saddled with those. The measure would create the new district within two years and specify that Orange and Osceola counties wouldn't be responsible for Reedy Creek's \$1 billion debt.

Proposed Rules

Notice of Development of Rulemaking
Department: Department of Education
Division: State Board of Education
Rule No.: 6A-6.0576

Purpose: To specify the procedures and timelines for implementation of an industry certification process and adoption of the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List changes. This rule amendment will: 1) Adopt an updated CAPE Industry Certification Funding list which will impact funding calculations associated with industry certification attainment; 2) Adopt an updated Master Credentials List (MCL), new Industry certifications added to the MCL which will be added to the updated CAPE funding list; 3) Adopt the updated Form FCAPE-1: Registration of K-12 Career and Professional Academies; and 4.) clarify certification requirements for K-12 instructors. Note: the updated CAPE and Master Credentials List will be available at the end of the month.

https://www.flrules.org/gateway/View_Notice.asp?id=26757564



Notice of Meeting/Workshop Hearing

Department: Department of Business and Professional Regulation

Division: Florida Building Commission

Rule No.: 61G20-1.001

Subject: The Florida Building Commission will hold a rule workshop for 61G20-1.001, F.A.C., to review and decide whether to take action upon comments pertaining to the development of the 8th Edition (2023) Florida Building Code; consider proposed updates to Energy Code Compliance Software for the 2022 Supplement to the 7th Edition (2020) Florida Building Code, Energy Conservation, and take up other matters that appear on the Commission's agenda.

Date/Time: March 14, 2023, 8:30 a.m.

Location: The Westin Lake Mary, Orlando North, 2974 International Parkway, Lake Mary, Florida 32746.

https://www.flrules.org/gateway/View_Notice.asp?id=26861257

Priority Bills

HB 89 Building Construction

Passed through first committee with unanimous support, now heads to second of three total committees of reference (Local Admin Subcommittee). The Senate bill, by Sen. Hooper, has yet to be placed on the Community Affairs Agenda.

Construction Defects

Senate bill now heads to the floor for a final vote. House bill has one final committee Judiciary.

Transfer of Warranties 1203/1243 Sen. Boyd and Rep. Maggard

Both bills have been referenced. House bill heads to Regulatory Reform Subcommittee. Senate bill heads to Commerce and Tourism.



Articles of Interest

Hutson Pushes Career, Tech Ed Bill

Middle and high school students would have more work-based learning opportunities under a measure filed this week by Republican Sen. [Travis Hutson](#). The proposal ([SB 240](#)) aims to support career and technical education, or CTE, in grades 6-12 by connecting educational programs to specific industry and employment needs in local communities. It would also establish regional education groups that would include representatives from local businesses and education institutions to create additional opportunities for work-based learning and apprenticeships. Additionally, the legislation provides \$100 million for the Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program for schools to fund the creation of career and technical education programs. It would also require school boards to provide work-based learning opportunities, diversify education opportunities and expand apprenticeships to all high school students. [Hutson Press Release](#)

Bill to Reduce Local Ordinance Impacts Moving

A measure that would make it easier to challenge local ordinances in court and require "business impact statements" before putting local laws in place is moving in the Senate after approval this week by The Community Affairs Committee. The bill ([SB 170](#)), sponsored by Sen. [Jay Trumbull](#), R-Panama City, doesn't have a House companion yet. The measure now goes to the Senate Rules Committee, its last stop before the Senate floor. The bill would allow courts to award up to \$50,000 in attorney fees to a plaintiff after determining a local ordinance is "arbitrary or unreasonable." and suspend enforcement of new local laws while the challenge is considered in the courts. [Florida Bar News](#)