



# The Delegation Digest 2017-2018 Legislative Session

Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation

Session Week 8  
Feb. 26 - Mar. 2, 2018

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## Week Recap

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February 27 was Military Appreciation and Florida National Guard Day at the Capitol. The Department of Military Affairs and the Florida National Guard sponsor the annual event, which educates the public and government personnel on various roles and missions of the Florida National Guard and thank the community for its continued support of the armed forces. The House and Senate began budget conference Wednesday to finalize allocations for the 2018-2019 budget.



*Visitors at the Capitol getting a first-hand view of a military helicopter.*

## Bills and Policy

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HB 79 - Public Meetings by Rep. Rick Roth requires all meetings of any collegial public body of the executive branch of state government or of any collegial public body of a county, municipality, school district, or special district, at which official acts are to be taken or at which public business of such body is to be transacted or discussed, to be noticed and open to the public. The bill passed favorably out the House Government Accountability Committee on Monday with a committee substitute and has been placed on First Reading.

The House Government Accountability Committee heard HB 227 - Workers' Compensation Benefits for First Responders by Rep. Matt Willhite on Monday. The bill revises workers' compensation standards to provide indemnity benefits for a mental or nervous injury of a law enforcement officer, a firefighter, an emergency medical technician, or a paramedic, whether or not such injury is accompanied by a physical injury requiring medical treatment. The bill also requires an employing agency of a first responder to provide educational training related to mental health awareness, prevention, mitigation, and treatment. The bill passed favorably out of committee. It was

read for a second time during Friday's House Session and has been placed on Third Reading.

Monday, HB 1211 - Airboat Regulation by Rep. Joseph Abruzzo was heard in the House Commerce Committee. The bill creates "Ellie's Law" in honor of Elizabeth "Ellie" Goldenberg who died in 2017 from injuries she sustained after being thrown from an airboat on an Everglades airboat tour. The bill prohibits a person from operating an airboat to carry passengers for hire on waters of the state unless he or she has specified documents on board the airboat while carrying passengers for hire. A person who violates the airboat operating provisions commits a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable by up to 60 days imprisonment or a \$500 fine. It was found favorable and read for a second time during Friday's House Session. The bill has been placed on Third Reading. SB 1612 - Airboat Regulation by Sen. Kevin Rader is the Senate sponsored version.

HB 33 - Texting While Driving, prime cosponsored by Rep. Emily Slosberg, amends the Florida Ban on Texting While Driving Law to change the current enforcement of the ban on texting while driving from secondary to primary, which will allow a law enforcement officer to stop a vehicle solely for texting while driving. The bill also requires a law enforcement officer who detains a motor vehicle operator for texting while driving to inform the operator that he or she has a right to decline a search of their cellphone. Lastly, the bill also requires a law enforcement officer to record the race and ethnicity of a person issued a citation for texting while driving. The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles must annually report this information to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives beginning February 1, 2019. The bill was read for a second time Wednesday and passed by a vote of 112-2 on Thursday. It has been sent via messages to the Senate.

Wednesday, Rep. Bill Hager's bill, HB 1073 - Department of Financial Services, was heard on second reading. The bill revises requirements for electronic originals and copying of certain records media; revises certain bureau names and creates new bureaus; revises service options for child transition plans; provides certain exemptions for members and veterans of armed forces; authorizes adjustments to Regulatory Trust Fund; revises requirements for licensure or appointment of managing general agents under the Florida Insurance Code; revises license application process for managing general agents; revises terms of office for Florida Fire Safety Board; and deletes provision for staffing and funding formula of Florida State Fire College. The bill was amended during Second Reading and passed by a vote of 113-0 on Thursday. It has been sent via messages to the Senate.

HB 1069 - Substance Abuse Services by Rep. Bill Hager was heard on second reading Wednesday during the House session. The bill expands the statutory findings on who may benefit from living in a recovery residence to include not only those individuals who have completed treatment, but also those who are continuing to receive substance abuse treatment. The bill allows for licensed service providers to accept referrals from a noncertified recovery residence if it is determined the individual would benefit from the service and no recovery residence employees/owners directly or indirectly benefit from the referral. It would also require recovery residences to comply with fire code standards according to the type of facility. The bill also expands background screening requirements and adds staff and volunteers who are subject to a level 2 background screening to include anyone with direct contact with individuals receiving treatment. The bill was amended during Second Reading and passed by a vote of 112-0 on Thursday. It has been sent via messages to the Senate.

The House heard Rep. Joseph Abruzzo's bill, HB 1437 - Employment Services for Persons with Disabilities during Session on Wednesday. The bill requires participants in an adult or youth work experience activity under either the Division of Blind Services or the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation be deemed an employee of the state for the purposes of workers' compensation coverage. The bill was amended during Second Reading and passed by a vote of 115-0 on Thursday. It has been sent via messages to the Senate.

Rep. Emily Slosberg's resolution, HB 8075 - School Backpack Awareness Month, was adopted by Publication in the House on Wednesday. The resolution recognizes August 2018 as "School Backpack Awareness Month" in Florida.

SB 582 - Write-in Candidate Qualifying by Sen. Kevin Rader codifies the 2016 Florida Supreme Court decision in *Brinkmann v. Francois*, by repealing the statute that requires a write-in candidate to reside in the district that he or she seeks to represent at the time of qualifying. The bill passed favorably out of the Senate Rules Committee on Thursday and has been placed on the calendar for Second Reading.

SB 820 - Firesafety Inspectors by Sen. Bobby Powell creates s.633.217, F.S., and prohibits certain actions to influence a firesafety inspector by coercion or compensation to violate the Florida Fire Prevention Code, any rules adopted by the State Fire Marshal, or any provision of ch. 633, F.S. The bill imposes criminal penalties for violation of the prohibited provisions. A first offense constitutes a second-degree misdemeanor. A second or subsequent offense constitutes a first-degree misdemeanor. The bill passed favorably on Thursday out of the Senate Rules Committee and has been placed on the calendar for Second Reading. HB 637 - Fire Safety and Prevention by Rep. Al Jacquet is the House sponsored version.

The Senate Rules Committee heard SB 1364 - Public Records/Substance Abuse Service Providers by Sen. Kevin Rader Thursday. The bill amends s. 119.071, F.S., to exempt from public records laws certain personal identifying information of current and former directors, managers, supervisors, nurses, and clinical employees of a substance abuse service provider licensed under part II of ch. 397, F.S., as well as certain personal identifying and location information of their spouses and children. The bill provides in its statement of public necessity as justification for the exemption that the public records exemption is needed as the release of this information may place these employees and their families at risk of harm from hostile persons based on the actions of the employees. The bill passed favorably and placed on the Second Reading Calendar.

Sen. Bobby Powell's bill, SB 982 - Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs, which creates the Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs Program was heard Friday during the Senate Session. The program will provide reimbursement for up to \$1,500 of annual veterinary costs associated with caring for a retired law enforcement dog by the former handler or adopter who incurs the costs. The bill also includes an appropriation of \$300,000 in recurring General Revenue Funds to implement and administer the program. The bill passed by a vote of 36-0 and has been sent to House via messages. HB 763 - Care for Retired Law Enforcement Dogs by Rep. Joseph Abruzzo is the House sponsored version.

SB 1612 - Airboat Regulation by Sen. Kevin Rader was heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee Friday. The bill creates "Ellie's Law" in honor of Elizabeth "Ellie" Goldenberg who died in 2017 from injuries she sustained

after being thrown from an airboat on an Everglades airboat tour. The bill prohibits a person from operating an airboat to carry passengers for hire on waters of the state unless he or she has specified documents on board the airboat while carrying passengers for hire. A person who violates the airboat operating provisions commits a noncriminal infraction, punishable by up to a \$500 fine. It was found favorable with a committee substitute and placed on the Second Reading Calendar. HB 1211 - Airboat Regulation by Rep. Joseph Abruzzo is the House sponsored version.

HB 421 - Homestead Waivers by Rep. Lori Berman provides language that that may be included in a deed that creates a presumption that the spouse knowingly and intelligently waived his or her right to inherit such homestead property. It was read for a second time during Friday's House Session and has been placed on Third Reading.

HB 491 - Theft by Rep. Rick Roth extends the mandatory \$10,000 fine to theft of commercially farmed animals or bee colonies of a registered beekeeper. The bill was amended during Second Reading and placed on Third Reading during Friday's House Session.

## Local Bills

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Wednesday, HB 901 - Acme Improvement District and Pine Tree Water Control District by Rep. Matt Willhite was heard on the House floor for second reading. The bill transfers the portion of the Flying Cow Ranch property within the Acme Improvement District and places it in the jurisdiction of the Pine Tree Water Control District to facilitate the development of the Flying Cow Ranch property. The bill also amends the charters of Acme Improvement District and the Pine Tree Water Control District to state the new boundaries of each District as a result of the parcel move. On Thursday, the bill passed by a vote of 110-0 and has been sent to Senate Rules Committee.

Rep. Matt Willhite's local bill, HB 889 - West Palm Beach Police Pension Fund, was also heard Wednesday during the House Session. The bill revises retirement pension calculations for the City of West Palm Beach police department and corrects scrivener's errors. The bill passed by a vote of 112-0 and has been sent to Senate Rules Committee.

## Member Highlights

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Rep. Bill Hager, who is term limited, gave his farewell speech on the House floor Thursday. Rep. Hager has represented District 89 since 2010. He is the current chair of the Delegation and was Vice Chair 2016-2017.

[Rep. Bill Hager Farewell Floor Speech](#)

On Thursday, Rep. Joseph Abruzzo gave his farewell speech during Session. He is not seeking reelection when his term ends in November. Rep. Abruzzo served in the Florida House of Representatives from 2008 – 2012 representing District 85. He served in the Florida Senate from 2012 – 2016 in District 25 and returned to the House of Representatives 2016 – 2018 representing District 81. Rep. Abruzzo was the Delegation Vice Chair from 2009 – 2010 and Delegation Chair 2010 – 2011.

[Rep. Joseph Abruzzo Farewell Floor Speech](#)

## Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation

Delegation Chair  
Rep. Bill Hager

Delegation Vice Chair  
Rep. Matt Willhite

### Senators

Joe Negron  
District 25

Kevin Rader  
District 29

Bobby Powell, Jr.  
District 30

Vacant  
District 31

### Representatives

Joseph Abruzzo  
District 81

MaryLynn Magar  
District 82

Rick Roth  
District 85

Matt Willhite  
District 86

David Silvers  
District 87

Al Jacquet  
District 88

Bill Hager  
District 89

Lori Berman  
District 90

Emily Slosberg  
District 91

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*The Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation Office is a non-partisan office that serves all thirteen members of the Florida Senate and House of Representatives representing Palm Beach County in Tallahassee. The delegation office is responsible for: scheduling and coordinating all delegation meetings in Palm Beach County and Tallahassee; developing the delegation's legislative program including local bills, appropriation requests, and county and municipal legislative priorities; providing legislative assistance and research to the delegation during the legislative session; and serving as a liaison between the delegation and local governments and community organization.*