



Delegation Digest

MARCH 2-5 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to Week 1 of the 2021 Legislative Session. In this Week's edition of the Delegation Digest, we are highlighting member bills and Palm Beach County Days.

Typically Session runs for 60 days. March 2, 2021 - April 30, 2021, depending on if there are any extensions or special sessions. Traditionally during the first week of Session, Palm Beach County Day is celebrated, with a reception, meetings, and other activities. These events allow for County businesses, stakeholders, and residents to connect with their local elected officials as well as other electeds in Tallahassee. With COVID-19 protocols, the state Capitol is closed to visitors but Palm Beach County is still very present in Tallahassee hosting several virtual meetings.



SENATE MEMBER LEGISLATION

Please note this is just a snapshot of the bills filed by the Delegation members.
You can visit Myfloridahouse.gov or Flsenate.gov to view a complete list of bills.

Senator Gayle Harell - District 25

SB 636 - Involuntary Examinations of Minors - Revising parent, guardian, or caregiver notification requirements that must be met before an involuntary examination of a minor; revising parent and guardian notification requirements that must be met before conducting an involuntary examination of a minor who is removed from school, school transportation, or a school-sponsored activity; creating reporting requirements for schools relating to involuntary examinations of minors; requiring that certain plans include procedures to assist certain mental and behavioral health providers in attempts to verbally deescalate certain crisis situations before initiating an involuntary examination, etc.

SB 260 - Services for Veterans and Their Families - creates the Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program (Program), to provide veterans and their families dedicated behavioral health care referral services, primarily for mental health and substance abuse. Through the Program, a veteran may call a separate veteran-dedicated support line to receive assistance and support from a fellow veteran who is trained to respond to the calls for assistance.

Senator Tina Polsky - District 29

SB 428 - Sale, Transfer, or Storage of Firearms - Redefines the term minor; revises requirements for the safe storage of loaded firearms, and provides criminal penalties when minors gain access to loaded guns that have not been properly secured or stored.

SB 1202 - Fee Waivers - Allows colleges and universities to waive fees for students in recovery residences and prohibits schools from charging with such waivers the out-of-state tuition rate.

Senator Bobby Powell, Jr. - District 30

SB 592 - Reemployment Assistance - Creates an ombudsman office within the Department of Economic Opportunity to assist people seeking unemployment benefits and identify procedural hurdles. Benefits to start at the date of unemployment.

SB 636 - Detention of Children - Prohibiting a child awaiting trial or other legal processes who is treated as an adult for purposes of criminal prosecution from being held in a jail or other facility intended or used for the detention of adults; requiring the court to consider specified factors in making a certain determination; providing a requirement and a prohibition if a court determines that it is in the interest of justice to allow a child to be held in a jail or other facility intended or used for the detention of adults, etc

Senator Lori Berman - District 31

SB 184 - Purple Alert - Requires the Department of Law Enforcement, along with other agencies to create a purple alert for missing adults with a mental disability, brain injury, or other physical, mental, or emotional disability not related to substance abuse.

SB 188 - Solar Energy Systems Located On the Property of an Educational Facility - Solar Energy Systems Located On the Property of an Educational Facility; Prohibiting costs associated with such systems from being included in the calculation of total cost per student station for the purpose of a limit imposed on such costs for certain new construction, etc.

HOUSE MEMBER LEGISLATION

Please note this is just a snapshot of the bills filed by the Delegation members.
You can visit Myfloridahouse.gov or Flsenate.gov to view a complete list of bills.

Representative Kelly Skidmore - District 81

HB - 1025 - Risk Protection Order - Redefining the term "petitioner" to include an individual who has a biological or legal parent-child relationship with, who is the legal guardian of, or who is spouse or sibling of the respondent.

HB 1023 - Cost-of-living Adjustment of Retirement Benefits - Specifies the minimum amount of factor used to calculate cost-of-living adjustment of benefits for certain retirees & beneficiaries of Florida Retirement System; provides a declaration of important state interest.

Representative Rick Roth - District 85

HB - 1071 - Medicaid Coverage for Former Foster Youth - Creates a program to help enroll young people formerly in foster into Medicaid.

HB 601 - Adoption Proceedings - This bill makes changes to current law to reduce the number of simultaneous adoption actions that can be filed by multiple parties to adopt the same child. The bill amends current law to require the dependency court to review DCF's decision to deny an application to adopt and eliminate the ability for a denied applicant to have an administrative review of DCF's decision under Ch. 120, F.S.

Representative Matt Willhite - District 86

HB - 437 - Operation of Motorized Vehicles by Minors - Prohibits minors from operating or riding upon motorized vehicle unless he or she is wearing certain footwear.

HB 979 - Village of Wellington, Palm Beach County - Provides an exception to general law; prohibits sale & use of fireworks located within Equestrian Preserve of Village of Wellington except under specified circumstances.

Representative David Silvers - District 87

HB - 453 - Student Mental Health - Revises elements of a plan required for school district funding under mental health assistance allocation.

HB 959 - Insurance Coverage Parity for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders - Requires Medicaid managed care plans to submit annual report to AHCA relating to parity between mental health & substance use disorder benefits & medical & surgical benefits; provides requirements for entities transacting individual or group health insurance or providing prepaid health care; removes provisions relating to optional coverage for mental & nervous disorders; requires OIR to implement & enforce federal law in specified manner; requires OIR to issue specified annual report to Legislature; removes provision relating to optional coverage required for substance abuse impaired persons.

Representative Omari Hardy - District 88

HB - Gun Violence Reduction - Creates Urban Gun Violence Task Force and Florida Firearm Violence Reduction Pilot program and defines tasks.

HB 1609 - Criminal Justice - Requires each county to establish an independent Office of Law Enforcement & Correctional Officer Oversight; provides for appointment & duties of commissioners provides requirements concerning collective bargaining agreements for law enforcement & correctional officers; provides duties for state attorneys concerning alleged misconduct of law enforcement & correctional officers; provides for forfeiture of law enforcement or correctional officer's pension for certain willful acts; repeals provisions relating to law enforcement officers' & correctional officers' rights; provides requirements for contracts between unions representing officers & employing agencies.

Representative Mike Caruso - District 89

HB 1091 - Access to Health Care Practitioner Services - Exempts physicians & osteopathic physicians who provide pro bono services from continuing education requirements; revises eligibility criteria for restricted license; establishes registration program for volunteer retired physicians & osteopathic physicians; authorizes Board of Medicine & Board of Osteopathic Medicine to deny, revoke, or impose restrictions or conditions on registration for certain violations & noncompliance; revises licensure criteria for Canadian applicants.

HB 1215 - Revising Penalties for Nonviolent Offenses - Provides for civil citations for possession of small amounts of cannabis & cannabis paraphernalia offenses; provides for community service in lieu of fines; limits the number of civil citations that person may receive; provides the person who contests violation waives specified civil penalty & may receive a larger penalty; revises principle of Criminal Punishment Code relating to prisoner's required minimum term of imprisonment & incentive gain-time that DOC may grant.

Representative Joe Casello - District 90

HB 313 - Firefighters Inquiries and Investigations - Provides that firefighters have certain rights during informal inquiry & not just interrogation; provides that firefighter may not be subjected to certain disciplinary action during interrogation.

HB 1237 - Bottled Water Excise Tax: Imposes an excise tax on bottled water operators; specifies tax rate & trust fund for tax proceeds; requires tax proceeds to be used for certain purposes; specifies procedures for bottled water operators related to tax payments; authorizes DOR to settle or compromise taxes; providing recordkeeping requirements for bottled water operators; specifying the department's authority to inspect books and records, issue subpoenas, & apply for certain judicial orders; provides procedures for DOR in conducting audits; specifies procedures for claiming refunds; provides that taxes due remain a lien on certain property; requires suits brought by DOR for violations be brought in circuit court; provides criminal penalties.

Representative Emily Slsoberg - District 91

HB 91 - Use of Wireless Communications Devices While Driving - Revises short title & legislative intent; prohibits the operation of a motor vehicle while holding or touching wireless communications device; provides exceptions; revises information that may be admissible as evidence in proceeding to determine whether a violation has been committed; revises procedures for collection & reporting by DHSMV of information recorded on the citation; conforms provisions relating to the use of wireless communications devices in school & work zones.

HB 673 - DNA Evidence Collected in Sexual Offense Investigations - Designates act "Gail's Law"; requires FDLE, by specified date, to create & maintain statewide database for tracking sexual offense evidence kits; provides database requirements; requires participation; requires FDLE to ensure that alleged sexual offense victims & certain other persons are notified of or have access to information regarding such kits & evidence; provides requirements for such notification; provides for implementation.

OPENING DAY OF THE 123RD REGULAR SESSION



NEW TRADITIONS IN THE HOUSE

During Organization Session, Speaker Sprowls announced the formation of the Law Enforcement Officer of the Day program. Each day on the Floor, the House will recognize brave men and women in Florida who put themselves in danger every day.

Each Representative will have the opportunity to submit for consideration an officer from within their community whom they believe exemplifies law enforcement's commitment to safety, security, and service. On March 4, 2021, during the House Session, Representative Emily Slosberg requested Deputy Will Ferel from Palm Beach County to be recognized as March 4th's Law enforcement Officer of the Day. Deputy Will Ferel single-handedly created and implemented a diversion program for youthful traffic offenders, giving them the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and understand the consequences of dangerous driving. With a zero percent recidivism rate, Deputy Ferel's program has undoubtedly saved lives and resulted in safer roadways.



Representative Slosberg and Deputy Will Ferel

The House has added this new tradition joining the Doctor of the Day and Minister of the Day.

LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION LOGO

As the Delegation Director, one of my goals was to create a logo for the Delegation. A logo that would represent Palm Beach County and all 13 members. It was decided after many designs were considered, the Delegation would use a sea turtle as part of the new logo. Sea turtles in Palm Beach County are a welcomed site each year. Between March 1 and October 31, sea turtles make their way to Palm Beach County beaches to nest. The 9.5 mile stretch of beach spans from northern Palm Beach County to the northern boundary of John D. MacArthur Beach State Park. The Loggerhead Marinelife Center monitors these nests to make sure they are protected and are able to hatch as they make their way safely to the ocean. Last year the Center documented 16,935 sea turtles. It is estimated that 800,000 hatchlings were produced from the 2020 nesting season alone.

To learn more about sea turtles and nesting season visit the Loggerhead Marinelife Center located in Juno Beach.

OUR NEW LOGO



Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation

Delegation Chair - Rep. David Silvers
Delegation Vice-Chair - Rep. Mike Caruso

Senators

Gayle Harrell - District 25
Tina Polsky - District 29
Bobby Powell, Jr. - District 30
Lori Berman - District 31

Representatives

Kelly Skidmore - District 81
John Snyder - District 82
Rick Roth - District 85
Matt Willhite - District 86
David Silvers - District 87
Omari Hardy - District 88
Mike Caruso - District 89
Joseph "Joe" Casello - 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.