



Palm Beach County State Legislative Update

Department of Legislative Affairs

Special Session & Committee Week 4

November 6-9, 2023

Special Session C

On October 20, Senate President Kathleen Passidomo and House Speaker Paul Renner issued a joint proclamation convening a special session during the committee week scheduled for November 6-9. The following four bills were passed by the legislature and subsequently signed into law by the Governor.

HB 1C, Disaster Relief: This legislation provides additional resources to assist Floridians recovering from the impacts of Hurricane Idalia, including tax relief on motor fuel used for agricultural shipments and debris removal, as well as on materials used to repair or replace nonresidential farm buildings and fencing. The bill also addresses the backlog of My Safe Florida Home applications by allocating \$176.2 million to the program, allowing Floridians to fortify their homes and lower their insurance premiums. Lastly, the bill revised an existing prohibition on local governments within 100 miles of the landfall of Hurricanes Ian or Nicole from proposing or adopting more restrictive or burdensome procedures or amendments concerning a development order, land development regulation, or comprehensive plan. With the new law taking effect upon the Governor's signature, this prohibition now only applies to specified counties impacted by Hurricane Ian (not including PBC) and municipalities within those counties.

HB 3C, Family Empowerment Scholarship: The bill revises the cap for the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program for Students with Unique Abilities so that eligible students can access the educational resources that fit their individual needs.

HB 5C, Scrutinized Companies: This legislation directs the State Board of Administration to divest public funds from companies on the "Scrutinized Companies with Activities in Iran Terrorism Sectors List" that do business with the Islamic Republic of Iran in specific sectors. The bill was sponsored by Representative John Snyder, a member of the Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation.

HB 7C, Security Grants: The bill provides at-risk institutions, such as Jewish Day Schools, with additional security resources and infrastructure.

Both the House and Senate adopted resolutions in support of the State of Israel during the special session as well.

Senator Lori Berman, who represents a portion of Palm Beach County, sponsored **SR 8C** condemning the attack on October 7 by Hamas and supporting the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign nation. It also supports Israel's right to defend itself, demands the end of financial support to Iranian-backed Hamas or other entities that support such terrorist organizations, and condemns threats against Jewish people, institutions, and communities. The resolution was adopted with unanimous support.

The Florida House adopted two similar resolutions to that of the Senate. In a show of bipartisan support, Representative Katharine Waldron and Representative Peggy Gossett-Seidman of the Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation, joined together to sponsor **HR 9C** which asserts Florida's unwavering support of Israel and condemns the terrorist organization Hamas. Representative Randy Fine sponsored the second adopted resolution, **HR 11C**, that called for the U.S. to halt funding for Palestinian-affiliated organizations and condemned anti-Semitic rhetoric on college campuses and elsewhere.

Committee Week 4

Although the spotlight was on special session this week, some committees and subcommittees still met on regular business. A list of the committees that held meetings and the topics of those meetings are included below.

Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

- Presentation by Joe Marino, Executive Director of Veterans Florida
- Presentation by Commander Dennis Baker, Chairman of the Florida Veterans Foundation

Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections

- Senate Confirmation Hearing: Consideration of several named executive appointments.

Senate Committee on Community Affairs

- Presentation by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation on Implementation of the Live Local Act (SB 102)

Senate Committee on Agriculture

- Presentation by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Wilton Simpson
- Presentation by Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association President Mike Joyner
- Presentation by Brightmark and Larson Dairy Farms on the Renewable Natural Gas Project

Senate Committee on Education Pre-K – 12

- Workshop on Recommendations to Reduce Regulations on Public Schools

House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee

- Implementation update by the Department of Education regarding Workforce Adult General Education Performance-based Incentive Funds, the Pathways to Career Opportunities Grants, Apprenticeship Programs, the Teacher Apprenticeship Program and Mentor Bonus, the Dual Enrollment Teacher Scholarship Program, and the Open Door Scholarship Program

House Justice Appropriations Subcommittee

- Presentations by the State Courts System, the Office of the Attorney General/Department of Legal Affairs, and various justice administration entities regarding their FY 24-25 Budget Requests.

House Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee

- Briefing on physician and nurse workforce by the Department of Health
- Briefing by the Florida Center for Nursing on the nursing workforce annual report

House Regulatory Reform & Economic Development Subcommittee

- Presentations on Homeowners' Associations & Panel Discussion
- Consideration of **HB 133**, providing a period of time when convictions or other adjudications for crimes may not be grounds for denial of licensure as a barber or cosmetologist (Passed 13-0)

House Education Quality Subcommittee

- Recommendations from State Board of Education of Repeals & Revisions to FL Early Learning Education

House Local Administration, Federal Affairs & Special District Subcommittee

- Presentation by the Florida Department of Commerce on Special Districts
- Presentation by OPPAGA on Performance Reviews of Fire Control Districts Located in RAOs

House Transportation & Modals Subcommittee

- Presentation and workshop on laws related to towing

House Choice & Innovation Subcommittee

- Presentations on the Tallahassee Collegiate Academy & Florida Institute for Charter School Innovation

House Civil Justice Subcommittee

- Presentation on the implementation of 2023 HB 1419 by Lee County Clerk of Court Kevin C. Karnes

House Infrastructure & Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee

- Presentations by the Division of Emergency Management, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of State regarding their FY 24-25 Legislative Budget Requests.

House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee

- Presentations by the Department of Elder Affairs, the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, and the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs regarding their FY 24-25 Legislative Budget Requests

House Water Quality, Supply & Treatment Subcommittee

- Presentation by the Woodville Karst Plain Project on underwater cave systems
- Presentation by the Florida Aquarium on coral breeding and restoration programs
- Presentation by Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium on reef restoration programs

House Criminal Justice Subcommittee

- Presentation by FDLE on Florida Track-Kit, the statewide database for tracking sexual assault evidence kits