

PALM BEACH COUNTY 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION FINAL REPORT



Palm Beach County Legislative Affairs

Todd J. Bonlarron, Assistant County Administrator

Ed Chase, Intergovernmental Affairs Director

Kasey Denny, Legislative Affairs Director

April 29, 2024

Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners



MARIA SACHS
MAYOR
DISTRICT 5
(561) 355-2205
MSachs@pbc.gov



MARIA G. MARINO
VICE MAYOR
DISTRICT 1
(561) 355-2201
MMarino@pbc.gov



GREGG K. WEISS
DISTRICT 2
(561) 355-2202
GWeiss@pbc.gov



MICHAEL A. BARNETT
DISTRICT 3
(561) 355-2203
MBarnett@pbc.gov



MARCI WOODWARD
DISTRICT 4
(561) 355-2204
MWoodward@pbc.gov



SARA BAXTER
DISTRICT 6
(561) 355-2206
SBaxter@pbc.gov



MACK BERNARD
DISTRICT 7
(561) 355-2207
MBernard@pbc.gov

2024 Legislative Session Final Report

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2024 Session Overview

The 2024 Legislative Session began on January 9 and ended as scheduled on March 8. The end of this session concludes Senate President Kathleen Passidomo and House Speaker Paul Renner's service as the presiding officers of their respective chambers. Three Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation members, Senator Bobby Powell Jr., Representative David Silvers, and Representative Rick Roth, will not be returning to the Legislature next year due to term limits or because they are pursuing an alternative elected office.

This session, a total of 1,957 bills and 2,196 amendments were filed. Members of the Legislature successfully passed 325 bills covering various topics, including health care, education, social media use for minors, vacation rentals, and more. This year, the number of controversial bills that advanced focused on social issues markedly decreased. However, there was no notable reduction in the number of preemptions and local government mandates that were ushered through the process.

Many of the bills passed this session have significant implications for local government. One of the most notable bills, HB 1365, will require local governments to determine how to implement new restrictions and requirements addressing homelessness. This bill prohibits cities and counties from allowing regular sleeping or camping on public property without a permit unless the county has designated the site for such purposes. The bill also establishes a civil cause of action allowing the Florida Attorney General, a resident, or the owner of a business located in the county to sue a local government for violations.

This year, Senate President Kathleen Passidomo's main focus was improving Florida's health care system. Several bills were part of a package known as her 'Live Healthy' initiative. Spearheaded by Senators Gayle Harrell and Colleen Burton, 'Live Healthy' aims to enhance health care across Florida by offering new training opportunities, improving access to services in rural areas, and promoting technological advancements. House Speaker Paul Renner's top priority was HB 3, a social media ban for minors under 16 with a parental consent exception for 14 and 15-year olds.

Before adjourning the 2024 Legislative Session, lawmakers approved a \$117.4 billion state budget for Fiscal Year 24-25, a modest increase from last year's spending plan. In recent years, the state budget has been boosted by federal money related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, President Passidomo stated that as the timeline to spend pandemic funds is ending, the Legislature is moving towards making thoughtful, fiscally responsible adjustments to balance the budget to a level sustainable in the long term.

The following pages will highlight some of the priority appropriations and policy issues from the 2024 Legislative Session that impact Palm Beach County.

FY 2024-2025 Budget Highlights

TOTAL STATE BUDGET: \$117.46 billion [\$49.4 billion GR; \$68.1 billion TF]

TOTAL RESERVES: \$10.0 billion

- Unallocated General Revenue: \$5.1 billion
- Budget Stabilization Fund: \$4.4 billion (\$300 million added)
- Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund: \$500 million
- Retirement of State Debt: \$500 million

Major Issues

Compensation and Benefits

- Three percent pay increase for all state employees.
- State Employees and Retirees Health Insurance Premiums held constant
- Inclusion of the Florida College System for State Group Health Insurance

Education

Total Budget: \$30.1 billion [\$22.6 billion GR; \$7.5 billion TF]

Education Capital Outlay

Total Budget: \$1.2 billion

- State University System Projects - \$616.2 million
- Florida College System Projects - \$133.6 million
- Charter School Repairs and Maintenance - \$230.8 million
- Small School District Special Facilities - \$193.2 million
- Developmental Research School Repairs & Maintenance - \$9.2 million

Early Learning Services

Total: \$1.7 billion [\$608.9 million GR; \$1.1 billion TF]

- Partnerships for School Readiness - \$34.4 million
- School Readiness Program - \$1.2 billion
- Early Learning Standards and Accountability - \$4.9 million
- Voluntary Prekindergarten Program - \$438.1 million
 - Decrease of 1,885 fewer students (\$9.6 million)
 - Increase of \$12.5 million to the Base Student Allocation
 - Increase to Administration from 4 percent to 5 percent - \$4.1 million
 - Summer Bridge Program - \$4.1 million

Public Schools/K12 FEFP

Total: \$28.4 billion [\$15.5 billion state funds; \$12.9 billion local funds]

- FEFP Total Funds increase is \$1.8 billion or 6.73 percent
- FEFP increases in Total Funds per Student served by a district is \$240.01, a 2.75 percent increase
- Base Student Allocation (BSA) increase by \$191.25 or 3.72 percent
- FEFP Base Funds (flexible \$) increase of \$1.27 billion or 7.22 percent
- Required Local Effort (RLE) increase of \$483.4 million; RLE millage maintained at prior year level of 3.189 mills
- Safe Schools Allocation - \$40 million increase for a total of \$290 million for School Safety Officers and school safety initiatives
- Mental Health Assistance Allocation - \$20 million increase for a total of \$180 million to help school districts and charter schools address youth mental health issues

Public Schools/K12 Non-FEFP

Total: \$627.4 million [\$619.9 million GR; \$7.5 million TF]

- Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program - \$6.5 million
- School Recognition Program - \$200 million
- Mentoring Programs - \$12.2 million
- Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources Centers - \$8.7 million
- School District Foundation Matching Grants - \$7 million
- Florida Safe Schools Canine Program - \$3.5 million
- District Threat Management Coordinators - \$5 million
- Regional Literacy Teams - \$5 million
- Early Childhood Music Education - \$2.4 million
- Charity for Change - \$4.7 million
- ~~• Menstrual Hygiene Products Grant Program - \$6.4 million~~
- Civics Literacy Captains and Coaches - \$3.5 million
- Civics Professional Development - \$2.75 million
- Florida Civics Seal of Excellence - \$10 million
- New Worlds Scholarship Accounts - \$24 million
- SEED School of Miami - \$12.2 million
- School and Instructional Enhancement Grants - \$54.7 million
- Florida School for the Deaf and Blind - \$68.3 million
- Transportation Stipend - \$14 million to fund the Family Empowerment Transportation
- School Safety Inspection Bonus Program - \$3.8 million
- Capital Projects - \$66 million

State Board of Education

Total: \$308.2 million [\$156.1 million GR; \$152.1 million TF]

- Assessment and Evaluation - \$129.2 million
- ACT and SAT Exam Administration - \$8 million

Vocational Rehabilitation

Total: \$257.4 million [\$61.7 million GR; \$195.7 million TF]

Blind Services

Total: \$72.6 million [\$24.7 million GR; \$47.9 million TF]

Private Colleges

Total: \$243.2 million GR

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) - \$31.4 million
- HBCU Facility Hardening Funds - \$15 million
- Effective Access to Student Education (EASE) - \$134.8 million
 - EASE Plus - \$9.6 million

Student Financial Aid

Total: \$1.05 billion [\$318.6 million GR; \$728.1 million TF]

- Bright Futures - \$616.9 million
 - Workload increase - \$26.2 million
- Benacquisto Scholarship Program - \$39 million
 - Workload increase - \$4.3 million
- Children/Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans - \$21.5 million
 - Workload increase - \$4.8 million
- Florida First Responder Scholarship Program - \$10 million
- Open Door Grant Program - \$35 million
- Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Scholarship - \$7 million

School District Workforce

Total: \$812.1 million [\$475.5 million GR; \$293.9 million TF; \$42.7 million tuition/fees]

- Workforce Development - \$451.2 million
 - Workload increase - \$24.6 million
- Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program for apprenticeships - \$20 million
 - Increase for “Grow Your Own Teacher” Apprenticeship Program - \$5 million
- Nursing Education Initiatives - \$20 million
- Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program - \$5 million
- Student Success in Career and Technical Education Incentive Funds - \$2.5 million
- No tuition increase

Florida College System

Total: \$2.4 billion [\$1.47 billion GR; \$259 million TF; \$689.9 million tuition/fees]

- CAPE Incentive Funds for students who earn Industry Certifications - \$20 million
- College System Program Fund - \$1.6 billion
- Nursing Education Initiatives - \$59 million
- Student Success Incentive Funds - \$30 million

- 2+2 Student Success Incentive Funds - \$17 million
- Work Florida Incentive Funds - \$13 million
- No tuition increase

State University System

Total: \$6.8 billion [\$4.3 billion GR; \$666.7 million TF; \$1.94 billion tuition/fees]

- Metric Based Performance Funding - \$645 million
 - State Investment - \$350 million
 - Institutional Investment - \$295 million
- Performance-Based Excellent Recognition Program - \$100 million
- Preeminent State Research Universities - \$100 million
- Lastinger Center for Learning at University of Florida - \$58.2 million
- Nursing Education Initiatives - \$46 million
- Community School Grant Program - \$20.1 million total, which includes a \$9.1 million workload increase
- Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program for Students with Unique Abilities - \$12.5 million total, which includes a \$3.5 million workload increase
- No tuition increase

Health and Human Services

Total Budget: \$46.5 billion [\$16.2 billion GR; \$30.3 billion TF]

Agency for Health Care Administration

Total: \$34.7 billion [\$11.1 billion GR; \$23.6 billion TF]

- Individuals with Developmental Disabilities Pilot Program - \$38.4 million
- Medicaid Provider Rate Increases - \$333.1 million
 - Air and Ground Ambulance Emergency Services - \$5.9 million
 - Assistive Care Services - \$1.3 million
 - Early Intervention Services - \$1.2 million
 - Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics - \$19 million
 - Maternal Fetal Medicine - \$3.5 million
 - Medical Foster Care - \$0.5 million
 - Nursing Homes - \$247.9 million
 - Pediatric Behavioral Health Services - \$43.1 million
 - Pediatric Physicians - \$43.1 million
 - Statewide Inpatient Psychiatric Program - \$7.6 million
 - Therapeutic Group Home - \$0.3 million
- Behavioral Health Collaborative Care - \$8.3 million
- Graduate Medical Education - \$10.5 million
- Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly - \$29.7 million
- Florida Health Care Connections (FX) - \$92.1 million

Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Total: \$2.4 billion [\$1.1 billion GR; \$1.3 billion TF]

- Home and Community Based Services Pre-Enrollment to Waiver - \$64.8 million
- Pre-Enrollment to Waiver Slots for Siblings - \$16.9 million
- Dually Diagnosed Program - \$6.5 million
- Adult Pathways Waiver - \$0.3 million
- Information Technology - \$9.3 million
- Fixed Capital Outlay for People with Developmental Disabilities - \$12.5 million

Department of Children and Families

Total: \$4.7 billion [\$2.8 billion GR; \$1.9 billion TF]

- Independent Living Programs Eligibility Expansion - \$8.1 million
- Adoption Incentive Benefit Increase and Eligibility Expansion - \$9.4 million
- Adoption, Guardianship and Foster Care Subsidies - \$26.4 million
- Homeless Housing Opportunities - \$10 million
- Domestic Violence Services - \$10 million
- Human Trafficking Emergency Bed Expansion - \$5 million
- Optional State Supplementation Personal Needs Allowance Increase - \$6.7 million
- Opioid Settlement - Treatment, Prevention, and Recovery Services - \$83.9 million
- State Mental Health Treatment Facilities - \$88.8 million
- Integrated Behavioral Health Clinics - \$7 million
- Behavioral Qualified Residential Treatment Program - \$5.7 million
- Community-Based Mental Health/Substance Abuse Services - \$21.5 million
- Florida System and Child Welfare Information System Modernization - \$54.1 million
- Economic Self Sufficiency (ESS) Call Center - \$12.3 million
- Fixed Capital Outlay for State Mental Health Treatment Facilities - \$6.5 million

Department of Elder Affairs

Total: \$482.4 million [\$251.7 million GR; \$230.6 million TF]

- Florida Alzheimer's Center of Excellence - \$2.1 million; 2 positions
- Serve Additional Clients in the Home Care for the Elderly and Community Care for the Elderly Programs - \$11 million
- Alzheimer Disease Initiative - \$6 million
- Office of Professional and Public Guardians Waitlist - \$1.4 million
- Electronic Client Information and Registration Tracking System (eCIRTS) Project Implementation - \$2.8 million

Department of Health

Total: \$4.1 billion [\$948.2 million GR; \$3.2 billion TF]

- Statewide Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Program - \$1.7 million
- Florida Cancer Innovation Fund - \$40 million
- Sickle Cell Treatment and Research - \$10 million
- Rural Hospital Capital Improvement Grant Program - \$10 million

- Mary Brogan Breast and Cervical Early Detection Program - \$1.7 million
- Fixed Capital Outlay for Public Health Laboratories - \$9.7 million

Department of Veterans Affairs

Total: \$220 million [\$58 million GR; \$162 million TF]

- Collier County State Veterans' Nursing Home - \$10 million
- Veterans' Claims Examiners - \$0.6 million
- Veterans Dental Care Grant Program - \$1 million
- Florida is for Veterans' Vets Program - \$2 million
- Florida is for Veterans' Occupancy License Reciprocity - \$1 million
- Fixed Capital Outlay for State Veterans' Nursing Homes - \$4 million

Criminal and Civil Justice

Total Budget: \$7.3 billion [\$6.3 billion GR; \$1 billion TF]

Department of Corrections

Total: \$3.6 billion [\$3.5 billion GR; \$101.7 million TF]

- Correctional Facilities Capital Improvement - \$100 million
- DOC Education Expansion - \$11.1 million
- Certified Officers Public Safety Initiative (uniforms) - \$1.6 million
- Community Corrections Statewide Firearms Transition - \$2.1 million
- Inflationary Adjustments for Operations - \$3 million
- Offender Based Information Technology Modernization - \$17 million
- Technology Restoration Plan - \$9.2 million
- Contracted Work Release Provider Rate Increases - \$4.9 million
- Contracted Maintenance Staffing - \$2.5 million
- Food Service Contract - \$12 million
- Contracted Inmate Health Services - \$21.3 million
- Operation New Hope - \$9.8 million

Attorney General/ Legal Affairs

Total: \$382.9 million [\$122.3 million GR; \$260.6 million TF]

- Statewide Prosecution Workload - \$10.9 million
- Children's Advocacy Centers - \$5.3 million
- Agency-wide Information Technology Infrastructure and Hardware Replacement - \$7.1 million

Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Total: \$494.9 million [\$321.5 million GR; \$173.3 million TF]

- Forensic Backlog Reduction - \$1.3 million
- Biometric Identification Solution (BIS) Modernization - \$11.9 million

- Missing and Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse Technology Upgrade - \$1.9 million
- Restore Crime Scene Function Orlando, Tampa, Miami - \$2.5 million
- Criminal Justice Network Bandwidth Increase - \$3 million
- State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication (S.A.F.E.) in Florida Program - \$8.5 million
- Purchase of Body Armor for Local Law Enforcement - \$2 million
- Investigative Services Needs - \$1.5 million
- Cell Site Simulator - \$2.1 million
- Intercept Operations Expansion - \$1.2 million
- Law Enforcement Crime Abatement Technology Enhancements - \$1.1 million
- Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant - \$2.5 million
- School Safety Security Assessment Grant Program - \$5 million
- Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Community Outreach and Engagement Initiative - \$3 million
- Investigative Support and Laboratory Inflationary Costs - \$2.5 million

Department of Juvenile Justice

Total: \$743.3 million [\$581.4 million GR; \$162 million TF]

- Florida Scholars Academy - \$12.8 million
- Increase DJJ Probation Provider Pay - \$2.4 million
- Increase Residential Commitment Capacity - \$5.2 million
- Children In Need of Services/Families In Need of Services (CINS/FINS) - \$6.3 million

Justice Administrative Commission

Total: \$1.3 billion [\$1 billion GR; \$225.4 million TF]

- Increase Staff to Represent All Children - \$0.8 million
- Fund Shift for Victims of Crime Act Deficit - \$4.3 million
- Replacement of Motor Vehicles - \$2.8 million
- Ybor City Community Outreach and Engagement Initiative - \$3 million

State Court System

Total: \$741.3 million [\$625.5 million GR; \$115.8 million TF]

- Due Process Resources - \$2.6 million
- Court Reporting Resources - \$4.1 million
- Case Processing Support - \$1.9 million
- Certification of Additional Judgeships - \$3.7 million
- Cybersecurity Resources - \$2 million
- Child Support Enforcement Hearing Officer Resources - \$1.8 million
- Maintenance and Repair Needs for the 5th District Court of Appeal Courthouse - \$1.8 million

Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development

Total Budget: \$20.4 billion [\$930 million GR; \$19.4 billion TF]

Department of Commerce

Total: \$2.3 billion [\$361 million GR; \$1.97 billion TF]

- Law Enforcement Recruitment Bonus Program - \$17 million
- Florida Job Growth Grant Funding - \$75 million
- Fully funds Live Local:
 - State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program - \$174 million
 - Affordable Housing (SAIL) Program - \$84 million
- Emergency Revolving Bridge Loan - \$20 million
- VISIT FLORIDA - \$80 million
- Space Florida
 - Financing Program for Aerospace Industry - \$6 million
 - Operations - \$5 million
- Information Technology
 - Cloud Hosting Infrastructure and Services - \$6.6 million
 - Reemployment Assistance Claimant Services Enhancement - \$5 million
 - Reemployment Assistance - Operations and Maintenance - \$11.4 million
 - One-Stop Service Migration - \$500,000
 - Florida Planning, Accounting, and Ledger Management (PALM) Readiness - \$645,900
 - Department-Wide IT needs - \$338,887
- Economic Development Toolkit - \$24 million
- Federal Reemployment Tax Service Contract - \$1.7 million
- Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery Grant Funding (CDBG-DR) - \$396 million
- Community Services Block Grant - \$3 million
- Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Programmatic Funding - \$100 million
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) - \$100 million
- State Small Business Credit Initiative - \$175.2 million
- Housing & Community Development Initiatives - \$29.8 million
- Florida Sports Foundation Additional Funding - \$2 million

Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

Total: \$600 million [TF]

- Additional Equipment for the Florida Highway Patrol - \$1.3 million
- Provide for Increased Costs for Fuel and Maintenance for Motor Vehicles - \$1 million
- Replace Pursuit Vehicles - \$3.3 million
- Purchase of Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW) Mobile - \$782,284
- Credentialing Equipment and Maintenance - \$5.5 million
- Motorist Modernization Project - Phase II - \$13.2 million
- Maintenance and Repair - Neil Kirkman Building, Tallahassee - \$4.6 million

Department of Military Affairs

Total: \$169.5 million [\$104.2 million GR; \$65.3 million TF]

- Florida National Guard Tuition Assistance - \$5.2 million
- Maintenance, Repair, Construction Statewide - \$8.5 million

- Camp Blanding - Level II - \$40.5 million
- Readiness Center Revitalization and Modernization Program - \$5.2 million

Department of State

Total: \$231.8 million [\$207.8 million GR; \$24 million TF]

- Libraries Maintenance of Effort - \$21.5 million
- Libraries Additional Aid - \$2 million
- Cultural and Museum Program Support Grants and Initiatives - \$60.8 million
- Historical Preservation Grants and Initiatives - \$50.6 million
- African American Cultural and Historic Grants - \$4.7 million
- Library Construction Grants - \$5.7 million
- Sunbiz System Modernization - \$3.8 million
- Division of Corporations Call Center Services - \$2.7 million
- Reimbursement to Counties for Special Elections - \$1.5 million
- Advertising Proposed Constitutional Amendments - \$1.6 million
- Mission San Luis Conservation Laboratory - \$7 million
- Restoration of Historical Properties - Lead-based Paint Abatement - \$7.1 million

Department of Transportation

Total: \$15.7 billion [\$138 million GR; \$15.5 billion TF]

- Transportation Work Program - \$13.98 billion
- Information Technology
 - Florida Planning, Accounting, and Ledger Management (PALM) Readiness - \$13.8 million
 - Cybersecurity In-House Staffing Resources - \$321,016
 - Network Communication Recovery \$742,807
 - Storage Area Network Replacement - \$452,000
 - Data Infrastructure Modernization - \$3.2 million
 - Security Risk Management Program - \$607,320
 - Virtual Mobility Data Management - \$384,000
 - Geospatial Roadway Data Strategic Framework - \$552,240
 - Secure Email Gateway - \$890,640
- Increase Operating Costs Department-wide - \$10.9 million
- Building and Grounds Maintenance and Repair - \$1 million
- Transportation Disadvantaged - \$3 million
- Fixed Capital Outlay Projects - \$13.2 million

Division of Emergency Management

Total: \$1.4 billion [\$118.9 million GR; \$1.3 billion TF]

- Non-federally Declared Disaster Response - \$500,000
- Open Federally Declared Disasters
 - Funding to Communities - \$1.02 billion
 - State Operations - \$155 million
- Statewide Emergency Alert and Notification System - \$3.5 million
- State Non-Profit Security Grant Program (CH 2023-180, LOF) - \$10 million

- Specialty Response Teams Equipment and Training Support - \$5 million
- Warehousing Space Needs for Commodity Storage and Operations - \$1.9 million
- Warehouse Procurement - \$5.1 million
- Positions and Salary Issues - \$869,958
- DEM Vehicle Replacement - \$456,860
- Emergency Management Critical Facility Needs - \$15,788,500
- Outside Legal Services Support - \$500,000
- Information Technology
 - Florida Planning, Accounting, and Ledger Management (PALM) Readiness - \$725,000
 - Statewide WebEOC Initiative - \$2.5 million

Agriculture, Environment and General Government

Total Budget: \$9.9 billion [\$2.2 billion GR; \$7.7 billion other TF]

Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Total: \$3.1 billion [\$314.5 million GR; \$276.6 million LATF; \$2.5 billion TF]

- Rural and Family Lands Protection Program - \$100 million
- Wildfire Suppression Equipment/Aircraft - \$12.4 million
- Road/Bridge and Facility Maintenance - \$14 million
- Reforestation Program - \$4 million
- Citrus Canker Eradication Judgments - \$5.5 million
- Citrus Protection and Research - \$33.5 million
- Lake Okeechobee Agriculture Projects - \$10.2 million
- Feeding Programs/Farm Share/Feeding Florida - \$25 million
- Emergency Food Distribution Program - \$33.2 million
- Mosquito Control Program Increase - \$1 million
- Agriculture Education and Promotion Facilities - \$7.6 million
- Conner Complex Construction - \$80 million
- ~~Florida State Fair - \$12 million~~

Department of Citrus

Total: \$33.8 million [\$12.2 million GR; \$21.6 million TF]

- Citrus Marketing - \$4 million
- Citrus Recovery Program - \$2 million

Department of Environmental Protection

Total: \$3.4 billion [\$1 billion GR; \$2.3 billion TF]

- Everglades Restoration and South Florida Water Management District Operations - \$702 million
- Water Quality Improvements - \$1.7 billion
 - Wastewater Grant Program - \$135 million
 - Water Supply Grant Program - \$25 million
 - Indian River Lagoon WQI - \$75 million

- Biscayne Bay Water Quality Improvements - \$20 million
- Caloosahatchee WQI - \$25 million
- Water Projects - \$410.4 million
- C-51 Reservoir - \$100 million
- Water Quality Improvements - Everglades - \$50 million
- Total Maximum Daily Loads - \$25 million
- Non-Point Source Planning Grants - \$5 million
- Alternative Water Supply - \$55 million
- Onsite Sewage Program - \$4.1 million
- Water Quality Improvements - Blue Green Algae Task Force - \$10.8 million
- Innovative Technology Grants for Harmful Algal Blooms - \$10 million
- Harmful Algal Bloom Grants - \$10 million
- Springs Restoration - \$55 million
- Flood and Sea-Level Rise Program - \$125 million
- Florida Forever Programs and Land Acquisition - \$528.6 million
 - Division of State Lands - \$100 million
 - Florida Recreational Development Assistance Grants - \$14.3.million
 - Rattlesnake Key Land Acquisition - \$8 million
 - Chips Hole and Wakulla Springs - \$3.8 million
 - Wekiva-Ocala Greenway - \$2.5 million
 - Grove Land Reservoir - \$400 million (Back of the Bill)
- Florida Keys Area of Critical State Concern - \$20 million
- Lake Apopka Restoration - \$5 million
- Petroleum Tanks Cleanup Program - \$220 million
- Hazardous Waste and Dry Clean Site Cleanup - \$14 million
- Beach Management Funding Assistance - \$50 million
- Water Infrastructure Improvements - \$178.3 million
- Small County Wastewater Treatment Grants - \$8 million
- Land and Water Conservation Grants - \$16.9 million
- Local Parks - \$17.9 million
- State Parks Maintenance and Repairs - \$15.5 million

Department of Financial Services

Total: \$684.7 million [\$131 million GR; \$478.7 million TF]

- Additional Resources Due to Workload Increases - \$9.1 million
- Fixed Capital Outlay and Maintenance Projects - \$7.5 million
- Law Enforcement, Fire Marshal and Disaster Response Training, Vehicles and, Technology Upgrades and Equipment - \$6.4 million
- Increase in Contracted Services, Rent and Expenses - \$5.3 million
- Local Government Fire and Firefighter Services - \$85.5 million
- Hurricane Model Enhancements - \$7 million
- Workers' Compensation Insurance Premiums Reimbursement - \$2 million
- Veteran / First Responder Electroencephalogram Pilot Program - \$10 million
- My Safe Florida Home Condominium Pilot Program - \$30 million
- Fire and Insurance Studies - \$1 million

Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

Total: \$585.3 million [\$138.5 million GR; \$119.4 million LATF; \$327.4 million TF]

- Law Enforcement Vessel & Vehicle Replacement - \$9.4 million
- Motor Vehicle \ Vessel Replacement - \$9.4 million
- Pier Access and Replacement and Renovation - \$8 million
- Wildlife Habitat Restoration Projects - \$8.5 million
- Wildlife Management Area Improvements - \$6.5 million
- Florida Bass Conservation Center - \$0.8 million
- Artificial Reef Program - \$5.6 million

Department of Business and Professional Regulation

Total: \$187.7 million [\$1.9 million GR; \$185.8 million [TF]

- Additional Resources due to Workload Increases - \$0.8 million
- Cybersecurity Support - \$0.3 million; 2 positions

Florida Gaming Control Commission

Total: \$42.8 million [TF]

- ~~Licensing and Enforcement System - \$9.8 million~~
- Gaming Enforcement Staffing - \$1.1 million
- Compulsive and Addictive Gambling Prevention Contract - \$0.8 million

Department of the Lottery

Total: \$234.9 million [TF]

Department of Management Services

Total Budget: \$862.5 million [\$209.5 million GR; \$653.2 million TF]

- Florida Facilities Pool (FFP) Fixed Capital Outlay - \$87.2 million
- Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) Issues - \$15.2 million
- State Utility Payments - \$2 million
- E-Rate Telecommunications - \$3 million
- Emergency 911 Public Safety Answering Points Upgrade - \$12 million

Division of Administrative Hearings

Total Budget: \$39 million [TF]

- Additional ALJ Positions for Citizens Property Insurance Disputes - \$4.9 million

Public Service Commission

Total: \$30.7 million [TF]

Department of Revenue

Total: \$827 million [\$336.2 million GR; \$490.8 million TF]

- Fiscally Constrained Counties - \$72.4 million

Palm Beach County Appropriations

*Projects in red represent PBC priorities; all funding is subject to gubernatorial veto; projects that are vetoed will be struck through

Education

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

FAU Autism Program	\$1,386,508
FAU Cultural & Museum Grants	\$29,126
FAU Max Planck Florida Scientific Fellows Program	\$2,889,101
FAU Temporary Buildings Preservation Planning Grant	\$27,767
FAU University Grants & Aid	\$130,178,912
FAU University Grants & Aid for Nursing Education	\$3,744,706
FAU University Lottery Funds	\$50,809,486

PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE

PBSC Board of Trustees Cultural & Museum Grants	\$73,421
PBSC Florida College System Grants & Aid for Nursing Education	\$1,637,660
PBSC Florida College System Lottery Funds	\$13,200,326
PBSC Florida College System Program Fund	\$65,808,361
PBSC Florida College System Student Success Initiatives	\$1,362,933
PBSC Student Library & Media Technology Center	\$9,762,824

PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOLS K-12

Public Schools Workforce Education Program Funds	\$19,024,135
Roosevelt Elementary School Program Enhancements	\$847,920
West Technical Education Center Adult Education & Workforce Development Training	\$989,342

PRIVATE COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Palm Beach Atlantic University LeMieux Center for Public Policy	\$3,000,000
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OTHER EDUCATION

Alpert Jewish Family Service - Holocaust Education	\$165,000
Autism Therapeutic Wellness Program	\$200,000
Busch Wildlife Sanctuary Environmental Education Center	\$500,000
Catapult! Afterschool Youth Mentoring for Low-Income High school Students	\$500,000
Center for Creative Education	\$1,000,000
Cox Science Center and Aquarium Expansion	\$5,000,000
Roots and Wings: Project UpLift - Elementary Literacy Initiative	\$200,000
School Readiness Services	\$81,295,592
Student Success in Career and Technical Education Fund	\$28,098
T3 - Teach, Touch the Trades Workforce Education	\$358,750
Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program	\$32,239,439

Health and Human Services

CHILD & FAMILY WELFARE

ChildNet - Parent Engagement Program	\$582,000
EJS Project Teen Center	\$250,000
Place of Hope Child Welfare Services	\$1,000,000
TOTAL	\$1,832,000

HEALTH

Let's Move 365 Initiative	\$500,000
Palm Beach County Rape Crisis Center (Butterfly House)	\$282,039
Promise Fund of Florida	\$225,000
TOTAL	\$1,007,039

ELDER AFFAIRS

Aging in Place with Grace, by Rales Jewish Family Services	\$494,100
Alzheimer's Community Care Association	\$1,500,000
Alzheimer's Community Care Critical Support Initiative & Facility Repair/Renovations	\$1,750,000
Boca Raton Jewish Federation Holocaust Survivors Assistance Program	\$92,946
TOTAL	\$3,837,046

SUBSTANCE ABUSE & MENTAL HEALTH

211 Palm Beach & Treasure Coast Building	\$1,000,000
Alpert Jewish Family Service Community Access Life Line Service	\$600,000
Alpert Jewish Family Service Mental Health First Aid	\$1,000,000
Alpert Jewish Family Service Mental Health Services for Persons with Disabilities	\$375,000
HabCenter Boca Raton: Mental Health and STEAM Program	\$250,000
Jewish Family Services Affordable Psychiatry Access	\$1,075,000
The Lord's Place - Mental Health Care for People Experiencing Homelessness	\$300,000
Veterans Suicide Prevention - Fort Freedom	\$560,000
TOTAL	\$5,160,000

FACILITIES

Arc of Palm Beach County - Hurricane Hardening at the South Campus	\$1,000,000
Els for Autism Foundation - Specialized Autism Recreation and Hurricane Shelter	\$1,000,000
JARC Florida - Generators for Generations	\$475,000
Palm Beach County Food Bank - Rural Community Mobile Food Pantry	\$125,000
Resilient Housing for Veterans and Essential Employees	\$700,000
The IDDeal Place - Intellectually & Developmentally Disabled Permanent Housing	\$1,000,000
YMCA of the Palm Beaches Community Center	\$500,000
TOTAL	\$4,800,000

WORKFORCE/VOCATIONAL

Arc of Palm Beach County	\$225,000
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HabCenter Supported Employment Program	\$200,000
JARC Community Works	\$425,000
TOTAL	\$850,000

Criminal Justice and Public Safety

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Oak Street Home II - Female Teen Delinquency Prevention Program	\$350,000
Palm Beach County RESTORE Re-entry Program	\$500,000
Sago Palm Facility	\$142,900
South Bay Correctional Facility	\$275,560
TOTAL	\$1,268,460

PUBLIC SAFETY

Boynton Beach 911 Communications Center Generator Replacement	\$600,000
City of Belle Glade Structure Demolition	\$200,000
Delray Beach Emergency Response Mobile Traffic and First Responder Protection	\$306,000
Riviera Beach Design and Demolition of Fire Station on Singer Island	\$500,000
North Palm Beach Public Safety Resiliency	\$255,000
PBC Fire Rescue Water Vessels for Hazard Mitigation	\$385,000
Palm Beach Zoo Safety and Security Upgrades	\$100,000
Wandering Rescue and Prevention Project	\$250,000
Wellington - Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Substation	\$500,000
Westgate Community Redevelopment Agency Enhanced Street and Safety Initiative	\$250,000
West Palm Beach Fire Department - Contaminant Reduction Program	\$116,000
TOTAL	\$3,462,000

Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Boynton Beach Sky Lake Neighborhood Road Resurfacing	\$1,018,400
Central Palm Beach County Infrastructure Improvements	\$1,000,000
City of Belle Glade Sidewalk Replacement	\$250,000
City of Greenacres - Chickasaw Road Expansion Project	\$250,000
City of Palm Beach Gardens RCA Boulevard Roadway Improvements	\$400,000
City of West Palm Beach Traffic Signal Hardening	\$475,000
County Road 880 Reconstruction	\$2,000,000
Downtown West Palm Beach Signalization Upgrades - Phase I	\$2,750,000
Pine Tree Lane Bridge Replacement Phase II	\$250,000
Riviera Beach - Shore, Palm, Riviera Drive Pavement Restoration	\$350,000
Royal Palm Beach - Park Road North Pedestrian and Parking Upgrades	\$500,000
Spanish River Boulevard - El Rio Trail Underpass	\$500,000
SW 12th Avenue Improvements - South Bay	\$1,000,000
SW 8th Avenue Roadway Restoration - Delray Beach	\$500,000
Western Indiantown Road Improvement	\$2,425,000
TOTAL	\$13,668,400

TRANSPORTATION WORK PROGRAM

Arterial Highway Construction	\$9,710,299
Aviation Development Grants	\$14,996,628
Bridge Construction	\$32,398,721
Construction Inspection Consultants	\$35,422,124
County Transportation Programs	\$7,116,648
Highway Maintenance Contracts	\$14,268,463
Highway Safety Construction Grants	\$3,300,042
Intermodal Development Grants	\$2,500,000
Intrastate Highway Construction	\$425,936,740
Preliminary Engineering Consultants	\$20,453,448
Public Transit Development Grants	\$10,877,150
Rail Development Grants	\$1,350,000
Resurfacing	\$56,518,719
Right-of-Way Land Acquisition	\$15,066,585
Right-of-Way Support	\$3,885,860
Seaport Grants	\$11,827,136
Small County Outreach Program	\$2,045,238
Toll Operation Contracts	\$54,546,207
Traffic Engineering Consultants	\$5,442,568
Transportation Planning Consultants	\$2,000,000
Transportation Planning Grants	\$4,439,405
TOTAL	\$734,101,981

TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Peanut Island Historic Restoration	\$1,000,000
WXEL - TV Replacement of Aging HVAC	\$1,000,000
TOTAL	\$2,000,000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Jupiter Community Web-cams	\$411,245
TOTAL	\$411,245

FLORIDA RECREATION DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (FRDAP)

Donald Ross Beach Access	\$112,500
Field of Dreams Park	\$50,000
Neighborhood Park Acquisition	\$200,000
Osborne Park	\$50,000
Sadie McCray	\$50,000
Southwest Meadows Sanctuary Park	\$200,000
Sports Lighting Retrofit	\$200,000
Tennis Center	\$200,000
Tequesta Park	\$112,500
Veteran's Park	\$50,000
TOTAL	\$1,225,000

CULTURAL & MUSEUM GRANTS

Adolph & Rose Levis Jewish Community Center	\$59,089
Aequalis	\$19,029
Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens	\$51,519
Ballet Palm Beach	\$22,728
Benzaiten Center for Creative Arts	\$42,583
Boca Ballet Theatre Company	\$59,305
Boca Raton Historical Society	\$42,777
Boca Raton Museum of Art	\$70,777
Boca Raton Philharmonic Symphonia	\$44,333
Boynton Cultural Centre	\$36,870
Busch Wildlife Sanctuary	\$70,666
Center for Creative Education	\$70,554
Centre for the Arts at Mizner Park	\$12,004
City of Riviera Beach	\$63,621
Cox Science Center and Aquarium	\$71,666
Creative City Collaborative of Delray Beach	\$68,755
Cultural Council of Palm Beach County	\$72,249
Digital VibeZ, Inc.	\$17,189
Friends of Mounts Botanical Garden	\$67,259
Historical Society of Palm Beach County	\$58,307
Lake Worth Cultural Renaissance Foundation	\$5,335
Lighthouse Art Center	\$70,932
Loggerhead Marine Life Center	\$69,110
Loxahatchee River Historical Society	\$71,332
Lynn Conservatory of Music	\$66,221
Maltz Jupiter Theatre	\$74,147
Memory Trees Corporation	\$11,472
Norton Museum of Art	\$73,888
Palm Beach Dramaworks	\$74,925
Palm Beach Opera	\$75,443
Palm Beach Shakespeare Festival	\$9,437
Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts	\$76,377
Resource Depot	\$12,004
School of the Arts Foundation	\$72,494
Society for Preservation & Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing	\$9,427
Spady Cultural Heritage Museum	\$28,153
Sunfest of Palm Beach County	\$72,954
The Armory Art Center	\$73,332
The Chamber of Music Society of Palm Beach	\$43,679
The Henry Morrison Flagler Museum	\$71,666
The Lake Worth Playhouse	\$61,489
The Masterworks Chorus of the Palm Beaches	\$6,524
The Morikami	\$69,351
The Palm Beach Symphony Society	\$72,721

The Zoological Society of the Palm Beaches	\$72,776
Village of Royal Palm Beach	\$66,577
Village of Wellington	\$63,310
Young Singers of the Palm Beaches	\$43,166
TOTAL	\$2,539,522

CULTURAL FACILITIES

Adolph & Rose Levis Jewish Community Center - Renovations	\$500,000
The Center for Arts and Innovation - Design Phase II	\$1,000,000
TOTAL	\$1,500,000

HISTORIC PRESERVATION GRANTS & HISTORIC PROPERTIES RESTORATION

PBC South Bay Flagler Railroad Cottage Restoration Project	\$50,000
Town of Lake Park Historic Evergreen House Preservation Improvements	\$198,500
Town of Lake Park Town Hall Building Preservation and Compliance Improvements	\$15,281
TOTAL	\$263,781

Agriculture & Natural Resources

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

South Florida AgriCenter and Emergency Shelter at South Florida Fairgrounds	\$1,000,000
TOTAL	\$1,000,000

FISH & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Loggerhead Marine Life Center Improving Water Quality & Coastline Cleanliness	\$250,000
Loggerhead Marine Life Center Water Treatment System for Sick/Injured Sea Turtles	\$250,000
TOTAL	\$500,000

BEACH PROJECTS

Central Boca Raton Beach Nourishment Project	\$61,364
Mid-Town Beach Shore Protection Project	\$958,200
North Boca Raton Shore Protection Project	\$42,450
Phipps Ocean Park Beach Nourishment Project	\$771,200
TOTAL	\$1,833,214

INLET MANAGEMENT

Boca Raton IMP Implementation	\$77,700
Jupiter IMP Implementation	\$736,789
TOTAL	\$814,489

WATER PROJECTS

Boca Raton Drinking Water Transmission & Distribution Improvements	\$750,000
Boca Raton Jeffrey Street Seawall Replacement	\$300,000
Boynton Beach Lake Shore Bridge Canal Project	\$591,066
Delray Beach N Swinton Roadway and Underground Utility Improvements Phase II	\$750,000

Highland Beach Clean Water Project Lift Station Rehabilitation	\$250,000
Highland Beach State Road A1A Gravity Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation	\$875,000
Indian Trail Improvement District M-0 Canal Outfall	\$500,000
Loxahatchee Groves Stormwater System Rehabilitation Phase II	\$750,000
Magnolia Park Water Plant Modernization and Expansion	\$750,000
Ocean Ridge Water Valve Project	\$250,000
PBC Green Cay Phase II	\$500,000
PBC Lake Worth Lagoon Seagrass Restoration Project Phase II	\$270,500
PBC Loxahatchee Slough Habitat Restoration Phase II	\$90,000
Palm Beach Shores - Lake Worth/Singer Island Channel Dredging	\$1,000,000
Palm Springs Village Congress Avenue Sewer Force Main	\$1,000,000
South Bay Stormwater Flood Control and Waterway Management Phase III	\$180,000
Zoological Society of the Palm Beaches Inc. Zoo Wetlands & Ecosystem	\$750,000
TOTAL	\$9,556,566

2024 Legislative Issues

*all bills are subject to approval by the Governor before becoming law, bills in red are PBC priorities

Finance & Tax

HB 7073 – Taxation

This year’s tax package contained an estimated \$508.8 million in relief for Floridians and businesses. The bill creates a temporary corporate income tax credit for businesses that hire persons with disabilities, reduces natural gas fuel tax rates by half for 2026, and increases the annual cap of the Strong Families Tax Credit program to \$40 million.

As usual, several sales tax holidays are designated in the bill. These include a 14-day “Back to School” holiday for clothing and school supplies (July 29, 2024 – August 11, 2024), two 14-day “Disaster Preparedness” holidays (June 1, 2024 – June 14, 2024 & August 24, 2024 – September 6, 2024), a “Freedom Month” tax holiday for recreational items and event tickets (July 1, 2024 – July 31, 2024), and a 7-day “Tool Time” holiday for tools and equipment necessary for specific skilled trades (September 1, 2024 – September 7, 2024).

Regarding property taxes, the bill expands the ad valorem tax benefits for renewable energy source devices to include certain facilities, extends the time in which a homestead owner has to start repairing a damaged homestead to keep their exemption, provides when property owners must pay certain back taxes, and makes various revisions to affordable housing property tax exemptions.

Lastly, insurers are required to deduct 1.75 percent of the total premium charged on residential property policies and on personal or commercial flood policies. The bill also stipulates that insurers must deduct the total premium charged on residential properties in an amount equal to the State Fire Marshal regulatory assessment charged for the policy.

This bill originally contained language that limited all new local discretionary sales surtax ordinances to ten years unless reauthorized by referendum and required tourist development taxes to be renewed by referendum every six years. Palm Beach County and other stakeholders successfully advocated for the removal of this language from HB 7073 before it ultimately passed.

HJR 7017 – Annual Adjustment to Homestead Exemption Value

This joint resolution proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution to be decided by the voters during the 2024 General Election. The proposed amendment would require the \$25,000 of assessed value between \$50,000 and \$75,000 exempt from all ad valorem taxes to be adjusted annually for positive inflation growth based upon the Consumer Price Index. If approved, this would apply to existing and future homestead exemptions and begin on January 1, 2025.

HB 7019 – Exemption of Homesteads

If HJR 7017 is approved by 60 percent of the electors voting on the amendment, this bill will go into effect to implement the change to the Florida Constitution. The bill makes the necessary conforming changes to Florida law to align with the amendment passed and directs the Legislature to appropriate funds to offset reductions in ad valorem tax revenue experienced by fiscally constrained counties.

HB 113 – Tax Collections and Sales

This legislation removes the \$10 processing fee tax collectors were previously allowed to charge for partial payment of current year taxes and clarifies the applicable interest rate and status of a tax certificate following cancellation of a tax deed application. Tax collectors must also revise their annual errors and insolvencies report on tax collections to include properties subject to federal bankruptcies, properties in which the taxes are below the minimum bill, and properties assigned to the list of lands available for taxes.

BILLS OF NOTE THAT DID NOT PASS

HB 609/SB 1144 – Local Business Taxes

Originally filed to repeal local government’s authority to levy any business tax, this legislation was scaled back through the committee process to instead provide a limitation to the amount of revenue a local government could receive from local business taxes. The bills would have limited the amount of revenue a local government could receive to the amount collected in either 2023 or 2024, whichever is greater. If a local government were to receive revenue from business taxes in excess of the limit established, they would be required to reduce tax rates proportionally and issue refunds or credits to taxpayers. The House bill made it through committee and was ready to be heard on the floor; however, the Senate companion bill never received a hearing.

HB 1195/SB 1322 – Millage Rates

These bills would require a two-thirds vote of a local government’s governing body to pass any millage rate increase, except where a higher vote threshold is already required by law. The House bill passed the floor but ultimately died in the Senate.

HJR 7015 – Homestead Exemption Increase

Another joint resolution introduced by the House, this measure would have proposed an amendment to the Florida Constitution increasing the current homestead exemption by \$25,000. The assessed value between \$50,000 and up to \$100,000 would be exempt from all ad valorem taxes other than school district levies. This resolution failed to progress after its first committee hearing in the House, and no Senate companion was filed.

Preemptions & Mandates

SB 280 – Vacation Rentals

SB 280 implements new regulations for vacation rentals, including tax collection by advertising platforms and local licensing requirements. The bill requires advertising platforms or operators listing vacation rentals to collect and remit specified taxes for certain transactions, mandates the display of license and local registration numbers on advertising platforms, and preempts the regulation of these platforms to the state. Local governments are authorized by the bill to adopt local registration programs and require a point of contact who is always available to handle issues and emergencies at the vacation rental. The bill outlines the registration processes and requirements local governments can utilize for their programs and establishes criteria for local governments to fine, suspend, or revoke local licensure. The Florida Department of Business

and Professional Regulation must create and maintain a vacation rental information system to facilitate compliance and provide a mechanism for local governments and platforms to verify vacation rental statuses.

HB 433 – Employment Regulations

This legislation prohibits local governments from:

- Requiring an employer or contractor to meet or provide heat exposure requirements over requirements in state or federal law;
- Giving preference to or considering in a competitive solicitation an employer based on the employer’s heat exposure requirements;
- Seeking to control wages or employment benefits offered by contractors or subcontractors of the local government through preferences or contracting procedures;
- Requiring a minimum wage for certain employees under the terms of a contract; and
- Adopting or enforcing any ordinance, policy, or contract requirement regulating scheduling by a private employer except as expressly authorized by state or federal law or pursuant to federal grant requirements.



A version of this bill contained language that preempted all regulation of terms and conditions of employment to the state, however, that was later amended to limit the preemption to the regulation of employee scheduling for private employers.

HB 705 – Public Works Projects

HB 705 revises the circumstances under which certain governmental actions are prohibited when procuring a “public works project.” A public works project consists of the construction, maintenance, repair, renovation, remodeling, or improvement of certain infrastructure projects owned by any political subdivision. Current law prohibits the state or any political subdivision from imposing specific requirements on contractors for public works projects paid for with any state-appropriated funds. The bill expands this provision to include public works projects paid for with local funds as well.

As a result of this legislation, governmental entities will no longer be able to prescribe a wage rate or specific benefits a contractor or subcontractor on a public works project must provide their employees. It also forbids governments from prohibiting a qualified and licensed contractor or subcontractor from receiving information about or bidding on these projects. However, the bill does maintain the ability for municipalities and counties to apply preference based upon where the business is geographically located if the project is paid solely with local funds.

SB 1628 – Local Government Actions

This bill reduces the exceptions to the requirement that counties and cities produce a “business impact estimate” before passing an ordinance. A local government must generally complete a business impact estimate, which includes an estimate of the direct economic impact of the government action, before passing an ordinance but with certain exceptions. The bill specifies that local governments must now complete a business impact statement before to adopting and implementing a comprehensive plan amendment or land

development regulation amendment other than those amendments initiated by a private party. The bill also provides that a local government holding a referendum on approving a bond issue greater than \$500 million must do so at a general election, as opposed to a special election held for that purpose.

HB 601 – Law Enforcement and Correctional Officers

HB 601 preempts the receipt, processing, and investigation of complaints of misconduct by law enforcement and correctional officers to the state. It also prohibits civilian oversight of law enforcement agencies' investigations of these complaints. The legislation does allow county sheriffs or municipal police departments to establish a civilian oversight board to review the policies and procedures of their office. Still, boards must be composed of between 3-7 members appointed by the sheriff or chief of the department, and one member must be a retired law enforcement officer. The bill also increases the base salary of every sheriff by \$5,000.

SB 674 – United States-produced Iron and Steel in Public Works Projects

A new mandate, this bill requires a governmental entity that contracts for a public works project or purchases materials for a public works project to ensure that any iron or steel product that will be permanently incorporated into the project is produced in the United States. This contract requirement is waived if the government determines any of the following apply:

- The iron or steel products required for the project are not produced in the U.S. in sufficient quantities, are not reasonably available, or are of unsatisfactory quality;
- The use will increase the total cost of the project by more than 20 percent; or
- Compliance with the requirement is not consistent with the public interest.

A governmental entity may allow minimal use of foreign iron or steel materials in the project if they are ancillary to the primary product and the cost of the materials does not exceed .1 percent of the total contract cost or \$2,500, whichever is greater.

SB 1084 – Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Bringing about several modifications, SB 1084 significantly impacts various agriculture, consumer services, and licensing activities under the jurisdiction of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). Notably, the bill preempts the regulation of electric vehicle charging stations to the state. The bill also prohibits the manufacture and sale of cultivated meat, revises the information provided to FDACS on a motor vehicle repair shop registration application, and criminalizes the destroying, harvesting, or selling of saw palmetto berries, among other changes. Furthermore, the legislation reduces the number of trespassing signs required for lands classified as commercial agricultural property and increases criminal penalties for trespassing on such property intending to commit a crime.

HB 165 – Sampling of Beach Waters & Public Bathing Spaces

HB 165 preempts to the state the issuance of health advisories related to the results of bacteriological sampling of public bathing places. Regarding the Department of Health (DOH), the bill requires they adopt and enforce rules to protect people using public bathing places and beach waters. The Department must also issue health advisories if the water quality fails to meet standards and require closure of the locations that fail to meet the water quality standards if deemed necessary. Counties and municipalities must now notify DOH within 24 hours or the next business day, whichever is sooner, of any incident that makes the water quality of these locations in their jurisdiction unsafe. They must also post and maintain health advisory signs around

the affected area. Owners of public boat docks, marinas, and piers must notify the jurisdictional county or municipality of any incident impacting water quality within the same timeframe.

SB 676 – Food Delivery Platforms

An express preemption of the regulation of food delivery platforms, this legislation establishes a statewide regulatory framework for these platforms to operate under. The bill prohibits a food delivery platform from taking and arranging for the delivery or pickup of orders from a food service establishment without express consent, outlines what information must be disclosed to consumers on these platforms, dictates certain agreement requirements, and designates the Department of Business and Professional Regulation as the enforcing body of these new regulations.

SB 1082 – Housing for Legally Verified Agricultural Workers



This bill preempts a local government from inhibiting the construction or installation of housing for legally verified agricultural workers on land classified as agricultural if the housing meets certain criteria related to location and construction. The bill provides that a local ordinance regulating such housing must comply with state and federal regulations for migrant farmworker housing, including rules adopted by the Department of Health and federal regulations under the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection

Act or the H-2A visa program. As the bill establishes maximum requirements for such housing, a local government may validly adopt less restrictive land use regulations. Circumstances requiring the removal or disuse of such housing and recordkeeping requirements for property owners of housing sites are also provided for.

HB 1567 – Qualifications for County Emergency Management Directors

The bill establishes minimum training, experience, and education standards for all county emergency management directors, including the following:

- Fifty hours of training in business or public administration, business or public management, or emergency management or preparedness. A bachelor's degree may be substituted for this training requirement.
- Four years of specified experience in comprehensive emergency management services with direct supervisory responsibility for responding to at least one emergency or disaster. A master's degree in certain fields may be substituted for two years of the required experience but not for the required supervisory experience. Alternatively, certain professional accreditation may substitute for the required experience if the certification remains in good standing until the actual time and experience requirements are met.

- Completion of one hundred and fifty hours of comprehensive emergency management training provided through or approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or its successor, including completion of certain National Incident Management System courses or equivalent FEMA courses through the Emergency Management Institute. A county emergency management director must have completed this training within the ten years preceding the date of initial appointment or reappointment.

The bill provides that a county emergency management director who does not satisfy these training or certification requirements will have until June 30, 2026, to meet the new criteria. All county emergency management directors must have a valid driver license, and if the license is not a Florida driver license, the director must obtain a Florida driver license within 30 days after being appointed.

BILLS OF NOTE THAT DID NOT PASS

HB 57/SB 438 – Term Limits

These bills would have established term limits for county commissioners or required a referendum be placed on the ballot to establish such term limits. The bills changed significantly throughout the process, at one point fluctuating between 8 and 12-year limits. The House bill would have required term limits whereas the Senate bill eventually changed to only require a local referendum on the matter to allow the voters to determine if they supported 8-year term limits.

HB 901/SB 1120 – Display of Flags by Governmental Entities

Bills prohibiting governmental entities from displaying a flag that represents a political viewpoint were also unsuccessful in passing this year. The bills would have banned the display of any flags by a governmental entity representing a politically partisan, racial, sexual orientation, gender, or political ideology viewpoint.

Local Government

HB 103 – Public Records/County & City Attorneys

This bill creates a public records exemption for the personal identifying and location information of current county attorneys, assistant county attorneys, deputy county attorneys, city attorneys, assistant city attorneys, and deputy city attorneys and the spouses and children of such attorneys.

HB 377 – License or Permit to Operate a Vehicle for Hire

Some counties and municipalities, including Palm Beach County, require persons to obtain a permit or license to operate a vehicle for hire within its jurisdiction. HB 377 prohibits a local government from requiring a person to obtain an additional license or permit to operate a vehicle for hire in their jurisdiction if the person holds a valid, active license or permit issued by another local government and has not had that license or permit suspended or revoked within the past five years. A local government may not subject a vehicle for hire operator with a valid license or permit in another jurisdiction to any additional fees for operating in their jurisdiction. Palm Beach County and others successfully advocated for the exemption of airports, seaports, and non-emergency medical transport vehicles from these provisions.

HB 303 – Rabies Vaccinations

This bill allows an employee, agent, or contractor of a county or municipal animal control authority or sheriff to administer rabies vaccinations to impounded dogs, cats, and ferrets under the indirect supervision of a veterinarian. “Indirect supervision” means the supervising vet must be available for consultation through telecommunications but is not required to be physically present during the consultation.

HB 849 – Veterinary Practices

Titled the “Providing Equity in Telehealth Services (PETS) Act,” HB 849 allows veterinarians to practice telehealth in Florida to perform an initial patient evaluation, diagnose medical issues in pets, and prescribe specific treatments and medications authorized by the bill.

HB 273 – Public Records/Animal Foster & Adoption

The records of a public animal shelter, humane organization, or animal control agency, like the records of other public agencies in the state, are open to the public to inspect or copy unless those records have been made exempt from public record requirements. These records may include information such as the identifying information of a person who adopts or fosters an animal from the facility. Many public shelter animals come from



criminal animal cruelty or neglect cases, and there are instances where an offender will make a public records request for a new owner’s information because they would like to retrieve their pet unlawfully. The bill creates a public record exemption for the personal identifying information of a person who fosters, adopts, or otherwise receives legal custody of an animal from a shelter or animal control agency operated by a humane society, a county, municipality, or other incorporated political subdivision.

SB 770 – Improvements to Real Property

The bill substantially amends a program authorized in current law, commonly known as the “Property Assessed Clean Energy” or “PACE” program, which allows property owners to make qualifying improvements to real property and finance the cost through annual non-ad valorem tax assessments. SB 770 expands qualifying improvements under the PACE program to include waste systems, flood and water damage mitigation, and resiliency improvements. Substantial consumer protections were added regarding solicitation, advertising, and unenforceable financing agreements, and the bill requires contractor registration and oversight by program administrators. A key clarification was included in the bill to provide that a program administrator may only offer a program within the jurisdiction of a county or municipality if that county or city has authorized program’s administration by ordinance or resolution.

HB 267 – Building Regulations

This bill shortens several timeframes in statute regarding local government’s processing and approval of building permits. The bill requires a local government to determine if a building permit application is complete within five business days of receiving the application, previously set at ten days. A local government must approve or deny a complete and sufficient permit within thirty business days for structures less than 7,500 square feet and sixty days for larger structures, commercial buildings, certain plats, and multifamily residential not exceeding fifty units, previously set at one hundred and twenty days. If a permit is under an

already approved master plan permit dependent on the local program, it must be approved or denied within 12 business days. Local governments are also required to create auditing standards for private providers before performing an audit of a private provider.

SB 812 – Expedited Approval of Residential Building Permits

The bill requires certain local governments to create a program to expedite the issuance of residential building permits based on a preliminary plat and to issue the number or percentage of permits requested by an applicant if certain conditions are met. Local governments required to establish this expedited program are counties with 75,000 residents or more (except for Monroe County) and municipalities with 10,000 residents or more and 25 acres or more of contiguous land designated for agricultural or residential purposes.

By October 1, 2024, applicable local governments must establish the program and allow applicants to request up to 50 percent of the permits for a residential subdivision or planned community. By December 31, 2027, applicable local governments must update their program to allow an applicant to request up to 75 percent of the development permits. The bill states that an applicant for a building permit may not obtain a temporary or final certificate of occupancy for each residential structure or building until the final plat is approved by the governing body and recorded. Additionally, an applicant may contract to sell, but may not transfer ownership of, a residential structure or building located in the preliminary plat before the local government approves the final plat. The bill authorizes an applicant to use a private provider to expedite the application process for building permits after a preliminary plat is approved and requires local governments to establish a registry of qualified contractors whom the local government can use for assistance in processing and expediting the review of applications for preliminary plats.

SB 1142 – Occupational Licensing



The bill requires the Florida Construction Industry Licensing Board (CILB) to issue licenses to registered contractors in good standing who were registered with a local jurisdiction during the years 2021, 2022, or 2023 and can provide evidence that they were registered and are in compliance with insurance and financial responsibility requirements. The bill also extends the expiration of all local licensing of occupations from July 1, 2024 to July 1, 2025.

HB 7013 – Special Districts

Building upon legislation from previous legislative sessions, HB 7013 revises several provisions regarding special districts. The bill establishes a 12-year term limit for popularly elected members of governing bodies of most types of special districts, requires special districts to adopt goals and performance measures, and provides additional criteria for a special district to become inactive. Concerning mosquito control districts, it reduces the maximum ad valorem millage rate a mosquito control district can levy to 1 mill and requires these districts to meet certain conditions to participate in state programs. Notably, the bill repeals the statute that allows special districts to convert to a municipality without legislative approval and prohibits the creation of new safe neighborhood districts.

HB 149 – Continuing Contracts

A “continuing contract” is a contract for professional services entered into in accordance with the Consultants’ Competitive Negotiation Act between a government agency and a firm whereby the firm provides professional services to the agency for several projects. The bill increases the maximum limit for continuing contracts from an estimated per-project construction cost of \$4 million to \$7.5 million. It also directs the Department of Management Services to annually adjust the maximum allowed amount by using the change in the Consumer Price Index beginning July 1, 2025. These provisions do not apply to contracts procured by the Florida Department of Transportation subject to the federal Buy America requirements.

HB 151 – Florida Retirement System

As initially filed, this legislation included a provision for a three percent annual cost of living adjustment to all Florida Retirement System (FRS) Pension Plan members who retirement date was before July 1, 2011. During budget negotiations, the scope of this bill changed significantly and this language was removed. In its final form, HB 151 closes the FRS Preservation of Benefits Plan to new members effective July 1, 2026. It also allows FRS retirees to receive both compensation from an employer that participates in the FRS and retirement benefits provided the retiree is not reemployed within the first six months immediately following the date of retirement. Additionally, employer contribution rates were adjusted slightly upward.

HB 473 – Cybersecurity Incident Liability

This bill states a local government that substantially complies with the cybersecurity training standards and notification protocols under current law is not liable in connection with a cybersecurity incident. The bill also provides that a covered entity or third-party agent that acquires, maintains, stores, processes, or uses personal information is not liable for a cybersecurity incident if the covered entity or third-party agent substantially complies with notice protocols as provided in current law and has also adopted a cybersecurity program.

SB 7014 – Ethics

This legislation makes changes to the Florida Code of Ethics and establishes new timeframes and requirements for the Florida Commission on Ethics. The bill also requires ethics complaints to be based on personal knowledge or information rather than hearsay, adds candidates for public office to the categories of persons authorized to recover costs and attorney fees for defending against a maliciously filed ethics complaint, and makes several requirements of local governments with local ethics laws and enforcement procedures. Local governments with local ethics laws now must require a complaint be written and signed under oath or affirmation, require the complaint to be based on personal knowledge, prohibit self-initiation of complaints by a local government entity that is directly in charge of enforcing local ethics laws, and authorize recovery of costs and attorneys’ fees incurred in defending against a maliciously filed complaint.

HB 1451 – Identification Documents

Current law prohibits counties and municipalities from providing funds to any person, entity, or organization to issue an identification card or document to a person who does not provide proof of lawful presence in the United States. This bill now prohibits a county or a municipality from accepting as identification any identification card or document issued by any person, entity, or organization that knowingly issues identification cards or documents to individuals who are not lawfully present in the United States. This prohibition does not extend to any documentation issued by or on behalf of the Federal Government.

BILLS OF NOTE THAT DID NOT PASS

HB 569/SB 472 – Suits Against the Government

Substantially changing several times throughout session, these bills and efforts to increase sovereign immunity caps for damages against state and local entities did not pass again this year. If they had passed as filed, the bills would have increased the \$200,000 per person and \$300,000 per incident caps to \$400,000 to \$600,000, respectively. Throughout the committee process, the House and Senate bills differed significantly and when controversial new provisions relating to litigation financing were added to the bill it was not advanced further.

Health & Human Services

HB 1365 – Unauthorized Public Camping and Public Sleeping

This legislation prohibits a county or municipality from allowing a person to regularly sleep or camp without a permit on any public property under the county or the municipality’s jurisdiction.

A county may designate, by majority vote, a property owned by the county or a municipality for public sleeping; however, the site must be certified by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). If the county designates a public sleeping and camping site on property owned by a city, the city’s governing board must approve the location by a majority vote. To receive a site certification from DCF, the county must submit specific documentation to the Department. Once certified, the county must maintain minimum standards and procedures regarding safety, sanitation, access to mental health and substance abuse services, and the prohibition of illegal substance and alcohol use.

The bill authorizes DCF to inspect such designated property at any time and to recommend closure of designated property if requirements for maintaining the property are not being met. Lastly, the bill establishes a civil cause of action allowing a resident of the county, the owner of a business located in the county, or the Attorney General to bring a civil action to enjoin the county or municipality for violations of the law.

HB 1065 – Substance Abuse Treatment

A product of the Palm Beach County State Attorney’s Addiction Recovery Task Force, this bill establishes multiple levels of care for certified recovery residences and additional standards corresponding to the new levels of care. HB 1065 also prohibits any recovery residence from denying an individual access solely because they have been prescribed medication to assist with treatment and preempts local governments from regulating the length or frequency of stay of individuals in recovery residences. Lastly, the bill amends certain requirements of recovery residence administrators.



SB 7016 – Health Care

Part of Senate President Passidomo’s “Live Healthy” Initiative, the bill revises or creates numerous provisions of Florida law relating to the state’s health care workforce, health care services, health care practitioner licensure and regulation, health care facility licensure and regulation, Medicaid, and health-care-related education programs. Specifically, the bill revises the Dental Student Loan Repayment Program (DSLRL

Program), the Florida Reimbursement Assistance for Medical Education (FRAME) Program, the Telehealth Minority Maternity Care Program, the Statewide Medicaid Residency Program (SMRP), and the Access to Health Care Act.

The bill also creates the Health Care Screening and Services Grant Program; an advanced birth center designation; the Training, Education, and Clinicals in Health (TEACH) Funding Program; emergency department diversion requirements for hospitals and Medicaid managed care plans; a requirement for the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to produce an annual report entitled “Analysis of Potentially Preventable Health Care Events of Florida Medicaid Enrollees;” a requirement for the AHCA to seek federal approval to implement an acute hospital care at home program in Florida Medicaid; limited licenses for graduate assistant physicians; and temporary certificates for physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses to practice in areas of critical need.

To implement the comprehensive changes made by SB 7016, \$327.4 million in recurring funds, \$3 million in nonrecurring general revenue, and \$386.7 million from trust funds are appropriated.

SB 7018 – Health Care Innovation

Also included in the “Live Healthy” Initiative, SB 7018 intends to harness the innovation and creativity of entrepreneurs and businesses, in collaboration with the state’s health care system and stakeholders, to lead the discussion on innovations that will address challenges in the health care system and to transform the delivery and strengthen the quality of health care in Florida.

The bill creates the Health Care Innovation Council, a 15-member council within the Department of Health (DOH), to facilitate public meetings across the state to lead discussions with innovators, developers, and implementers of technologies, workforce pathways, service delivery models or other solutions. Based on the public input and information gathered at public meetings, the bill requires the council to create best practice recommendations and focus areas for the advancement of the delivery of health care in Florida.

Similar to SB 7016, this legislation appropriates significant nonrecurring (\$50.25 million) and recurring funds (\$51 million) to implement these changes.

Transportation & Economic Development

HB 49 – Employment & Curfew of Minors

Florida’s Child Labor Law contains protections for 16 and 17-year-olds, including restrictions on what times during a day they may work, how many hours in a week they may work, and what jobs or occupations they may perform. The bill makes several changes to the hours and timeframes a minor can work by providing:

- Minors 16 and 17 years old may only work between 6:30 am and 11 pm and may not work more than 8 hours in one day when school is scheduled for the next day;
- Minors 16 to 17 years of age may work more than 30 hours per week when the minor’s guardian or school superintendent waives the limitation;

- Minors 16 and 17 who work more than 8 hours in a day may not work more than 4 continuous hours without a 30-minute meal period;
- Minors 15 years or younger may not work more than 6 consecutive days in a week or 4 continuous hours without a 30-minute meal period; and
- Exceptions to the work restrictions outlined above in certain circumstances, such as if the minor is performing domestic service in private homes or is employed by their parents.

HB 141 – Economic Development

Eliminating the match and demonstrated need requirements relating to the Regional Rural Development Grants Program, this legislation makes it easier for regional development organizations operating in rural areas to qualify for critical state resources to help attract new businesses.

SB 328 – Affordable Housing

After receiving feedback from various stakeholders regarding the implementation of the Live Local Act (SB 102) passed last session, the Legislature introduced SB 328 to make several changes. The bill amends the land use and zoning provisions for affordable multifamily rental developments to:

- Preempt a local government’s floor area ratio for qualifying developments;
- Specify that a local government must reduce parking requirements for qualifying developments by at least 20 percent if the development is located within one-half mile of certain transportation facilities and has available parking within 600 feet;
- Modify the building height entitlement to address situations where a qualifying development is adjacent to single-family parcels;
- Prohibit qualifying developments within one-quarter mile of a military installation from being approved administratively;
- Exempt certain airport-impacted areas from the zoning and land use entitlements;
- Make clarifying changes regarding the density, height, and floor area ratio entitlements for qualifying developments;
- Require qualifying developments be treated as a conforming use;
- Require local governments to publish procedures and expectations for the administrative approval of qualifying developments;
- Clarify that only the affordable units in a qualifying development must be rental units;
- Impose unique qualifiers for developments within a transit-oriented development or area.

The bill also amends the ad valorem tax exemptions established to incentivize the development of multifamily rental units for individuals and families at specified household income levels and appropriates \$100 million for the Florida Hometown Hero Program.

HB 479 – Alternative Mobility Funding Systems

Florida counties and cities publicly stood on opposite sides of the debate around HB 479 when the bill was initially filed; however, the counties successfully negotiated an amendment with the bill’s proponents to address many of their concerns. This legislation in its final form defines the terms “mobility fee” and “mobility plan” and prohibits a developer from being charged twice for the same transportation impacts. The bill requires cities and counties that charge developers a fee for transportation capacity impacts to enter into interlocal agreements to coordinate the mitigation of their respective impacts, provides criteria for the

agreements, and establishes an alternative process to follow if local governments fail to enter into such agreements by October 1, 2025. Additionally, local governments adopting and collecting impact fees must base impact fee calculations on a study using the most recent and localized data available within 4 years of the current fee update. If the impact fee increases, the local government must adopt the new study within 12 months of initiation.

HB 1301 – Department of Transportation



This legislation revises several aspects of the Florida Department of Transportation’s operations. Notable changes include a \$15 million appropriation for the next five fiscal years to support the Department’s Intermodal Logistics Center Infrastructure Support Program, an increase from 3 to 10 years the time that a prepaid toll account can remain dormant before it becomes unclaimed, and certain prioritization of funding for arterial highway projects.

Palm Beach County successfully incorporated language in the bill that creates a funding mechanism within the Small County Outreach Program that would allow local governments located in the EAA to apply for funding to reconstruct critical farm-to-market roads used to transport agricultural products to distribution centers. This funding source will be critical in assisting with the reconstruction of County Road 880.

Other aspects of the bill regarding local government include new requirements when proposing to repurpose existing traffic lanes, new voting and public meeting obligations for lane elimination proposals, and public meeting requirements for any action of eminent domain for acquiring public transit facilities carried out by a public transit provider.

Beginning November 1, 2024, a public transit provider must annually certify during a publicly noticed meeting that the budgeted and general administrative costs are not greater than 20 percent above the annual state average for its respective tier and disclose certain salary information of executive level management. If a public transit provider has a cumulative year over year increase of 5 percent or more in general administrative costs, they must be reviewed and approved by the department before approval by the public transportation provider’s governing board. Lastly, the bill prohibits a public transit provider from using Department funds for marketing or advertising activities on wraps, paint, or tinting unless the display the provider’s logo, the seal of the jurisdictional government entity, or a state agency public service announcement.

SB 1380 – Transportation Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Transportation Disadvantaged

This legislation increases the membership of the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) and revises the commission’s membership. The CTD is required to establish a model system for reporting and investigating adverse incidents during the provision of paratransit service to persons with disabilities and local governments or transportation service providers are required to submit quarterly reports of adverse incidents to the CTD. Under the bill, all investigations of adverse incidents must commence within 48 hours of receiving the report.

Additionally, the bill enacts new requirements of contracts with providers of paratransit services. It directs the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to ensure grants and agreements between the Department and paratransit providers contain performance requirements and penalties for continued violations, minimum liability insurance requirements, and a complaint and grievance process for paratransit users. FDOT must also issue a comprehensive report on transportation disadvantaged services and the CTD by January 1, 2025.

SB 1680 – Advanced Technology

This bill establishes the Government Technology Modernization Council within the Department of Management Services to advise the Legislature on new technologies, artificial intelligence, and other related issues. The bill requires council members to meet at least quarterly and to perform several duties, including preparing and submitting an annual report to the Governor and Legislature addressing the modernization of government technology. This legislation also creates a new criminal statute, making it a crime to possess, control, intentionally view, or create generated child pornography.

SB 1420 – Department of Commerce

Amending several provisions impacting the Department of Commerce, this bill also includes language that specifies a citizen-led county charter amendment that is not required to be approved by the board of county commissioners but which preempts certain land development decisions is prohibited unless expressly authorized in the charter. Regarding comprehensive plan amendments, the bill states amendments are deemed to be withdrawn if a local government doesn't hold a second public hearing and adopt a comprehensive plan amendment within 180 days after comments are provided by the Department or if the local government fails to transmit the amendment to the Department within 10 working days after the final adoption hearing.

BILLS OF NOTE THAT DID NOT PASS

SB 7076 – Transportation Network Companies

This bill would have prohibited an airport or seaport from charging a transportation network company (TNC) a pickup fee for a prearranged ride requested within 60 minutes before the time the rider enters the TNC vehicle that is greater than the lowest pickup fee charged to a taxicab company. The bill did not have a House companion, and therefore, it was not considered on the Senate floor.

HB 107 – Impact of Electric Vehicles & Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles on State Revenues and State Trust Funds

In order to understand the impact the proliferation of hybrid and electric vehicles (EVs) will have on fuel tax revenues, the bill would have directed the Office of Economic & Demographic Research to produce a report. The report would have had to estimate the long-term impact on the State Transportation Trust Fund, the impact on sales tax and gross receipts tax revenues expected to result from the adoption of these vehicles and the percentage of users that utilize residential charging stations rather than commercial stations. The bill would require the Revenue Estimating Conference to estimate the impact of sales tax levied on the sale of electricity used to charge EVs for the next three fiscal years. Beginning July 2024, the Department of Revenue would be directed to distribute one-twelfth of the amount estimated by the REC for that fiscal year to the

State Transportation Trust Fund. The bill cleared all committees of reference but was not considered on the floor.

Criminal & Civil Justice

HB 275 – Offenses Involving Critical Infrastructure

The bill creates new criminal offenses involving critical infrastructure. This term includes an electric power facility, natural gas facility, water intake structure, water treatment facility, wastewater plant, communication facility, military base, dam, or mining facility. Knowingly and intentionally tampering with critical infrastructure that damages, interrupts, or impairs the function of critical infrastructure is punishable as a second-degree felony. Trespassing on critical infrastructure when notice is given against entering or remaining is a third-degree felony under the bill. Lastly, tampering with or accessing a computer, computer system, computer network, or electronic device owned, operated, or used by a critical infrastructure entity without authorization is considered a third-degree felony.

HB 7067 – Pretrial Detention Hearings

HB 7067 amends current law to authorize a court to base an order of pretrial detention solely on hearsay if a defendant was arrested for a dangerous crime that is a capital felony, life felony, or first-degree felony, and a pretrial detention hearing is mandatory. As such, the bill aligns the evidentiary standard in mandatory pretrial detention hearings with the evidentiary standard for pretrial detention under the Florida Constitution and Rule 3.131 and ensures that victims and other witnesses are not required to appear in person at such mandatory pretrial detention hearings. The bill changes the evidentiary requirements for specified pretrial detention hearings but does not affect the requirement to hold such a hearing, the standard of proof at such a hearing, or the time frame in which the hearing must be conducted.

HB 117 – Disclosure of Grand Jury Testimony

Narrowly tailored, this bill allows a court to authorize the disclosure of grand jury testimony to further justice when disclosure furthers a public interest, and the disclosure is requested by the media or an interested person, regardless of whether the purpose of the disclosure is for use in a criminal or civil case. Additionally, the subject of the grand jury inquiry must be deceased, the grand jury inquiry must be related to criminal or sexual activity between the subject of the investigation and a person who was a minor at the time of the alleged criminal or sexual activity, the testimony must be previously disclosed by a court order, and the state attorney must be provided notice of the request. These very particular circumstances apply only to the grand jury testimony in the 2006 case against Jeffrey Epstein.

SB 1036 – Reclassification of Criminal Penalties

This legislation intensifies penalties for felonies committed by individuals with certain prior convictions and for offenses benefiting transnational crime organizations. It reclassifies felony penalties for individuals previously convicted of crimes related to the reentry of removed aliens, elevating the degree of felony charges. The bill also authorizes penalty reclassification for misdemeanors and felonies committed to benefit, promote, or further the interests of a transnational crime organization, enhancing the severity of charges to the next highest degree.

HB 1589 – Driving Without a Valid Driver License

This legislation raises penalties for driving without a valid license and mandates a minimum jail sentence for repeat offenders. Under the bill, a second-degree misdemeanor is committed upon a first conviction, a first-degree misdemeanor is committed upon a second conviction, and a first-degree misdemeanor and mandatory ten days in jail must be served for a third or subsequent conviction. It establishes that individuals cannot have more than one valid driver license at any time and sets penalties for false affidavits concerning the possession of driver licenses.

Specific conditions are listed in the bill regarding when a driver’s license can be canceled due to the person not completing a substance abuse education course or for failing to show proof of financial responsibility. However, a case can be dismissed if a person produces a valid driver’s license before or during a court appearance. The bill also prohibits issuance of a commercial driver’s license to non-residents of the state and outlines penalties for violations.

Public Safety

SB 556 – Protection of Specified Adults

To protect Florida’s vulnerable adults from fraud, this bill allows financial institutions to delay disbursements or transactions of funds from an account of a vulnerable adult under certain conditions. If a financial institution believes that financial exploitation is occurring or has occurred to a vulnerable adult, the bill allows them to delay a transaction and initiate an internal review of the facts and circumstances that led the employee to reasonably believe exploitation is occurring. No later than three business days after the date the delay was first placed, the financial institution is required to provide written notice to all parties on the account. The delay expires in 15 business days but may be extended for up to an additional 30 days. Financial institutions are tasked with developing policies and procedures for how to proceed with reviewing and, if applicable, reporting the exploitation to supervisory personnel.

HB 3 – Online Access to Materials Harmful to Minors



The impact of social media on children’s mental health has become an emerging concern across the nation. This bill requires social media platforms to prohibit minors under 16 from holding an account with or accessing the material on social media sites. Minors who are 14 or 15 years of age may maintain an account on these social media sites with parental consent. The bill also requires entities that knowingly publish materials that are harmful to minors, such as pornography, to perform age verification to prevent minors under the age of 18 from accessing the website.

HB 1029 – My Safe Florida Condominium Pilot Program

Expanding upon the My Safe Florida Home Program, this legislation creates the My Safe Florida Condominium Pilot Program with the intent that the program provide licensed inspectors to perform

inspections for eligible associations and to provide grants to associations who qualify. The grants are matched at \$2 for every \$1 provided by the association and are limited to 50 percent of the project cost for a maximum of \$175,000 per association.

HB 7063 – Anti-Human Trafficking

The bill extends the repeal date of the direct-support organization for the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking, updates the phone number utilized for reporting human trafficking, and requires nongovernmental entities entering into contracts with a government to sign an attestation affirming the entity does not use coerced labor or services. HB 7063 also prohibits anyone under 21 from performing at or being employed by an adult entertainment establishment.

BILLS OF NOTE THAT DID NOT PASS

HB 259/SB 270 – Discharging a Firearm in Residential Areas

These bills would have established criminal penalties for individuals who recreationally discharge a firearm in residential areas when the bullet leaves the boundaries of the property it was fired from. The Senate bill passed through one committee of reference and the House bill was never considered.

HB 873/SB 1156 – Dangerous Dogs

Named the “Pam Rock Act,” these bills would have required owners who know their dog to have dangerous propensities to keep them securely confined in a proper enclosure and required dogs deemed “dangerous” to be spayed or neutered. The bills also required dangerous dog owners to obtain liability insurance, required local governments to hold a dog during a dangerous dog investigation in certain circumstances, and raised the maximum fine for violations of the law to \$1,000 from \$500. Under the provisions of the legislation, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services would be required to create a statewide Dangerous Dog registry and require local animal control authorities to provide certain information for inclusion in the database.

Education

SB 7002 – Deregulation of Public Schools

This legislation is one of two bills in a legislative package supported by Senate President Passidomo focused on public school deregulation.

A few of the notable changes made by the bill include the following:

- Providing additional funds that can be used for school districts to provide financial incentives to bus drivers. Specifically, districts would be allowed to use fines collected from individuals cited for passing a stopped school bus to compensate bus drivers.
- For districts who are out of compliance with class size laws, removing the requirement for school districts to develop a plan listing the specific actions they will take to get into compliance.
- Allowing school districts to decide if it is necessary to make up days lost to hurricanes or other emergencies.

- Reducing certain financial reporting requirements.
- Providing flexibility for school boards to satisfy statutory duties regarding public notices, levying millage, and adopting budgets.
- Adding discretion for local emergency management plans to determine requirements related to staffing emergency shelter facilities instead of requiring the district school board to staff the facilities.

SB 7004 – Assessment and Accountability Deregulation

Furthering the goal of deregulating public education in Florida, SB 7004 makes several significant changes to the existing requirements of school districts and the State Board of Education (SBE). Some of these changes include:

- Flexibility for district school boards to determine the adequate number of instructional materials in each classroom.
- Providing school districts with additional time to review state-adopted instructional materials.
- Allowing a school district to meet the requirement to offer a summer Voluntary Prekindergarten program by contracting with private VPK providers.
- Removing the requirement for a school district to offer a virtual instruction option.
- Repealing reporting relating to participation in fine arts courses, a comparison of charter technical career centers to public technical centers, student achievement for middle grades students in career and professional academies and in career courses, student performance in academically high-performing school districts, single-gender programs, the Competency-based Education Pilot Program, the committee of practitioners under the No Child Left Behind Act, and duplicative community assessment and accountability feedback reports.
- Removing the requirement for the SBE to establish the tuition and out-of-state fees for developmental education and associate degree credit.

Agriculture & Natural Resources

SB 1638 – Funding for Environmental Resource Management

Representing a significant investment in Florida’s environmental resources, SB 1638 provides for 96 percent of revenues from the 2021 Seminole Gaming Compact to be deposited in the Indian Gaming Revenue Trust Fund to acquire and manage conservation lands, invest in resiliency efforts, and promote clean water infrastructure. A portion of these revenues up to \$100 million will support the Florida wildlife corridor, a portion up to \$100 million will be used for the management of uplands and removal of invasive species, and another portion up to \$100 million will be deposited in the Resilient Florida Trust Fund.

This legislation also appropriates money to various trust funds for land acquisition, land management, invasive species management, water quality projects, resiliency projects, and \$150 million to the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). The bill directs SFWMD to contract with the Water School at Florida Gulf Coast University to conduct a study of the health and ecosystem of Lake Okeechobee.

SB 7040 – Ratification of the Department of Environmental Protection’s Rules Relating to Stormwater

This bill ratified the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) revisions to stormwater rules with several changes, including:

- Extending the timeframe for a permit application to be deemed complete to qualify for an exemption from 12 months to 18 months after the effective date of the revised rules;
- Providing that entities implementing stormwater best management practices also regulated under different provisions of law are not subject to duplicate inspections for the same practices;
- Allowing alternative treatment standards for redevelopment projects in areas with impaired waters;
- Providing that a stormwater management system is presumed not to violate state water quality standards if an applicant demonstrates its designs and plans meet performance standards and has met other requirements under the revised rules; and
- Allowing an applicant to demonstrate compliance with the rule's performance standards by providing reasonable assurance through modeling, calculations, and supporting documentation that satisfies the provisions of the revised rules.

Additionally, the legislation clarifies that nothing in the revised rules eliminates any grandfather provisions currently in existence and the bill exempts additional projects meeting specific requirements.

BILLS THAT DID NOT PASS

HB 1079/SB 298 - Coastal Construction & Assessments

An expansion of the Resilient Florida Grant Program, these bills would have allowed the Department of Environmental Protection to provide grants to coastal counties for saltwater intrusion vulnerability assessments. Of concern to Palm Beach County, the bill would have repealed locally established coastal construction zoning and building codes adopted in lieu of the state-established CCCL, which would have negatively affected the Palm Beach County Sea Turtle Protection and Sand Preservation ordinance. Upon hearing concerns from stakeholders, the Senate amended the problematic language out before passing the bill and sending it to the House in messages. SB 298 was never taken up for consideration by the full House.



HB 163/SB 608 - Dredging & Beach Restoration Projects

These bills would have required the Department of Environmental Protection to mandate that, as a condition of a permit being issued, adverse impact analyses for dredging and beach restoration projects be done by independent contractors who have not conducted work for the local government within the past year. The contractor performing the analysis would then be prohibited from working for the local government for up to one year after the analysis is complete. Both the Senate and House bills did not receive a hearing in committee.