

Legislative Update

Week 8 Recap - February 28-March 4



Budget Conference Underway - After leadership agreed on allocations, the House and Senate began negotiations on their respective \$105.3 billion and \$108.6 billion spending plans this week. See this Florida TaxWatch [Budget Watch](#) comparing the two budgets. The subcommittees went as far as they could before the Thursday deadline and all unresolved issues have now been bumped to the House and Senate budget chairs. Some major issues have been agreed to, such as the Senate's proposals to increase the minimum wage to \$15/hour for contracted healthcare providers and \$850 million to build a new prison and an inmate hospital. However significant differences remain for the chairs to work out. [Here are some of those differences \(updated\)](#).

Legislation - This week, several bills supported by Florida TaxWatch research passed one chamber.

- **SB 434 – VISIT FLORIDA.** The Senate wants to extend this important tool for eight years, the House wants only five. *See Economic Development section below.*
- **HB 7053 - Sea Level Rise and Resiliency.** Improves the Resilient Florida Grant Program created last year, creates a process to prioritize projects for funding, and requires a resiliency plan for the State Highway System. *See Environment section below.*
- **SB 752 - Education and Employment Incentives for Probationers.** Incentivizes educational and employment achievement by awarding a reduction in the term of supervision for a probationer or offender in community control. *See Smart Justice/Public Safety section below.*
- **SB 1800/1802 - Broadband Pole Replacement Program.** Expands broadband internet access to underserved areas. *See Economic Development section below.*
- **HB 7071 – House Tax Package.** A \$325 million plus tax relief plan that focuses on non-recurring tax relief for individual taxpayers, such as sales tax holidays and temporary sales tax exemptions. [FTW Summary](#). *See Taxes section below.*
- **HB 741 - Net Metering.** As the rooftop solar industry grows, this bill seeks to avoid utility customers without solar from subsidizing those that do. A 20-year grandfather clause has been added. *See Economic Development section below.*
- **HB 1054 - Dorothy Hukill Financial Literacy Act** - Adds one-half credit of instruction in personal financial literacy and money management to high school graduation requirements. *See Education section below.*

Some bills that Florida TaxWatch has raised some concerns with also passed one chamber this week.

- **HB 9 - Data Privacy.** With the laudable goal of protecting Floridians' on-line personal information, the bill as written would create huge compliance, operational, and potential private litigation costs for Florida businesses. *See Economic Development section below.*

- **HB 7049 - Legal Notices.** Allows local governments to post meeting and other legal notices on their website in lieu of publishing in a newspaper. *See Government Efficiency and Accountability section below.*
- **SB 1382 - Tax Administration** - The Department of Revenue's legislative package to strengthen its audit process. After amendments reflecting input from TaxWatch and others, the bill is more balanced. Unfortunately, it does not include a provision in the House version (HB 1041) creating a workgroup to examine the audit process and make recommendations for improvement. *See Taxes section below.*