

2022 Legislative Session Update

Week 7 - February 21-25



Two Weeks Left, Time is Running Out for Many Bills

Budget - The House and Senate will soon be going into conference negotiations on their respective \$105.3 billion and \$108.6 billion spending plans. The budget conference has been known to start the next to last weekend of session, but lawmakers are not ready yet. The leaders have not yet decided on allocations for each budget silo. There are some significant differences between the two budgets. Florida TaxWatch released a *Budget Watch* this week highlighting those differences.

Florida TaxWatch submitted written [testimony](#) on several bills that advanced this week:

- **Consumer Data Privacy** - HB 9 attempts to deal with the real problem of protecting people's private data. [Our updated analysis](#), released this week, found that while it may provide some level of privacy, it would expose Florida employers to significant costs and economic risks, with initial compliance costs between \$732,000 and \$2.5 million for a single affected firm and up to \$21 billion economywide. The bill has been scaled-back, but concerns remain. **The bill passed its last committee this week** and is on Special Order next week. A comparable Senate bill (SB 1894) was not moved.
- **Expanding Broadband Access** – SB 1800 creates the Broadband Pole Replacement Program to promote the replacement of existing utility poles in areas of Florida that [are unserved by broadband Internet service](#). **The bill passed a committee this week but the \$500 million in funding was taken out.**
- **Juvenile Diversion Program Expunction** – HB 195 expands the crimes that qualify for record expungement after the child completes a diversion program. This will help keep more juveniles from unnecessarily entering the corrections system. This week, **the bill was unanimously approved by the full House and sent to the Senate**, where a similar version (SB 342) is also awaiting a floor vote.
- **Legal Notices** – HB 7049 would allow local governments to post meeting and other legal notices on their website in lieu of publishing in a newspaper. We pointed out that there are a significant number of Floridians still live in internet deserts and that compromising the access to legal notices compromises accountability. **The bill is headed to the House floor** but there is no Senate companion.
- **House Tax Package** - The package contains mostly non-recurring tax relief (including four sales tax holidays) with a focus on individual taxpayers, with a relatively small amount targeted to businesses. With a few provisions yet to be scored, the bill contains over \$300 million in first year tax savings, \$33 million in recurring state tax savings, and \$65 million in local tax savings. [See this FTW summary for the details of the package](#). **The bill passed its last committee this week and is scheduled for a floor vote next week.**

- **Net Metering** – HB 741 revises the net metering program, including changing the credits that renewable energy generators receive for the excess energy they produce. **The bill passed its last committee this week and now goes to the floor.**
- **Homestead Property Tax Exemption for Critical Public Service Workforce** – HJR 1 would bring a proposed constitutional amendment to the ballot to create a new \$50,000 **property tax exemption** for teachers, law enforcement and correctional officers, firefighters, child welfare professionals, and active military. The resolution **was approved by the full House** and sent to the Senate, where it is on the **Appropriations** agenda on Monday. The bill has been **amended** to exclude school levies from the exemption and add EMTs and paramedics.

See the [Florida TaxWatch Legislative Update webpage](#) for more information on the 2022 session and to find our research on these and other issues.