

WEEKLY TALLAHASSEE UPDATE



The Florida Legislature kicked off the 2024 Florida Legislative Session on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, which is the 126th regular legislative session hosted since Florida's Statehood in 1845. The start of Florida's annual legislative session kicks off a 60-day session where our State's legislature convenes in Tallahassee for committee hearings, budget conferences, and legislative body discussions. Florida has a bicameral legislative body meaning there is an upper house, The Florida Senate, and a lower house, The Florida House of Representatives. As written in the Florida Constitution, the Governor of Florida and the Florida Legislature must work together annually to pass and approve a balanced budget. Term limits allow Senators to serve a maximum of two, four-year terms for a maximum of eight years, and Representatives can serve up to four, two year terms for a maximum of eight years.

In late 2023, the Venice Area Chamber of Commerce (VACC) Public Policy Committee formed our 2024 legislative priorities which were approved by the VACC Board of Directors. These legislative priorities have evolved each year since we started publishing them four years ago. They were presented to our local legislative delegation by VACC President & CEO Kathy Lehner a few months ago, and we will continue to promote and advocate for our priorities throughout the 2024 legislative session. As a recap, our 2024 legislative priorities are as follow:

1. Support continued insurance initiatives that create a competitive and stable insurance market which will lower costs for Florida's policy holders.
2. Monitor "Live Local" Act affordable housing solutions for our workforce and residents' housing needs and Florida's housing trust funds (Sadowski Act) to be used solely for housing programs.
3. Support FDOT work program funding which adds to regional vibrancy including S.R. 681 and I-75 interchange expansion project.
4. Support the flexibility to extend disaster loan payoff terms and reduce interest rates for business recovery after disasters.
5. Support the continued reduction of Florida's corporate income tax.
6. Support Department of Commerce to proactively market the state as a business destination and incentivize

The Florida Chamber of Commerce serves as a resource to our local chamber with their dedicated staff that will follow and track legislation relevant to their 2024 Florida Business Agenda. Their top priorities they have identified for the 2024 legislative session are as follow:

1. Continuing recent lawsuit abuse reform efforts to improve Florida's bottom-five legal climate.
2. Eliminating or reducing taxes where Florida businesses are at a competitive disadvantage, such as the Florida-only Business Rent Tax.
3. Developing Florida's long-term workforce pipeline by enhancing opportunities from cradle to career.
4. Creating a consistent regulatory and operating environment across Florida's 411 municipalities and 67 counties.
5. Pushing forward-thinking and science-driven infrastructure investments and policy.

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Just two days into the 2024 session, the House Regulatory Reform & Economic Development Subcommittee passed [HB 433 - Employer Regulations](#) on a vote of 9 to 4. This legislation aims to create consistency across Florida by preempting labor regulations to the State of Florida so there isn't a patchwork of regulations from municipality to municipality. The bill also aims to prohibit prevailing wages, which is the ability of a local jurisdiction to mandate benefits or wages on private employers through their procurement or purchasing processes that are higher than what State or Federal law requires. I have provided a link to the house bill above if you are interested in tracking the bill this legislative session.

On the same day, the Florida Senate's Fiscal Policy Committee unanimously voted 18 to 0 in favor of [SB 7016 - Health Care](#) which has been identified as a priority of Senate President Passidomo. The legislation aims to "improve access to medical care by reducing barriers for providers, such as increasing reimbursement rates that incentivize providers to serve Medicaid patients." Florida Senate President Passidomo said "My goal is to make sure the healthcare system is growing and innovating to better serve all Floridians" during her opening day remarks on the first day of the 2024 session.

If there are any bills or topics you would like for me to include in these updates throughout the 2024 session, please email them to the VACC and I will do my best to address them or provide an update before the end of the annual session.

Justin Taylor
Public Policy Chair