

WEEKLY TALLAHASSEE UPDATE



With the fourth week of the 2024 Florida Legislative Session complete, State Legislators are at the halfway point of the 60-day legislative session. At the conclusion of week four, a total of twelve bills have passed both the House and Senate. Several committees in the House and Senate have already had their final committee meeting, which essentially kills the bills that didn't make it out of those committees. During any regular legislative session, it is expected anywhere from 200 to 250 bills to pass both chambers.

[HB 347 Exemptions from Products Liability Actions](#) sponsored by Representative Truenow passed the House Civil Justice Subcommittee and is headed to the House Judiciary Committee. This legislation aims to improve Florida's "bottom-five legal climate" by protecting Florida's agriculture industry from increasing litigation regarding the proper use of regulated and approved fertilizers for crop production. [SB 1252 Exemptions from Products Liability Actions](#) sponsored by Senator Collins passed the Senate Judiciary Committee 8 to 1 and will head to the Senate Agriculture Committee for a second committee stop.

[HB 1367 Asbestos and Silica Claims](#) sponsored by Representative Brackett also passed the House Civil Justice Subcommittee and will move along the process to the House Judiciary Committee. This legislation seeks to ensure legitimate claims against liability for asbestos exposure move through the judicial process efficiently while reducing multiple claims by the same individuals. Companies that filed for bankruptcy due to liability associated with asbestos created trusts for injured parties to recover damages. Individuals have filed duplicate claims across multiple trusts in an effort to secure damages from multiple parties. This bill will require specific exposure information to be included when a claim is filed and will aid in transparency for the process to reduce multiple claims. [SB 720 Asbestos and Silica Claims](#) sponsored by Senator Hutson passed the Senate Judiciary Committee 8 to 1 with a committee substitute. The next committee stop will be the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee though the bill hasn't officially been sent yet.

[HB 1503 Citizens Property Insurance Corporation](#) sponsored by Representative Esposito advanced through the House Insurance and Banking Subcommittee unanimously. The legislation aims to move Citizens closer towards its intended use of being an insurer of last resort by making it easier for private insurers to use policies under certain circumstances.

[HB 335 Requiring Broader Public Support for Constitutional Amendments or Revisions](#) sponsored by Representative Roth passed the House Ethics, Elections and Open Government Subcommittee 11 to 6 and will now head to the House Judiciary Committee. If passed by both chambers and signed by the Governor, it would head to the ballot for the citizens of the State of Florida to vote on. There is currently not a Senate companion bill. The current threshold for a constitutional amendment to be approved by voters in the State of Florida is 60%, this bill proposes raising the threshold to a 2/3 vote, or 66.67%.

WEEKLY TALLAHASSEE UPDATE



The first proposal of the 2024 - 2025 state budget proposed by the House came in at \$115.5 billion with the Senate's proposed budget sitting at \$115.9 billion. These are proposed reductions from the approved 2023 - 2024 budget of \$116.5 billion. For the 2024 legislative session to adjourn on the proposed 60th day, Friday March 8, 2024, the budget must be completed by Tuesday March 5, 2024, to ensure the proper "cooling off" time before a vote for approval can be held. Here are some Florida Chamber identified takeaways of the proposed budgets:

- Both the House and Senate are proposing \$7.5 million for the Quick Response Training Grant, which aims to promote economic growth and enhance workforce skills.
- The House has proposed \$25 million with the Senate proposing \$75 million to fund the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund.
- VISIT Florida has received proposed funding of \$30 million by the House and \$80 million by the Senate to promote and enhance Florida tourism marketing.
- Transportation remains a priority in the proposed budget for each chamber with suggested funding of \$14.2 billion from the House and \$14.3 billion from the Senate towards the Department of Transportation's Five-Year Work Program.
- \$174 million has been proposed by both the House and Senate for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program which aims to provide affordable housing options for Floridians.
- \$75 million has been proposed by the House compared to the Senate's \$100 million to fund the Hometown Heroes program, which aims to make homeownership more affordable for eligible workers in the community.
- The State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program has received a proposed \$234 million by both chambers.

Justin Taylor
Public Policy Chair

Sources:

www.flsenate.gov

www.myfloridahouse.gov

www.flchamber.com