Florida Legislative Update – Halfway Through the 2025 Session

With the 2025 Florida Legislative Session set to conclude on May 2, we are now more than halfway through this year's session. Each year, the Florida Legislature has only one constitutional requirement: to pass a balanced budget. This means the only bill that must pass both chambers and be signed by the governor is the budget bill—though this process involves months of negotiation and is subject to the governor's line-item veto power after the session concludes. As of last week, proposed budgets for each chamber have already been moving through budget subcommittees. By the end of Week 4, the Florida House had passed 10 bills off the floor, while the Florida Senate had passed 32 bills.

Key Budget Proposals

Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives Danny Perez has proposed lowering the state's sales tax from 6% to 5.25%, potentially saving Floridians over $5 billion annually. The House's proposed budget also includes a plan to reduce Florida's Business Rent Tax from 2% to 1.25%. If passed, the 2025–2026 budget would be lower than the 2024–2025 budget, marking the first year-over-year budget decrease since the Great Recession.

As always, if there are any bills or topics you would like me to track for these weekly updates, please email the Venice Area Chamber of Commerce.

Here's what's happening at the halfway point of the 2025 Florida Legislative Session:

Florida's Legal Climate & Key Bills

The Florida Chamber has identified Florida's legal environment as one of the bottom five in the nation. While the Legislature has made improvements in recent years, the Florida Chamber believes certain bills moving forward this session could worsen the legal climate.

<u>Insurance & Legal Reform Bills</u>

- **HB 6017 – Recovery of Damages for Medical Negligence Resulting in Death**
  - Sponsored by Rep. Trabulsy; passed the House 104-6.
  - Senate companion SB 734 (Sen. Yarborough) passed the Senate Rules Committee 23-1.
  - Expands medical malpractice liability, which could increase insurance premiums, lead to more litigation, and make it more difficult to recruit and retain healthcare professionals in Florida. Florida currently has the highest medical malpractice insurance rates in the nation.
- **HB 947 – Evidence of Damages in Medical Expense Cases**
  - Sponsored by Rep. Blanco; passed the House Judiciary Committee 19-3.
  - Repeals a section of the 2023 lawsuit abuse reform by eliminating "transparency in damages."
  - Allows for inflated medical expenses to be presented in court, which could lead to verdicts based on artificially high costs rather than actual payments made for medical care.

- **HB 1181 – Motor Vehicle Insurance**
  - Sponsored by Rep. Alvarez; passed the House Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee 13-2.
  - Repeals Florida's no-fault motor vehicle law (Personal Injury Protection or PIP).
  - Requires drivers to carry increased mandatory bodily injury protection insurance.
  - The Florida Chamber warns this transition could drive additional litigation and legal costs, leading to increased insurance premiums for Florida drivers.

Other Key Bills Moving Forward

- **HB 1427 – Rural Communities ("Florida's Rural Renaissance")**
  - Sponsored by Representative Griffitts and Senate President Ben Albritton's top priority has passed through the House Commerce Committee.
- **SB 1516 / HB 793 – Aerospace Industry & Innovation Funding**
  - SB 1516 (Sen. Wright) and HB 793 (Rep. Kendall) passed through committee stops last week.
  - HB 793 has passed three committees and now heads to the House floor for a vote.
  - SB 1516 has also passed three committees and awaits addition to the Senate floor calendar.
- **HB 859 – School Readiness Program**
  - Sponsored by Rep. Tramont.
  - Passed the Education Administration Subcommittee unanimously.
  - Moves to the PreK-12 Budget Subcommittee.
- **HB 47 / SB 738 – Child Care and Early Learning Providers**
  - HB 47 (Rep. McFarland) and SB 738 (Senator Burton) have both passed their second committee stops.
  - These bills aim to ease childcare regulations that do not improve quality or safety, supporting lower childcare costs and encouraging parents to re-enter the workforce.
- **HB 1239 – Energy Infrastructure Investment**
  - Sponsored by Rep. Jonsson.
  - Passed the Economic Infrastructure Subcommittee; now heads to the Commerce Committee.
  - Promotes the development of renewable energy sources, increasing energy independence and incentivizing additional energy sources to support economic growth and sustainability.
- **HB 1309 – Reading Interventions and Instruction**
  - Sponsored by Rep. Snyder.
  - Passed all three committee stops and is ready for the House floor.
  - Builds on previous legislative efforts to address reading deficiencies, expanding interventions to students in grades 4-12.

- **HB 943 – Real Property and Land Use Development**
  - Sponsored by Rep. Lopez.
  - Passed the Housing, Agriculture, and Tourism Subcommittee; now moves to the Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee.
  - Strengthens the Live Local Act to create more affordable housing options by limiting local governments' ability to impose regulations restricting affordable housing development.

Stay Informed

Thanks for reading this week's legislative update. If you'd like to learn more about any of the bills mentioned, please click the links associated with each bill.

Justin Taylor

Public Policy Chair

Sources:

www.flsenate.gov

https://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/6017

https://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/734

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