



WEEKLY TALLAHASSEE UPDATE

The Florida Legislature completed Week 8 of the 2026 legislative session with growing uncertainty about whether lawmakers will finish on time. With major differences remaining between the House and Senate on the state budget and property tax proposals, legislative leaders are increasingly signaling that the session may extend beyond the scheduled March 13 adjournment.

Budget negotiations remain the central issue driving the timeline. The House and Senate are reportedly about \$1.4 billion apart in their spending plans, and discussions over potential changes to property taxes have yet to produce an agreement. The House has already approved a proposed constitutional amendment that would eliminate the non-school portion of homestead property taxes if voters approve it on a future ballot, while the Senate and Governor are continuing to develop a separate property tax proposal.

Because the state constitution requires the Legislature to pass a balanced budget before July 1, lawmakers technically still have several months to reach an agreement even if the regular session ends without a final deal. In addition, a special legislative session has already been scheduled for the week of April 20 to address congressional redistricting.

Despite the budget uncertainty, a number of policy bills continued moving through the legislative process this week.

One measure that drew significant attention was Senate Bill 1296, which relates to the Public Employees Relations Commission and the rules governing public-sector unions. The bill passed the Senate this week and now moves to the House for consideration. Among other provisions, the legislation revises procedures for union certification and registration and sets standards for how union elections are conducted for public employees. The proposal has generated debate in Tallahassee over how union representation should be verified among public-sector workers.

Another bill that advanced this week focuses on Florida's building permitting system. Lawmakers approved legislation establishing a statewide uniform building permit application intended to simplify and standardize the process across local governments. The measure also includes provisions related to building inspections and private inspection services. Supporters say a consistent application and permitting framework could reduce delays and administrative burdens for property owners, contractors, and local governments.

Tax policy also remained a focus during Week 8. The House passed a tax package that includes several provisions designed to reduce costs and encourage economic activity, including tax relief measures and incentives connected to housing affordability and economic development initiatives.



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The Senate is continuing work on its own tax package, and differences between the two chambers will likely be addressed during budget negotiations.

Housing policy saw movement as well. The House passed legislation aimed at expanding workforce housing options by building on Florida's Live Local Act. The proposal would allow certain multifamily or mixed-use housing developments on property owned by local governments or religious institutions and would require local governments to allow accessory dwelling units in single-family residential areas. The Senate is considering its own version of the policy with some differences that would need to be reconciled before final passage.

Land use and development regulation was another topic debated during the week. A House bill intended to streamline residential development approvals and clarify how compatibility with surrounding land uses is evaluated passed the chamber and is now awaiting action in the Senate.

Several additional proposals moved forward addressing topics ranging from behavioral health access to emerging transportation technologies. The House unanimously approved a bill creating a pilot program in Northeast Florida designed to improve coordination among universities, healthcare providers, and community organizations to expand access to behavioral health services.

Another bill related to "vertiports," infrastructure designed for advanced air mobility aircraft, also passed the House and is advancing in the Senate as lawmakers explore future transportation technologies.

With only a short time remaining in the scheduled session calendar, the number of bills still eligible for floor consideration is narrowing. As of the end of Week 8, just over forty bills had passed both chambers and been sent to the Governor or were awaiting final approval in the other chamber.

The coming week will likely determine whether the Legislature can complete its work within the scheduled session or whether lawmakers will need additional time to resolve budget negotiations and remaining policy issues.

Thank you for reading this week's legislative update. – Justin Taylor

Sources:

www.FLHouse.Gov

www.FLSenate.Gov

www.FlChamber.Com