

WEEKLY TALLAHASSEE UPDATE



As we close out Week 7 of the 2026 Legislative Session, the pace in Tallahassee has shifted noticeably. With just two weeks remaining before the scheduled March 13 adjournment, both chambers are spending more time on the floor and less time in committee hearings. To date, **only 16 bills have passed both the House and Senate**, a relatively small number compared to the 200–300 bills that typically pass each session. That slower pace places additional focus on the must-pass state budget and several key policy bills that directly affect Florida’s business community.

Budget Negotiations Enter a Critical Phase

The only constitutionally required bill each year is the state budget, and the House and Senate remain approximately \$1.5 billion apart in their spending plans. House Budget Chair Lawrence McClure and Senate Appropriations Chair Ed Hooper both indicated this week that conference committees would not meet over the weekend, signaling that final allocations have not yet been agreed upon.

Under Florida’s constitution, a 72-hour “cooling off” period is required before a final budget vote, meaning budget negotiations must be finalized by Tuesday, March 10 for session to end on time. For businesses, the outcome of these negotiations will shape state investments in infrastructure, workforce development, education, and economic incentives heading into the next fiscal year.

Tax Package Proposals Release

Both chambers released their proposed tax packages this week, including the annual “piggyback” bill to adopt portions of the federal Internal Revenue Code. Neither chamber included certain corporate income tax provisions from recent federal legislation, and the overall size of the tax packages reflects a more cautious fiscal approach this year.

The Senate’s proposal (SB 7046) totals approximately \$34.1 million, while the **House proposal (HB 7031/WMC1)** totals approximately \$250 million, largely using nonrecurring dollars. In addition to general tax provisions, both packages include measures addressing workforce housing and sales tax holidays. The House proposal incorporates language from **HB 311**, creating the Homebuyer Workforce Tax Credit Program to incentivize employer contributions toward first-time home purchases.

The House package also extends the childcare tax credit through 2030 and proposes adjusting the annual back-to-school sales tax holiday window. As is typical, the final tax package will likely be negotiated in tandem with the budget during the final days of session.

Data Center Development Advances

One of the more closely watched issues this week was legislation related to data center development. **HB 1007** by Representative Griff Griffiths advanced through its remaining House committees. A Proposed Committee Substitute modified the bill from its original, more restrictive language, bringing it closer to the Senate version, SB 484 by Senator Bryan Avila.

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As currently structured, **HB 1007** would require additional regulatory testing for data centers located within five miles of a residence or school, including noise and radiofrequency standards that differ from other large-scale developments. **SB 484** passed the Senate unanimously this week and was sent to the House.

Data center policy is significant given the sector's economic impact. Testimony this week referenced estimates that a one-gigawatt data center could generate \$2.6 billion in sustained annual economic impact and more than \$400 million annually in state and local tax revenue.

Workforce and Healthcare Measures

Workforce and healthcare access remain prominent themes this session. **HB 13**, sponsored by Representative Christine Hunschofsky, passed the House and would enter Florida into the Social Work Licensure Compact. The compact allows licensed social workers to practice across state lines, potentially improving access to mental health services. The Senate companion, **SB 76**, has not yet been heard in committee.

The Linking Industry with Nursing Education (LINE) expansion is also advancing. **HB 1325** by Representative Erika Booth is ready for the House floor, and **SB 1246** by Senator Tracie Davis passed the Senate unanimously. The legislation expands matching grant opportunities to increase healthcare training capacity in Florida's higher education institutions. Additionally, **HB 783** by Representative Judson Sapp advanced unanimously in committee and establishes a behavioral health pilot program in Northeast Florida to improve coordination and access to services.

Permitting, Construction, and Regulatory Certainty

Several bills aimed at improving predictability for businesses and streamlining government processes moved forward this week. **HB 105** by Representative Robbie Brackett passed the House 104-5 and addresses local government enforcement actions, creating a clearer process for businesses to challenge actions deemed arbitrary or unreasonable.

HB 803 by Representative Dana Trabulsy passed unanimously and establishes a statewide uniform permit application while limiting duplicate inspections when private inspectors have already completed required work. Its Senate companion, **SB 1234** by Senator Nick DiCeglie, cleared its final committee and is headed to the Senate floor.

For commercial projects, **HB 405** by Representative Griff Griffiths passed 113-2 and establishes a statewide uniform permit application for commercial construction, while limiting certain local enforcement agency fees. **SB 526** by Senator Erin Grall awaits a hearing in Senate Rules.

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Land use and development regulations were also addressed through **HB 399** by Representative David Borrero and **SB 208** by Senator Stan McClain, both of which have cleared their final committees and are ready for floor consideration.

Public Sector Labor Policy

HB 995, sponsored by Representative Jenna Persons-Mulicka, passed the House State Affairs Committee this week. The bill increases transparency requirements for public sector unions and establishes minimum support thresholds within bargaining units. The Senate companion, **SB 1296**, is scheduled for its final committee hearing.

Looking Ahead

With limited time remaining and major negotiations still underway, the final two weeks of session will determine which of these measures ultimately cross the finish line. For our local business community, issues ranging from tax policy and workforce housing to permitting reform and healthcare training capacity will have long-term implications for economic competitiveness in Sarasota County and across the state.

We will continue monitoring floor activity, budget negotiations, and conference discussions closely as we move into the final stretch of the 2026 Legislative Session.

Thank you for reading.

-Justin Taylor, Venice Area Chamber of Commerce, Public Policy Committee

Sources:

- FLHouse.gov
- FLSenate.gov
- FLChamber.com