

The Briefing

March 16, 2026

The latest from the government and leadership office of the Chamber

INSIDE

New finds this week

Florida Legislative Update
for Week 9

Regional Business
Intelligence Report with
trend-lines

Your "Cyber House"



Week 9 Update - 2026 Florida Legislative Session

The Florida Legislature completed Week 9 of the 2026 legislative session without resolving its two most essential responsibilities—finalizing a state budget and agreeing on a property tax reform plan—setting the stage for lawmakers to return to Tallahassee in mid-April for at least one special session. Budget negotiations remained the dominant issue throughout the week. The House and Senate continue to stand roughly \$1.4 billion apart in their spending proposals, with the House advancing a \$113.6 billion budget and the Senate putting forward a plan totaling about \$115 billion. Legislative leaders acknowledged before adjournment that a final budget would not be produced during the regular session, marking the second consecutive year in which the Legislature failed to complete its work within the scheduled sixty days. Lawmakers will reconvene next month to restart negotiations, with the constitutional deadline of July 1 still providing additional time for an agreement.

Property tax reform, a major focus throughout the 2026 session, also remained unresolved as Week 9 concluded. The House had previously passed a proposal placing a new non-school homestead exemption before voters in 2026, but the Senate declined to take up the measure, citing concerns about the fiscal impact on smaller local governments. As a result, property tax discussions—already a point of friction between chamber leaders and the Governor—will also be addressed during the upcoming special session. Lawmakers from both chambers noted the significance of the House

proposal, describing it as one of the strongest property tax packages considered in recent years, even as it ultimately stalled in the Senate.

Tax policy developments added further complexity during the final week. In an unusual move, the Legislature opted to “decouple” the state’s corporate income tax from federal changes included in the One Big Beautiful Bill, passing HB 7031 to avoid a multibillion-dollar reduction in state revenues. The decision effectively collapsed both chambers’ broader tax relief packages, each of which had been expected to undergo negotiation during the budget conference process. By the end of the final week, neither the House nor Senate tax package remained intact, representing a significant departure from earlier expectations.

The session’s conclusion also reflected deep divisions that extended beyond budget and tax issues. For the second year in a row, the two chambers passed significantly fewer bills than in previous sessions. Many high profile proposals—ranging from artificial intelligence privacy standards to parental vaccine optout provisions, rural development incentives, homeowners’ association reforms, and school voucher guardrails—failed to reach the Governor’s desk. Legislative leaders acknowledged that major philosophical differences, as well as persisting tensions between the chambers and the Governor, contributed to a slower and more contentious process than usual. As of the end of Week 9, only 53 bills had been approved by both chambers, compared to 265 in 2025 and 313 in 2024.

Throughout the week, lawmakers from both parties offered differing assessments of the slowed pace and unresolved priorities. Some Republicans framed the outcome as a sign of legislative independence, while other leaders expressed frustration about gridlock and mistrust across chambers. Democrats criticized the session as a missed opportunity to address affordability issues, including high insurance costs, housing pressures, and the absence of progress on Medicaid expansion. Members of both parties recognized that the upcoming special sessions—one focused on the budget, another on redistricting, and potentially another addressing property taxes—will be essential to completing the work that remained unfinished during the regular session. Despite the delays, leaders noted that sufficient time remains before the July 1 deadline to produce a balanced budget and finalize remaining policy issues.

Sources:

www.FLHouse.gov

www.FLSenate.gov

www.FLChamber.com

- Florida TaxWatch, WLRN, WPTV, WUSF, Spectrum News 13

Regional Business Intelligence Report

Florida Legislature • Sarasota County • City of Venice

Coverage window: March 9, 2026 → March 16, 2026

I. Florida Legislature – Business Impact Trendlines (Week of March 9–16)

The week 9 update covers the Florida Legislature session ending activity.

II. Sarasota County – Business-Relevant Trendlines (Week of March 9–16)

1. No Commission Meetings During This Window

No actions between March 9-16. Next meeting March 24.

2. County Administrative Outputs

Departmental updates continue without regulatory changes.

III. City of Venice – Business-Relevant Trendlines

1. March 10 City Council Meeting

-Ordinance 2026-06: No business impact. (comprehensive plan amendment)

-Ordinance 2026-11: No direct compliance costs; may influence service levels. (budget amendment)

2. No New Ordinances with BIEs This Week

Next meeting March 24.

3. Planning Commission Meeting March 12

No business-impact ordinances.

4. AAM/Vertiport Explorations Ongoing

IV. Cross-Jurisdictional Trendlines

1. Revenue Compression as Dominant Theme

2. Local Govt Quiet Period This Week

3. AAM Continues Advancing at State Level

V. Bottom-Line Implications

- No new costs or obligations issued this week.

- State-level volatility in property tax remains key risk.

- Monitor Venice's March 24 meeting for land-use ordinances.

Cyber House

Cybersecurity risks continue to escalate globally. As we think of "spring cleaning", also think of keeping your business and personal "cyber house" in order. Year over year increases in cyber-attacks are a reality. Ransomware continues to impact business and government entities. Data and technology resilience certainly must be a business priority.

Blame me when you talk to your staff about the cyber safety training you are supplying. "Everything is great until it's not".