

SHUMAKER

ADVISORS

2022 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Week of March 7th - 11th

HIGHLIGHTS

The final week of the 2022 Legislative Session concluded today in Tallahassee. Lawmakers have nearly completed their business for the year, with only a final vote on the budget remaining. The legislature will convene for one final meeting on Monday to take a vote on the state spending plan after it has "cooled off" for the required 72 hours after its presentation yesterday, with initial questioning and debate being held today.

This week consisted of lengthy floor sessions, with legislators racing to pass their priority bills through both chambers before the close of session. Nearly 200 bills have made it across the finish line and will stand one final test before the Governor prior to becoming state law.

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Senate President Wilton Simpson presides over the final days of the 2022 Legislative Session. Photo via FloridaPolitics.

IN THE BUDGET

The legislature released the final negotiated budget on Thursday and began questioning and debate on Friday. A final vote is to be taken Monday before the budget is sent to the Governor. As it currently stands, the budget totals \$112.1 billion, making it the largest state spending proposal in Florida's history. It notably provides pay raises for state employees, a sizable increase in public school funding, a large allocation to affordable housing, and a gas-tax break for Florida drivers in the fall. Also included in the budget are nearly \$800 million worth of leadership "sprinkles," or extra funding provisions at the discretion of the House Speaker and Senate President. Once signed by the Governor, the budget will take effect July 1.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

At the close of session, nearly 200 pieces of legislation have made it through the process, earning a spot on the roster of bills to be sent to the Governor for approval and eventually placed into state statute. Noteworthy bills in various policy areas that have earned final passage throughout this week are below.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY One of the most controversial bills to be presented this year, [HB 7](#) will essentially prohibit the instruction of Critical Race Theory in Florida classrooms by mandating that instruction on race and sex not impose guilt on any group or individual. While the bill does not explicitly mention Critical Race Theory, it creates extensive guidelines for instruction that prevent the basis of the theory from being taught to students. The measure was a top priority of Governor DeSantis going into this year's session.

PEER SPECIALISTS Recovering addicts will be permitted to serve as peer counselors in substance abuse counseling programs under [SB 282](#), which was signed into law by the Governor this week.

SCHOOL BOARDS & LIBRARY BOOKS Under [HB 1467](#), local district school boards will be subject to 12-year term limits. The bill originally sought to nix school board members' salaries, but received pushback and was amended away from that provision. It also creates new review and reporting requirements for school libraries, seeking to increase transparency regarding instructional and leisurely library materials available to students.

DON'T SAY GAY Dubbed as the "Don't Say Gay" bill by its opponents, [HB 1557](#) passed in the Senate on Tuesday. The bill prohibits school personnel and third parties from providing instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity. Additionally, it prohibits schools from discouraging or prohibiting parental involvement and authorizes the parent to pursue legal action in school districts that they believe are in violation of the law. The bill has garnered extensive opposition throughout session, but is set to become law in spite of concerns about the "Don't Say Gay" provisions.

NET METERING In an effort to maintain reasonable utility rates for non-solar users, [HB 741](#) will remove some credits that users of renewable energy sources receive. Environmentalists are staunchly opposed to the measure, expressing concerns over the potential to deter people from utilizing solar panels to generate power.

LETHAL INJECTION PUBLIC RECORDS [HB 873](#), seeks to establish a more extensive public records exemption

for the state's execution process. If approved, the bill would protect any person or entity involved in the execution. Additionally, this bill ensures that the Department of Corrections (DOC) has the necessary supplies to carry out future executions and appease drug suppliers.

RESIDENTIAL PROTESTS If approved, [HB 1571](#) would prohibit residential protesting and expand penalties for violators. Police must notify an individual of a potential violation prior to taking action. If the individual continues this behavior the violation would be considered a second-degree misdemeanor. Penalties would include 60 days of jail time, 6-months probation and a \$500 fine.

CRYPTOCURRENCY [HB 273](#) will undo a court ruling in 2019 which prohibits individuals who own bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies from selling them without a license. It makes a number of changes to currency trading regulations, including to the permissible investments statute.

VOTER FRAUD Since the 2020 election, Florida lawmakers have continually emphasized their commitment to ensuring that voting procedures in the state effectively prevent voting fraud and produce accurate outcomes. Despite concerns about disenfranchisement from Democrats, [SB 524](#) will create the Office of Election Crimes and Security within the Department of State, impose new regulations for mail-in voting, and create a number of new restrictions for election processes.



Senator Manny Diaz engages in questioning on the bill targeting "woke" indoctrination, House Bill 7. The bill passed both chambers this week. Photo via FloridaPolitics.

CONTINUED LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

INSURANCE PACKAGE Referred to as an omnibus insurance package, [SB 468](#) makes updates to insurance and workers' compensation laws. It was amended to add a provision to address the state of the property insurance market in Florida, encouraging homeowners to seek coverage from private insurers rather than the state-sponsored Citizens Property Insurance Corporation. A number of other bills addressing insurance issues failed to make it across the finish line this year.

LOCAL ORDINANCES Named the Local Business Protection Act, [SB 620](#) seeks to allow local businesses to seek damages from local governments who impose ordinances or mandates that significantly affect their business earnings or operations. The sponsor of the bill has regarded the measure as necessary to strike a balance between respecting the role of local governments and protecting local businesses.

A complete list of bills that are headed to the Governor for final approval can be reviewed [here](#).

Shumaker Advisors will provide a comprehensive Post-Legislative Session Report in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, please contact
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