



HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE DANE EAGLE, MAJORITY LEADER

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Passed Both Chambers

Legislature Passed Balanced Budget

The Legislature passed a constitutionally-required balanced budget for FY 2019-2020. The budget continues the House's conservative approach of responsibly funding our state's critical needs, including significant investments in hurricane response and preparedness, education, and the environment. The budget also continues our commitment to tax relief by buying back the value of property value growth in the K-12 funding formula to prevent property tax increases. Finally, the budget responsibly plans for the future by placing over \$3.3 billion in reserves to prepare for any unforeseen future economic uncertainty.

The budget covers important elements that will positively affect all Floridians while also securing long-term budget surpluses for the future.

Florida Legislature Voted for Tax Relief

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/HB 7123** to reduce taxes for Floridians. The bill included several tax reductions and other tax-related policy changes that impact both families and businesses. Below are some highlights of the bill:

- Creates a three-day **Back-to-School Tax Holiday**.
- Reduces the **Business Rent Tax** for businesses.
- Authorizes a seven-day **Disaster Preparedness Tax Holiday**.
- Modifies several **local property tax** provisions to provide clarity and accountability to Floridians.



Florida Legislature Voted for Changes to Improve Prescription Drug Costs

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/HB 19**, which authorizes two methods to import FDA-approved prescription drugs into the state:

- The Canadian Prescription Drug Importation Program within the Agency for Health Care Administration allows certain state programs to import prescription drugs from Canada if they provide a cost saving to the state.
- The International Prescription Drug Importation Program within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation allows commercial prescription drug importation from certain foreign entities that are permitted with DBPR or the Department of Health and creates two new permits for such purpose.

The bill also outlines the importation process, safety standards, distribution requirements, and regulatory consequences for violations. Federal approval or guidance is required before any importation can occur. This gives Floridians access to lower-cost safe, effective, FDA-approved drugs from countries recognized for adhering to good manufacturing practices. The bill increases patient choices and allows safe and effective drugs from other countries to be sold in Florida pending federal approval.

Florida Legislature Voted to Remove Health Care Facility Market Barriers

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/HB 21**, which repeals the Certificate of Need (CON) program for general hospitals, tertiary hospital services and complex medical rehabilitation beds effective July 1, 2019. The bill also eliminates the CON review for specialty hospitals effective July 1, 2021. Repeal of this market-entry review will permit providers to open new facilities without the lengthy and expensive application process. AHCA will still enforce licensure requirements for each facility and service. The bill removes regulatory barriers that hinder competition and block innovation. Free and competitive markets are the most effective means for reducing prices and improving quality.

Florida Legislature Voted to Expand Telehealth Services

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/CS/HB 23**, which authorizes all types of Florida-licensed health care professionals to use telehealth to deliver health care services within their respective scopes of practice. The bill also authorizes out-of-state health care professionals to use telehealth to deliver health care services to Florida patients if they register with the Department of Health or the applicable board. The bill establishes standards of practice for services provided using telehealth, including patient examination, record-keeping, and a prohibition on prescribing controlled substances for chronic non-malignant pain. The bill increases access to care particularly for those in low-access areas of Florida.

Florida Legislature Voted to Improve Prescribing

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/HB 831**, which requires a prescriber with an electronic health record system to generate and transmit all prescriptions electronically, with numerous exceptions. Increased



electronic prescribing will prevent fraud, reduce abuse, and increase efficiency of health care access for Floridians.

Florida Legislature Voted for a Comprehensive Package of Health Care Reform

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/HB 843**, which is a comprehensive package of policy changes and new initiatives that will create new opportunities in Florida's healthcare system. The comprehensive package includes:

- **Considered in CS/HB 7-Direct Health Care Agreements**
 - The bill expands the scope of direct care arrangements beyond primary care.
 - The bill authorizes "Direct Health Care Agreements" between patients and physicians, nurses, dentists, and chiropractors for any health care services within the scope of their professional licenses.
 - The bill revises definitions and makes other various conforming changes to remove reference to "primary care," and replace it with "health care" to reflect the broadened scope of the agreements under the bill.
 - Direct health care agreements will still have the same contract requirements as direct primary care agreements and are exempt from insurance regulations.
 - This expands access to an affordable care delivery model that preserves the doctor-patient relationship.

- **Considered in CS/CS/HB 25-Ambulatory Care Services**
 - The bill changes the allowable length of stay in Ambulatory Surgical Centers from less than one working day to no more than 24 hours.
 - This eliminates an arbitrary limitation on business activity and expands patient access to services in a lower-cost, high-quality setting.

- **Considered in CS/CS/HB 319-Patient Safety and Quality Measures**
 - The bill requires all Florida hospitals to give quality report cards to patients showing their performance on key quality measures compared to the statewide average, including infection rates, readmission rates, and patient satisfaction scores.
 - The bill requires hospitals to present the data in writing to patients upon admission or non-emergency care scheduling or prior to treatment, and to give the data to any other person upon request.
 - The required information will enable patients to know how hospitals perform and make informed choices about where to go for care.

- **Considered in CS/HB 813-Hospital Observation Status**
 - The bill requires hospitals to inform a patient immediately, in writing, when the patient is placed on observation status.
 - Observation status can increase patient out-of-pocket costs. Patients need to know the cost consequences of hospital decisions timely – not as they are leaving the hospital.



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- **Considered in CS/HB 843-Hospital Patient Right to Physician Access**
 - The bill requires hospitals to notify a patient's primary care or specialist provider, if any, within 24 hours of the patient's admission to the hospital.
 - Additionally, the bill requires the hospital to inform patients immediately upon admission that they may request to have their primary care or specialist provider consulted during the development of their plan of care. If the patient makes this request, the treating physician at the hospital must make reasonable efforts to consult with the patient's primary care or specialist provider during the patient's admission.
 - The bill requires the hospital to notify the patient's primary care or specialist provider, if any, of the patient's discharge within 24 hours and provide the discharge summary and any related information or records to the primary care or specialist provider within 14 days.
 - A patient's own physician has the comprehensive knowledge of the patient's health history that can be vital during hospital admissions. Patients experience better outcomes when their health care providers timely communicate with one another and coordinate care across health settings.
 - The bill closes gaps in provider communication and promotes continuity of care from the inpatient to outpatient setting.

Florida Legislature Voted to Improve Health Plans

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/CS/SB 322**, which expands the availability of association and short-term health insurance. The bill allows Floridians to take advantage of the new federal regulations on association health plans and short-term health plans. Increased access to short-term health plans gives consumers a more affordable alternative to comprehensive coverage. These plans represent a legitimate alternative for many individuals.

Florida Legislature Voted for Changes to Florida's Medical Marijuana Industry

The Florida Legislature passed a bill that authorizes smokable medical marijuana and advances medical marijuana research.

CS/CS/CS/SB 182 eliminates the current ban on whole flower marijuana to allow Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers (MMTCs) to dispense marijuana in a form for smoking. The bill requires physicians who certify smoking as a route of administration for qualified patients, other than for terminally ill patients, to document their clinical decision-making process to the Board of Medicine and Board of Osteopathic Medicine. Over time, this documentation will be used by the Boards to establish practice standards for physicians. The bill allows children under age 18 to smoke medical marijuana if they are terminally ill and a board-certified pediatrician agrees with the marijuana certifying physician that smoking is the most effective means of administering marijuana for the patient. The bill updates the current informed consent form provided to all patients to include the negative health risks associated with smoking marijuana.



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Additionally, the bill creates supply and possession limits. The bill allows physicians to certify no more than six 35-day supply limits for smokable marijuana. A MMTC can only dispense one 35-day supply within any 35-day period, and a 35-day supply cannot exceed 2.5 oz unless the Department of Health (DOH) approves a higher amount requested by the qualified physician. The bill sets a possession limit of 4 oz. or a DOH-approved amount. The bill also allows a patient or caregiver to purchase and possess a delivery device for smoking from a vendor other than a MMTC, and imposes packaging and labeling requirements for marijuana cigarettes and loose flower.

The bill creates the Consortium for Medical Marijuana Clinical Outcomes Research within the state university system and establishes a board to direct its operations. The board will organize a program of research that contributes to the body of scientific knowledge on the effects of the medical use of marijuana and informs both policy and medical practice related to the treatment of debilitating medical conditions with marijuana.

Florida Legislature Passed School Safety Bill

The Florida Legislature passed **SB 7030** to improve safety and security in Florida schools.

In 2018, the Florida Legislature passed SB 7026 in response to the tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. **SB 7030** enacts recommendations from the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Public Safety Commission and stakeholders who are responsible for the safety of our children. The bill creates a safer environment for students, while giving school districts the flexibility to address their needs.

SB 7030 increases access to the Guardian Program, penalizes school superintendents for failing to implement school safety strategies, increases information sharing between districts, and utilizes FortifyFL and other data to respond to threats. The bill also increases coordination between schools and law enforcement to address school safety threats. The bill increases student access to mental and behavioral interventions by providing funding for school-based mental health personnel and services and providing timeframes for referral and beginning services.

This bill maintains the option for school districts and charter schools to utilize the Guardian program as an option to maximize school safety and does not require a teacher to be armed.

Florida Empowerment Scholarship Program Passed by Florida Legislature

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/SB 7070**, which is a comprehensive package of reforms to further the goal of providing a world-class education to all children in Florida.

The bill incorporates **HB 7075**, which creates the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program to provide parents the opportunity to choose what is best for their child's education. The Program provides scholarships to eligible kindergarten students and public school students in grades 1-12. The bill establishes the income eligibility criteria beginning with the 2019-20 school year. A family of four earning an annual income of up to \$77,250 is eligible to participate.



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Priority is given to students whose families earn less than \$47,638 to help alleviate the waitlist for the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program and to ensure the scholarship will go to students who need it the most.

The amount a student will receive is based on the school district where the student resides and will be 95 percent of what the student earns in the public school based upon grade level. The Empowerment Scholarship will be funded by the state through the Florida Education Finance Program.

The bill incorporates provisions from **HB 7095**, which allows Schools of Hope to open in “Florida Opportunity Zones” to provide quality educational options for students in low-income communities. The bill also establishes an allocation in the FEFP, rather than through the schools of hope grant program, to provide wrap-around services to students in turnaround schools and establishes a community schools grant program to help school districts implement the community partnership school model, prioritize awards to expand the model into new districts, and encourage self-sustaining programs.

The bill incorporates provisions from **HB 7061**, which addresses certification requirements by giving teachers more time to pass the General Knowledge Test (GKT), reduces the financial burden associated with retaking the GK test and improves the content used to prepare first-time teachers for the realities of the classroom.

The bill also modifies the Best and Brightest Scholarship Programs for teachers program by removing a teacher’s performance on the SAT or ACT as a factor in determining eligibility for the award and establishes a separate allocation within the FEFP to provide recruitment, retention, and recognition awards. Funding for awards is subject to annual appropriation.

Florida Legislature Passed Career and Workforce Education Bill

The Florida Legislature passed **HB 7071** to enhance career and workforce education. The bill incorporates the substance of **HB 7055**, to develop career pathways and postsecondary credential attainment so that Florida can reach the Governor’s goal of becoming #1 in workforce education.

HB 7071 creates the “SAIL to 60” Initiative to increase postsecondary credential attainment for working age Floridians. The goal is to raise the percentage of working age adults with a high-value postsecondary certificate, degree, or training experience to 60 percent by 2030.

The bill requires the establishment of a reverse transfer agreement between the State University System and the Florida College System (FCS) and requires career centers and FCS institutions to establish regional career pathway agreements that allow career center students to continue their postsecondary education.

The bill creates the Florida Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program to expand and establish apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs and requires the Department of Education to publish on its website an annual report to promote these programs and increase transparency.



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The bill requires the Department of Education to review career education offerings for alignment with industry priorities and to eliminate programs that do not address priority workforce demands or lead to middle- and high-wage jobs.

The bill establishes the Last Mile College Completion Program to increase outreach efforts to help students who are within 12 credit hours of completing their first associate or baccalaureate degree.

Finally, the bill enables school districts to meet the academic needs of students and be responsive to labor market demands by providing flexibility to meet graduation requirements through career education, establishing career planning requirements for middle school students, providing for professional development in computer science instruction, and increasing awareness of pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

Florida Legislature Passed Civics Education Bill

CS/HB 807 requires instructional materials used for the middle grades civics education course to be reviewed and approved by the Commissioner of Education in consultation with various organizations and stakeholders. The bill requires the Commissioner to review and make recommendations for improvements to current state adopted civics material and the statewide civics end-of-course assessment by December 31, 2019. The Department of Education is required to review civics education course standards by December 31, 2020.

The bill also allows students who participate in certain civic engagement programs to have their hours count toward service work requirements for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

Florida Legislature Passed Higher Education Reform Bill

The Legislature passed **CS/HB 190**, which is a comprehensive higher education package that ensures Florida's students continue to succeed and higher education institutions are held accountable.

The bill incorporates provisions from **CS/CS/CS/HB 839**, which supports our students who transfer into the SUS system by establishing the "2+2" targeted pathway program to improve student retention and on-time graduation, increases transparency by including Florida College System institution employee salaries and other information on the Florida Has a Right to Know website, and increases accuracy and consistency of data used for determining eligibility for performance funding.

The bill incorporates provisions from **HB 5501**, which provides for the expenditure of carry forward funds, clarifies provisions relating to the Bright Futures Scholarship program and provides criteria to the State Board of Education and Board of Governors for Public Education Capital Outlay projects recommended for funding.

The bill also incorporates provisions from **CS/HB 7051**, which makes colleges and universities more accountable to students and the taxpayers by adding requirements for institutions to correct audit



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findings and requiring the Board of Governors to develop and annually deliver a training program for state university trustees that addresses the role of boards of trustees in governing institutional resources and protecting the public interest.

The bill also incorporates provisions from **HB 257**, which increases the excess credit hours surcharge threshold from 110 percent to 120 percent of the number of credit hours required to earn a baccalaureate degree, thereby allowing students to change their majors or pursue additional leadership opportunities without financial penalty.

Florida Legislature Passed Criminal Justice Reform

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/HB 7125** in an effort to reform the criminal justice system.

Some of the provisions include:

- Allowing a court to sentence a defendant to **administrative probation**, a form of nonreporting supervision that is available to low-risk offenders currently only by transfer of the Department of Corrections (DOC), and to transfer a defendant to administrative probation upon successful completion of half their probationary term.
- Authorizing each judicial circuit to create a **community court**, a type of problem solving court that addresses misdemeanor crimes affecting a particular community.
- Reforming probation violations and standardizing a system for alternative sanctioning to respond to technical probation violations.
- Requiring each clerk of court to create a **Driver License Reinstatement Days** program to facilitate reinstatement for those who have had their license suspended or revoked.
- Expanding **reentry services** for recently released inmates by providing greater job training and career planning opportunities for inmates and authorizing DOC to expand the use of job assignment credentialing and industry certifications.
- Authorizing DOC to develop a Prison Entrepreneurship Program and adopt procedures for inmate admission.
- Increasing the threshold values for specified theft offenses including petit theft, retail theft, and grand theft.
- Expanding eligibility for veterans' treatment programs to individuals who are current or former U.S. Department of Defense contractors or military members of a foreign allied country.
- Authorizing a court to sentence a person meeting all other criteria as a youthful offender if he or she was 21 or younger at the time of the offense, regardless of age at the time of sentence.
- Repealing all mandatory direct file provisions and allowing, but not requiring, a state attorney to direct file an information against a child meeting discretionary direct file criteria.



The Florida Legislature Passed Assignment of Benefits

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/CS/HB 7065** relating to assignment of benefits.

An assignment of benefits (AOB) is a legal tool that allows a contractor, repair person, or other vendor to “stand in the shoes” of a property owner and receive the benefits under a property insurance policy for repairs to the covered property. For example, when homeowners experience water damage and contact a repair person for assistance, the repair person may have the homeowner execute an AOB so work can begin immediately and the repair person can seek payment directly from the insurance company. Since 2006, the number of lawsuits involving AOBs has skyrocketed, generally resulting in higher payouts and litigation costs. These increased costs are ultimately paid for by consumers as higher insurance premiums. The bill addresses the abuses involving AOBs and aims to protect consumers from the impact of increased litigation costs.

Florida Legislature Passed Financial Disclosure Bill

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/HB 7021**, creating a modern and more efficient process for financial disclosure.

CS/HB 7021 provides for the creation of an electronic financial disclosure filing system. This new system provides a modern way of filing financial disclosure for elected officials and state and local employees by utilizing current and up to date technology. The electronic system will also allow the public to easily search public disclosure forms that are filed to ensure full transparency and accountability.

Legislature Passed Bill that Will Increase Voter Participation and Protect the Citizen Initiative Process

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/CS/HB 5**, which concerns local government discretionary surtaxes and the citizen initiative process for amending the Florida Constitution.

The bill requires a referendum to adopt or amend a local discretionary sales surtax be held at a general election. The bill also revises the process for triggering the performance audit of the government entity seeking the surtax by providing that, upon adoption of an ordinance by a local government to hold a discretionary sales surtax referendum, the local government must notify the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). The bill establishes a process for notifying OPPAGA of the need for a performance audit when a proposal to adopt a discretionary sales surtax is by initiative. Failure of a local government or an initiative sponsor to comply with these requirements renders void any referendum held on the proposed surtax.

The bill also changes the citizen initiative process for amending the Florida Constitution by requiring a paid petition circulator to register with the Secretary of State prior to obtaining signatures, prohibiting compensation of a petition circulator based on the number of petitions gathered, and requiring each collected petition form to be submitted to the supervisor within 30 days. The bill requires the Financial



Impact Estimating Conference (FIEC) to include in its analysis whether the proposed amendment will affect the state budget or the state or local economy. If the FIEC estimates the amendment will have an adverse or indeterminate fiscal impact, the ballot must include a statement to that effect. The bill does not affect any petition forms gathered or any contracts entered into prior to the bill's effective date.

Legislature Passed Bill to Increase Accountability and Transparency for Community Redevelopment Agencies

The Legislature passed **CS/HB 9**, which seeks to remedy questionable spending by a number of community redevelopment agencies (CRAs) in Florida. The bill requires that money in the redevelopment trust fund only be expended pursuant to an annual budget adopted by the board of commissioners and only for those purposes specified in law. The bill expands the annual reporting requirements for CRAs and requires each CRA to file a detailed annual report with the county or municipality that created it. The bill provides for the phase-out of existing CRAs, unless the governing body of the creating county or municipality votes to continue the CRA or unless the CRA has outstanding bond obligations. The bill also provides a process for the Department of Economic Opportunity to declare a CRA inactive if it has reported no revenues, no expenditures, and no debt for six consecutive fiscal years. Finally, the bill requires commissioners to undergo four hours of ethics training annually.

Florida Legislature Approved Local Government Financial Reporting

The Legislature passed **HB 861**, which requires county and municipal governments to submit certain budget information to the Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR). The bill also requires the county and municipal tentative budgets and adopted final budgets to remain online for a specified period. **HB 861** will enable EDR to identify trends in government spending and debt and allow Floridians to compare the budget and spending information for local governments.

Florida Legislature Passed Impact Fees Bill

The Legislature approved **CS/HB 207** concerning impact fees. Impact fees are charges imposed by local governments to fund local infrastructure needs caused by new growth. The bill prohibits any local government from requiring payment of impact fees any time prior to issuing a building permit. It also codifies the dual rational nexus test, which requires a direct connection between the fees imposed and the benefits derived from the expenditure of those fees.

Florida Legislature Passes Lottery Warning Bill

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/HB 629**, requiring the Lottery to inform the public about the potential risks of gambling.

The Lottery is a state-run enterprise offering games that can cause addiction or compulsive behavior for some players. Currently, the Lottery urges customers to "Play Responsibly," and encourages problem



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gamblers to seek help, but it does not do enough to inform players about the potential risks associated with gambling. By requiring disclosures on tickets and in advertising, this bill ensures that Floridians and visitors to our state are better informed about the potential risks of gambling before deciding to play the Lottery.

Private Property Right Bill Passed House and Senate

The Florida Legislature passed **CS/HB 1159** dealing with private property rights. The goal of the bill is to inform the public of their rights as property owners. The bill also protects the rights of property owners to maintain trees on their property.

CS/HB 1159 requires county property appraisers to post a Property Owner Bill of Rights on their websites. The Property Owner Bill of Rights includes the right to acquire, possess, and protect property; use and enjoy property; exclude others from property; dispose of property; due process; just compensation for property taken for a public purpose; and relief when a new state or local government law, rule, regulation, or ordinance unfairly affects property. The website must state the Bill of Rights is not comprehensive and does not represent all property rights under Florida law.

The bill also gives residential property owners more power to prune, trim, or remove trees on their property by prohibiting local governments from requiring any sort of permit or notice when a tree is determined by a certified arborist or licensed landscape architect to be a danger to others or property. Further, the bill prohibits local governments from requiring the property owner to replant a tree that is pruned, trimmed, or removed under these specified conditions. The bill also allows a property owner adjacent to an electric utility right-of-way to request an electric utility to maintain the right-of-way without approval from the local government.

Passed House Only

Florida House Passed Ethics Reform Bill

The Florida House passed **CS/HB 1**, an ethics reform bill that would have held elected officials more accountable.

CS/HB 1 would have reformed conflicts of interest law so government employees and elected officials would not use their positions for private gain. Provisions in the bill included requiring disclosure and reporting offers of conflicting employment, prohibiting state and local officers or employees from soliciting a job from a business or entity that the officer or employee's agency has regulatory power over, and revising executive branch lobbying registration requirements.

Florida House Approved Campaign Fund Spending Bill

The Florida House passed **CS/HB 533**, which related to the disposition of surplus funds by candidates. Currently, there are four authorized methods by which a candidate or former candidate may dispose of



his or her campaign funds after an election. One of those methods includes donating the excess funds to a charitable organization or organizations that meet the requirements of s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. This bill would have prohibited a candidate from being employed by the charitable organization to which he or she donates the funds.

Florida House Passed Legislation to Increase Government Accountability for Community Development District Bond Financing

The Florida House passed **HB 641**, which would have required the board of supervisors of a community development district (CDD) to authorize general obligation bonds, benefit bonds, or revenue bonds by a two-thirds vote of all the board members. Currently, a CDD board must approve such resolutions by a simple majority vote of its members.

Florida House of Representatives Voted for Local Government Fiscal Transparency

The Florida House of Representatives passed **CS/CS/HB 15**, which would have increased local government fiscal transparency.

The bill would have focused on helping citizens gain access to important information so they can be more engaged in government decisions. Some of the bill's provisions included: improving access to voting records related to local option taxes and debt issuances; enhancing access to tax history and property tax information; expanding public notice requirements; and improving local government reporting requirements for economic development incentives. The bill also aimed to ensure local governments are responsible, transparent, and accountable with taxpayer dollars, which would have helped give Floridians confidence in their government.

Florida House of Representatives Voted to Modernize the Practice of Pharmacy

The Florida House passed **CS/HB 111**, which would have authorized pharmacists to manage chronic health conditions patients, if the pharmacist meets certain criteria and enters into a collaborative pharmacy practice agreement with the patient's physician. The bill would have established standards of practice for pharmacists providing these services, including a prohibition on prescribing controlled substances. Additionally, the bill would have authorized a pharmacist to test or screen for, and treat, minor non-chronic health conditions if the pharmacist meets and maintains certain qualifications, including prescribing non-controlled substances from a list developed by the Board of Pharmacy. The bill also would have authorized pharmacists to test for and treat flu and strep infections, under a physician protocol, if they meet certain criteria, including education, proof of liability insurance, and employer approval. Pharmacists are highly educated and very qualified to serve patients in collaboration with physicians. The bill would have increased access to quality care.



Florida House of Representatives Voted to Advance the Practice of Health Care Practitioners

The Florida House passed **CS/CS/CS/HB 821**, which would have allowed advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants to practice independently without physician supervision or a protocol, if they meet certain criteria. The bill would have responsibly allowed nurses and physician assistants to practice to the greatest and safest extent of their training, which would have increased access to care.

Florida House of Representatives Voted to Reduce Bias in Physician Referrals

The Florida House passed **CS/CS/HB 863**, which would have prohibited a health care provider from referring patients to any hospital in which the health care provider holds an investment interest. This bill would have eliminated the special exception in the law for hospital investment interested, and would have subjected such referrals to the anti-kickback and patient brokering statutes. Closing the physician referral loophole would have ensured that physician recommendations are based on the patient's best interest and not a provider's financial benefit.

Florida House of Representatives Voted to Improve Health Care Cost Transparency

The Florida House passed **CS/HB 935**, which would have prevented health insurers from prohibiting health care providers from giving patients information on costs. The bill would have prohibited a health insurer or HMO from limiting the ability of any provider to discuss pricing information with a patient. Health care providers would have been allowed to share all information on the costs of care and the availability of more affordable care options. Clear, accurate information about the costs and quality of health care is necessary for consumers to select health care services that provide good value.

Florida House Voted for Medicaid Eligibility Improvements

The Florida House passed **HB 955**, which would have created a new eligibility requirement for Medicaid to incentivize employment. The bill would have directed the Agency for Health Care Administration to seek federal approval to require able-bodied adults in the Medicaid program to work or be in school – consistent with the requirements for federal cash assistance programs.

Florida House of Representatives Voted for Healthcare Innovation

The Florida House passed **CS/HB 961**, which would have created an independent commission to review innovative ideas that face statutory or regulatory barriers to implementation and grant exemptions from specified laws and rules on a case-by-case basis. The bill would have allowed innovations in healthcare to overcome governmental barriers to efficiency, cost reduction, and better patient outcomes.

Florida House of Representatives Voted to Advance Medical Billing Transparency

The Florida House passed **CS/HB 999**, which would have empowered patients and eased the burden of medical bills on consumers. The bill would have helped patients manage their healthcare costs in three ways: requiring facilities to provide binding cost estimates, with exceptions; requiring facilities to establish



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an internal grievance process to contest charges; and increasing consumer protection in debt collection proceedings, including asset protection and a prohibition on taking collection action until all insurance coverage applicable to the patient has been exhausted.

Florida House of Representatives Voted to Give Patients Access to Medical Records

The Florida House passed **CS/HB 1035**, which would have required health care providers to give patients their records the way they want to receive them – including access to the provider’s electronic medical record through a patient portal, or by submitting the records to the patient’s own electronic Personal Health Record – if the provider uses an electronic health records system. The bill would have standardized the timeframes for providers to produce records or allow inspection of records. The bill would have helped patients to be more engaged in their treatment by making it easier to obtain and use their *own* health care records.

Florida House of Representatives Voted to Improve Hospital Charity Care

The Florida House passed **CS/CS/HB 1295**, which would have required hospitals to demonstrate they provide a level of charity that equals or exceeds their property tax liability in order to qualify for an existing property tax exemption for charitable organizations. The bill would have ensured hospitals earn the tax exemption and given Floridians transparent accountability for nearly \$200 million in exemptions annually.

Trade Secrets Legislation Passed House

The Florida House passed **HB 761** and **CS/HB 759** relating to trade secrets. **HB 761** would have created a public record exemption for trade secrets that applied to almost all agencies and entities that are subject to public records requirements, while **CS/HB 759** would have repealed every agency-specific public record exemption for trade secrets. Together, these bills would have established uniformity amongst agencies for protecting trade secret information.

Florida House Passed Charter School Bill

The Florida House passed **CS/CS/HB 1197** that would have increased the number of eligible charter school operators to address the needs of educational capacity, workforce qualifications, and career education opportunities that may extend beyond a school district’s boundaries.

CS/CS/HB 1197 would have authorized state universities and Florida College System (FCS) institutions to sponsor charter schools upon approval by the Department of Education (DOE), allowed FCS institutions with a teacher preparation program to operate more than one charter school, and authorized charter schools to offer career and professional academies.

The bill also would have required the DOE, in collaboration with charter school sponsors and operators, to develop a sponsor evaluation framework and report results in its annual charter school application report. In addition, the bill would have streamlined charter school application reporting requirements and submission dates for both sponsors and the DOE.



Florida House Passed Bill to Ease Occupational Licensing Regulations

The Florida House passed **HB 3**, which would have preempted a local government's ability to enact and maintain occupational licensing schemes.

HB 3 would have protected against burdensome occupational licensing laws that establish barriers to entry. The bill would have expressly preempted the regulation and licensing of occupations to the state, allowing professionals to readily obtain work statewide. Also, the bill would have specifically prohibited local licensure of certain construction-related professions that do not have a statewide license equivalent, such as painters, flooring and tile installers, and cabinetmakers. This deregulation would have brought down the costs of services and allowed more workers to seek employment in their chosen field. However, the bill would have allowed local governments to continue to issue licenses according to a grant of general law authority, and to construction professionals and journeymen that fall within certain scopes of practice.

Florida House Passed Bill to Reduce Regulations on Businesses

The Florida House passed **CS/HB 679**, which would have strengthened the State's Sunrise Act. The bill would have protected Floridians from burdensome regulations by requiring a more careful analysis of new regulatory proposals.

Sunrise reviews are formal procedures for weighing costs and benefits of new regulations. Current law requires the state to perform a sunrise review before passing any legislation that creates new regulations for any unregulated profession or occupation.

CS/HB 679 would have improved the current process by requiring a sunrise review for legislation that substantially expands regulation of an already regulated profession or occupation. The bill also would have added timelines for the submission of information related to such legislation to ensure that the Legislature receives all information necessary to complete a sunrise review.

Florida House Passed Bill to End Public Tax Dollars Going Towards Funding for Stadiums

The Florida House passed **HB 791**, which would have ended the practice of subsidizing professional sports franchise facilities on public lands.

In Florida, 80% of professional sports franchises are located on public land. The bill would have required any sale or lease of public lands and facilities to professional sports franchises to be made at fair market value. Also, Local Tourist Development Tax or Convention Development Tax funds would not have been able to be used to service bonds to finance construction or renovation of professional sports franchise facilities. Floridians take great pride in their sports teams, but they should not have to see their hard-earned tax dollars fund stadium construction or renovations for professional sports franchises. Such subsidies amount to hundreds of millions of dollars. These deals have been financial disasters for taxpayers; for example, public dollars have financed as much as 125% of total stadium costs in four Florida cities alone.