



HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

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Florida House Takes Historic Act to Guarantee Transparency

For the first time in recorded history, the Florida House of Representatives as a body voted to issue a subpoena, carrying with it the full weight and authority provided by the Florida Constitution. This measure is part of the ongoing legal dispute between the Florida House of Representatives and MAT Media over the way millions of taxpayer dollars were spent to produce a cooking show.

The Florida House has made our position clear, nobody will be able to spend a single dollar of taxpayer money in the dark. This week, we signaled how seriously we take this position by issuing this subpoena. I am very proud of the continued work the Florida House has done to ensure that your hard earned dollars are spent wisely and in the Sunshine. I look forward to continuing to provide updates on our progress.

“Rule of Law Adherence Act” Passed by the Florida House

The Florida House of Representatives passed HB 9, also known as the “Rule of Law Adherence Act.” The purpose of the Act is to ensure that federal immigration laws are followed in our state.

Here are four important provisions in the Act to accomplish that goal:

- 1) requires state and local governmental entities and law enforcement agencies to comply with and support the enforcement of federal immigration law;
- 2) requires any sanctuary policies currently in effect be repealed within 90 days of the effective date of the Act;
- 3) requires officials or employees of state and local governmental entities or law enforcement agencies to report violations of the Act to the Attorney General or state attorney; and
- 4) allows a person injured by the conduct of an alien unlawfully present in the United States to sue a state or local governmental entity or law enforcement agency whose violation of the Act contributed to the person’s injury.

Florida is a beautifully diverse state, which we should always celebrate. However, it is also true that our nation’s immigration process is dependent on our ability to properly enforce our current immigration laws. I support this bill because it will help fix our immigration system, and protect our citizens and the rule of law. The bill will now go to the Senate for their consideration.

Florida House Passes Workers’ Compensation Bill

After recent court rulings found parts of Florida’s workers’ compensation law unconstitutional, the Florida House passed a comprehensive bill to address the recent case law, increase rate competition, and provide measured changes focused on system cost drivers. Through the many changes made, the goal of HB 7009



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is to ensure the quick and efficient delivery of wage replacement and medical benefits to an injured worker and to facilitate the worker's timely return to gainful reemployment at a reasonable cost to the employer. The bill is expected to result in significant savings in overall workers' compensation system costs, which will lead to reduced premiums.

I support the bill and think it will improve the state's workers' compensation system for all of those involved. The bill will now go to the Senate for their consideration.

Florida House Approves Property Insurance Assignment of Benefits Reform Bill

The Florida House of Representatives passed HB 7015 to address abuses involving agreements that assign the benefits of a residential property insurance policy to a third party.

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 proceeds of 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 will 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 have risen astronomically, generally resulting in higher payouts and litigation costs. These increased costs are ultimately paid for by consumers as higher insurance premiums. The bill includes provisions that protect consumers and reduce litigation associated with AOBs.

I am proud to have voted for this bill on the House floor because I believe it protects consumers and will help reduce property insurance premiums for homeowners. The bill will now go to the Senate for their consideration.

Florida House Passes Legislation to Hold Government Accountable

This week, the House passed HB 11, which further increases transparency and accountability in government.

The bill holds government accountable by ensuring state agencies and local government entities have internal controls in place to curb waste, fraud, and abuse and promote efficiency in their operations. The bill increases transparency by requiring budget documents for cities and counties to be available online for a certain amount of time so citizens know how their tax dollars are being spent. Finally, the bill reforms public testimony laws so people will have the opportunity to speak at local board and commission meetings without having to submit their comments in advance. This bill may have an insignificant negative fiscal impact on the state and local governments and is primarily a bill that focuses on increasing government accountability and transparency.

I support this bill and pledge to continue looking for ways to make government more transparent, efficient, and accountable to taxpayers. The bill will now go to the Senate for its consideration.



Florida House Passes Repeal Red Light Cameras bill

This week, the Florida House passed HB 6001 to repeal the authorization for the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and local governments to install and maintain red light cameras. The decision follows a review of the 2016-2017 Red Light Camera Summary Report, which shows an *increase* in total crashes and injuries at intersections with red light cameras.

I supported the repeal. Although the intent behind red light cameras may be positive, the data shows they do not work. The bill will now go to the Senate for its consideration.

Florida House Passes Community Redevelopment Agencies Reform Bill

The House passed HB 17 to reform community redevelopment agencies (CRAs). CRAs are created by cities or counties to address slum, blight, or affordable housing shortages through redevelopment. While in committee, members found that some CRAs use taxpayer dollars for improper purposes and that all CRAs need better reporting and oversight. The committee also found that cities and counties can already perform many of the same functions as CRAs.

HB 17 would fix these problems by increasing transparency and accountability for CRAs. It would require board members to receive ethics training, require the Department of Economic Opportunity to declare inactive CRAs meeting certain criteria, and require more oversight of each CRA's budget process. In addition, the bill reforms the process for creating new CRAs and would require current CRAs to receive support from a super majority of the governing board of the creating city or county to continue.

Any government program that uses taxpayer money should be held to the highest standards. I proudly voted for this bill because I believe too many CRAs do not live up to such standards. The bill will now go to the Senate for its consideration.

House Floor Votes to End Public Tax Dollars Going Towards Funding for Stadiums

The House passed HB 13, which would end the practice of wasting taxpayer dollars to subsidize sports franchises on public lands, while also ensuring these organizations are held accountable by requiring them to pay outstanding debts if they no longer use their stadiums.

Floridians take great pride in their sports teams, but I believe they should not have to see their hard-earned tax dollars fund stadium construction or renovations on public land. In Florida, 80% of professional sports franchises have facilities on public land that taxpayers subsidize to the tune of 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.

I proudly supported this measure because I believe taxpayer dollars should be used wisely, and if these teams want to build or renovate stadiums, they should do so with private dollars. The bill will now go to the Senate for its consideration.



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The Florida House Approves Local Government Ethics Reform

The Florida House of Representatives passed HB 7003 this week to reform ethics guidelines for local governments. Some of the provisions of the bill include the following: requiring certain elected local officers to file a more detailed financial disclosure; expanding annual ethics training requirements for local officers; expanding restrictions when a conflict of interest exists; and requiring lobbyists to register with a statewide database before they can lobby local government bodies.

I am proud to support this bill and will continue to find ways to reform government and hold elected officials to the highest ethical standard. The bill will now go to the Senate for their consideration.

Florida House Passes Bill Focused on Local Government Fiscal Transparency

This week, the Florida House passed a bill to increase local government fiscal transparency.

HB 7 focuses on helping citizens gain access to important information so they can be more engaged on important government decisions. Some of the bill's provisions include: 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.

I was proud to support the bill because Floridians deserve to know how their tax dollars are spent.

Motor Vehicle Insurance Bill Passes Florida House

The Florida House passed HB 19 this week, which reforms motor vehicle insurance in Florida. The goal of HB 19 is to increase access to meaningful insurance coverage while bringing personal responsibility and accountability to the system.

The Florida Motor Vehicle No-Fault Law, also known as Personal Injury Protection (PIP), requires vehicle owners and drivers to obtain no-fault coverage. PIP coverage of \$10,000, along with property damage coverage of \$10,000, are the only insurance coverages required for all Florida drivers at the time of vehicle registration. In addition, the Financial Responsibility Law requires all Florida drivers at fault in an accident to be accountable for bodily injuries or deaths (BI) up to \$10,000 for one person, and \$20,000 for two or more persons. BI coverage may be secured through insurance or other allowable means following an accident.

Legislators revised PIP multiple times in response to rampant fraud. Unfortunately, these efforts have not fixed the problems and fraud and abuse in the PIP system continue.

HB 19 would resolve these issues by ending mandatory PIP coverage and replacing it with mandatory BI coverage that must be obtained prior to registering a vehicle. The bill focuses on personal responsibility and does away with the flawed no-fault system. Under the bill, drivers will have to obtain BI coverage that covers, at a minimum, \$25,000 in damages due to bodily injury or death to one person, and \$50,000 for two or more persons. Requiring BI coverage in this manner will bring Florida in-line with the vast majority of states.



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I support this good bill because it will bring much needed personal responsibility and accountability to our motor vehicle insurance system and will help decrease premiums for Florida drivers. The bill will now go to the Senate for their consideration.

Florida House passes improvements to our Health Care system

In the first week of the 2018 Legislative Session, your Florida House passed four health care reform bills, all of which will help increase access to affordable and quality health care for Floridians: HB 41; HB 35; and HB 23.

HB 41 codifies the existing Florida Pregnancy Support Services Program (FPSSP). It requires the Department of Health to contract with the Florida Pregnancy Care Network (FPCN) to provide pregnancy support services that promote and encourage childbirth, and wellness services. Pregnancy support services are services that promote and encourage childbirth, including direct client services, program awareness activities, and communication activities. Wellness services include services or activities intended to maintain and improve health or prevent illness and injury, like anemia testing, assistance with smoking cessation, and screenings for high blood pressure, thyroid functioning, cholesterol, and diabetes. This bill requires that any services provided under FPSSP be provided in a manner that is non-coercive, and may not include any religious content.

HB 35 requires all Florida hospitals and ASCs to complete patient safety culture surveys, and requires the Agency for Health Care Administration to publish the data. These surveys ask employees about patient safety and quality of care in the facility, to help facilities identify and fix problems. When published, the survey data will also help Floridians make decisions about which facilities are best for their own care and that of their families.

HB 23 expands the use of ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs) and allows recovery care centers (RCCs) in the state. ASCs are non-hospital facilities that provide surgical care. ASCs have highly skilled staff and surgeons and are less expensive and have lower infection rates than hospitals. The bill allows patients to stay in ASCs for up to 24 hours, instead of requiring discharge the same business day, which allows more types of patients to use ASCs. RCCs provide post-surgical and post-diagnostic, short-term medical and nursing care, support, and pain control for patients that do not require hospitalization. RCCs exist in some states, but not Florida.

Your Florida House is dedicated to passing legislation that will increase access to quality and affordable health care for all Floridians. The bill will now go to the Senate for their consideration.

Florida House Passes Professional Deregulation Bill

This week, the Florida House passed HB 15 seeking to deregulate certain professions. The goal of the bill is to provide more job opportunities for Floridians while protecting their health and safety.

The bill allows certain professionals to practice their chosen profession without obtaining licensure from the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, reduces the hours of training required to obtain



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certain licenses, and eliminates the requirement that certain professionals obtain a separate license and pay additional fees for their businesses.

There are numerous professions effected by the bill, including: hair braiders; hair wrappers; body wrappers; boxing announcers; boxing timekeepers; labor organizations; barbers; restricted barbers; nail specialists; facial specialists; full specialists; nail polishers; and makeup applicators. In addition, the following licensed professionals will no longer have to pay an additional fee to obtain a separate license for their businesses: architects; landscape architects; geologists; interior designers, asbestos abatement consultants and yacht and ship brokers (branch offices only).

I fully support professional deregulation because it removes unnecessary government barriers, is a key component in allowing businesses to grow more easily and will create more job opportunities for Floridians. The bill will now go to the Senate for their consideration.

House Members Vote to Extend Post-Service Lobbying Bans

The Florida House of Representatives passed HB 5 on Friday, which would extend the current ban on post-service lobbying from two years to six years. The ban prevents legislators and state officers from personally representing a person or entity for compensation before any state agency or state government body. This new six-year ban would be the first of its kind and the strictest ban in the country.

In my view, extending the timeframe of the lobbying ban will help eliminate any actual and perceived revolving door of elected officials profiting off their time in public office. I believe that holding public office is a sacred trust, and I am proud to have strongly supported both measures. The bill will now go to the Senate for their consideration.

House Appropriations Committee Passes Legislation to Protect Taxpayers

This week, the Florida House Appropriations Committee passed HB 7001, a proposed constitutional amendment that would protect taxpayers and Florida's long-term economic future by requiring a supermajority vote to impose any new state tax or fee or to raise any existing state tax or fee. I believe this effort compliments the good work your Florida House has achieved over the years by cutting taxes, cutting regulations, and cutting fees. Governor Scott has echoed these sentiments and is committed to working with the Legislature to continue to keep more money in the pockets of Floridians.

I look forward to supporting this bill, and any other measure that prevents future tax hikes that would endanger our workforce and the livelihood of Florida families.

Transparency and Accountably Bill Passes House Committee

This week, the House Ways & Means Committee passed HB 3, which will bring greater transparency to local tourism promotion agencies (TPA) and economic development agencies (EDA).

Throughout the state, TPA's and EDA's have shown a pattern of misuse and abuse when it comes to your tax dollars. A few of the much-needed accountability and transparency measures in the bill include: requiring all contracts valued over \$5,000 to be published on the TPA's or EDA's website; requiring all



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contracts valued over \$250,000 be submitted to the local governing authority before execution and published on their website 14 days in advance; requiring more frequent audits of TPA's and EDA's; institutes conflict of interest and other ethical provisions to safeguard the use of taxpayer money; and making it a criminal offense to avoid the transparency and accountability requirements in the bill.

I support holding these agencies accountable because I believe anyone receiving public dollars should have complete transparency and always disclose how they are spending taxpayer dollars.

House Committee passes bill to Strengthen Florida's 'Texting While Driving'

This week, the Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee passed HB 33 – Texting While Driving. This bill changes the method of enforcement of the existing ban on texting, emailing, and instant messaging while driving from a secondary enforcement to primary enforcement. The bill maintains the current penalties and exceptions to the texting ban, and maintains that the ban does not apply to stationary motor vehicles. The bill also includes safeguards to protect individuals' privacy rights by ensuring law enforcement officers follow certain protocols regarding access to the wireless communications device during a traffic stop for a violation of the ban.

Texting and driving presents a real, life-threatening danger to Floridians both on and off the road. I believe that providing law enforcement the ability to enforce the 'Texting While Driving' ban as a primary offense will help save lives. I'm confident that this bill also establishes the appropriate balance between safeties on the road while also protecting our individual civil liberties. I look forward to updating you further on the progress of this bill.

Florida House Advances Opioid Bill

In the first week of the 2018 Legislative Session, the House Health Quality Subcommittee passed House Bill 21 to target the opioid crisis affecting our nation and state.

Opioid addiction has been recognized as a public health emergency on both federal and state level. Drug overdoses have steadily increased and now represent the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., the majority of which involve an opioid. In our state, heroin caused 952 deaths, oxycodone caused 723 deaths, and hydrocodone caused 245 deaths in 2016.

This bill addresses opioid abuse by increasing regulation of prescribers and dispensers, expanding the use of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) and aligning state criminal statutes with federal law.

HB 21 limits the prescription for a Schedule II opioid to alleviate acute pain to a three-day supply, or a seven-day supply if deemed medically necessary by the prescriber. The bill requires the Department of Health (DOH) to establish guidelines for prescribing controlled substances for acute pain, similar to those for chronic pain, and requires prescribing practitioners to complete additional continuing education on prescribing controlled substances.

The bill also authorizes DOH to share data in Florida's PDMP with other states, and requires practitioners to review a patient's PDMP history prior to prescribing or dispensing a controlled substance.



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Your Florida House is committed to passing policies that will bring a resolution to opioid addiction and suffering. This crisis requires all of us to take a stand and help our family, friends, and community. If you would like more information on this bill please contact our office. If you or someone you know is suffering with an opioid addiction please contact 1-800-662-HELP (4357).