



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE DANE EAGLE, MAJORITY LEADER

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All communications distributed in mass, including in electronic format, require review and approval *prior to distribution*. The articles included below have been preapproved. However, please remember that you still need approval from the Majority Office before distributing an article if you change it or if you include it with other unapproved material. Refer to chapter 4 of the Administrative Policy Manual for more information on the House mass communications policy.

## **Florida House Voted to Remove Health Care Facility Market Barriers**

Last week, the Florida House passed **HB 21**, which repeals the Certificate of Need program and eliminates the specialty hospital ban. AHCA will still enforce licensure requirements for each facility and service that is no longer subject to the CON program. 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 House Committee Passes Professional Deregulation Bill**

The Business & Professions Subcommittee passed a bill dealing with professional deregulation. **HB 27** reduces regulation that overly burdens Florida professionals, and deregulates some professions, allowing more people to compete in an open market, while continuing to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

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

The bill removes barriers to Florida licensing for out of state professionals by allowing certain professionals licensed in another state to obtain a Florida license without further education, experience, or testing.

For a full list of the professions that will benefit from this bill, please refer to [myfloridahouse.gov](http://myfloridahouse.gov).

## **Florida House Ways & Means Committee Voted for Telehealth Innovations**

Last week, the Florida House Ways & Means Committee passed **CS/HB 23**, which establishes standard of care for telehealth providers.

The bill 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 (DOH) or the applicable board. Also, 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 malignant pain. Finally, the bill encourages health insurance coverage of services provided using telehealth by authorizing a tax credit for insurance companies and HMOs that reimburse for services provided via telehealth.



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### School Choice Bills Pass House Committee

Last Tuesday, the PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee passed two bills enhancing school choice. The goal of the bills is to increase school choice to provide a quality education to all students.

**HB 7095** allows Schools of Hope to open in “Florida Opportunity Zones” to provide quality educational options for students in low-income communities. The bill expands the traditional public school Schools of Hope grant program to reach more students, increases transparency by requiring school districts to report on controlled open enrollment applications, and strengthens background-screening requirements for private school personnel. The bill also allows a student to convert a Hope Scholarship to a transportation scholarship to a public school outside of their school district.

**HB 1197** gives parents more options by increasing the number of eligible charter school operators by allowing state universities and Florida College System (FCS) institutions to sponsor charter schools.

### Private Property Right Bill Passes First Committee

The Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee passed a bill 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.

**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 property owners more power to prune, trim, or remove certain trees on their property by prohibiting local governments from requiring permits. The tree must be determined by a certified arborist to be damaged, diseased, pest infested or dangerous and does not require the property owner to replant a tree that is pruned, trimmed, or removed. 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.

### Florida House Health Market Reform Subcommittee Voted to Improve our Health Care System

Last week, the Florida House Health Market Reform Subcommittee passed three bills that make the healthcare industry better in Florida.

**HB 1243** requires hospital acquisitions of physician practices to be reviewed by the Attorney General’s office before they take place. It requires all hospitals intending to acquire a physician practice to report the acquisition to the Attorney General at least 90 days before the acquisition is complete. The bill also



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allows the Attorney General's Anti-Trust Division to review information for any anticompetitive behavior and act accordingly to prevent monopolies. The bill combats hospital mergers and acquisitions that can result in higher healthcare spending.

**HB 1295** requires hospitals to demonstrate they provide a level of charity that equals or exceeds their property tax liability in order to qualify for a property tax exemption. The bill ensures hospitals do not abuse the tax exemption available to charitable organizations.

### **Florida House Committee Passes Higher Education Transparency Bill**

Last week, the Public Integrity & Ethics Committee passed a bill to increase transparency and accountability for Florida's higher education institutions.

Transparency and accountability are two principles required to maintain the public's trust. Currently, there are some controls in place to ensure that institutions are accountable and responsible stewards of state funds, but there are several areas that need strengthening.

**HB 7051** makes colleges and universities more accountable to students and the taxpayers by adding requirements for institutions to correct audit findings and increasing oversight of state higher education institutions direct support organizations.

### **Florida House Committee Passes Bill to Ease Occupational Licensing Regulations**

The State Affairs Committee passed **HB 3** last week, which preempts a local government's ability to enact occupational licensing requirements.

**HB 3** protects individuals from burdensome regulations by expressly preempting the regulation and licensing of occupations to the state, and allows professionals to obtain work anywhere in the state without the barriers that local regulations create. The bill specifically prohibits local licensure of certain jobs, including painting and flooring installation. This will bring down the costs of services and allow more workers to seek employment in their chosen field. However, the bill allows local governments to continue to license based on a grant of authority to do so by the state in general law and allows local governments to continue to license construction-related professionals and journeymen that fall within certain scopes of practice.

### **Florida House Health & Human Services Committee Voted for Price Transparency**

Last week, the Florida House Health & Human Services Committee passed **HB 935**, which prevents health insurers from prohibiting health care providers from giving patients information on costs.

The bill prohibits a health insurer or HMO from limiting the ability of any provider to discuss pricing information with a patient. Health care providers will be 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.



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## Florida House Appropriations Committee Voted for Taxation Transparency

Last week, the Florida House Appropriations Committee passed **HB 7053** to bring accountability to both state and local taxation.

The bill requires select state and local “levies” to be identified as taxes, instead of their current titles as fees, surcharges, assessments or similar terms. Truth in taxation is critical for public accountability in the exercise of one of the most serious responsibilities of elected officials -- taxation.

## Florida House Committee Passes School Safety Bill

The Education Committee passed a committee bill to increase school safety and security in our Florida schools.

In 2018, the Florida Legislature passed SB 7026 in response to the tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The committee bill is a result of the work product of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Public Safety Commission and recommendations from stakeholders who are implementing the requirements of the school safety act. Every aspect of this bill seeks to create a safer environment for students, while giving districts the tools they have asked for.

The committee bill increases access to the Guardian Program, penalizes school districts for failing to implement school safety strategies, increases information sharing between districts, and utilizes Fortify Florida data to respond to threats. The bill also improves the coordination between schools and law enforcement to provide the appropriate mental and behavioral interventions sooner and allows law enforcement to fulfill their duty regarding school safety.

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.

## The Florida House Justice Appropriations Subcommittee Passes Criminal Justice Reform

Last week the House Justice Appropriations Subcommittee passed **HB 919**, Community Courts, in an effort to reform the criminal justice system.

**HB 919** creates a new problem solving court: community courts. Community courts are designed to address misdemeanor crimes affecting a particular community. The bill allows a judicial circuit to establish a community court and gives the chief judge discretion on what misdemeanor crimes qualify for the community court. The bill seeks to provide a way for particular communities to address problems that affect them directly.

## Florida House Committee Passes Bill to End Public Tax Dollars Going Towards Funding for Stadiums

The Commerce Committee passed **HB 791**, which ends the practice of subsidizing professional sports franchise facilities on public lands.





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In Florida, 80% of professional sports franchises are located on public land. The bill requires 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 cannot 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.

### **Florida House Committee Passes Civics Education Bill**

Last week, the PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee passed a bill relating to civics education.

Civic literacy and preparing students to become engaged and knowledgeable adults who positively contribute to their communities are priorities of Florida's K-20 education system.

**HB 807** requires instructional materials used for the one-semester civics education course in middle school to be reviewed by the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship and approved by the Commissioner of Education.

### **Florida House Ways & Means Committee Voted for Local Government Fiscal Transparency**

Last week, the Florida House Ways & Means Committee passed **HB 15** to increase local government fiscal transparency.

The bill focuses on helping citizens gain access to important information so they can be more engaged in 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. The bill also aims to ensure local governments are responsible, transparent, and accountable with taxpayer dollars, which will help give Floridians confidence in their government.

### **Florida House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee Voted to Allow Innovative Health Plans**

Last week, the Florida House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee passed **CS/HB 997**, which expands availability of association and short-term health insurance.

The bill allows Floridians to take advantage of the new federal regulations on associated 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.



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### The Florida House Appropriations Committee Approves Criminal Justice Reform

Last week the House Appropriations Committee passed **HB 943**, Driver License Reinstatement Days, in an effort to reform the criminal justice system.

**HB 943** requires each judicial circuit to create a Driver License Reinstatement Days program for those who have had their license suspended or revoked. By authorizing clerks to negotiate or waive outstanding fees, the bill reduces financial barriers to license reinstatement and allows people to resume driving to work and purchase motor vehicle insurance.

### Insurance and Banking Subcommittee Discusses Assignment of Benefits

Last Tuesday, the Insurance and Banking Subcommittee heard **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 House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee Voted for Improvements to the Practice of Pharmacy

Last week, the Florida House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee passed **CS/HB 111**, which allows collaborative pharmacy practices between pharmacists and physicians.

The bill authorizes pharmacists to manage chronic health conditions for physicians’ patients, if the pharmacist meets certain criteria and enters into a collaborative pharmacy practice agreement (CPPA) with a physician.

The bill also establishes standards of practice for pharmacists providing these services. It prohibits a collaborating pharmacist from initiating or prescribing a controlled substance, modifying or discontinuing any medication prescribed by a health care practitioner who does not have a CPPA with the pharmacist, and entering into a CPPA without the express, written approval of the owner of the pharmacy at which he or she is an employee. However, a pharmacist may prescribe any non-controlled substance, including those typically requiring a prescription to dispense, such as antibiotics.

Additionally, the bill authorizes a pharmacist to test or screen for, and treat, minor non-chronic health conditions if the pharmacist meets and maintains certain qualifications. The bill also authorizes pharmacists to test for and treat flu and strep infections within the framework of a written protocol with



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a physician if they meet certain criteria, including education, proof of liability insurance, and employer approval.

Allowing pharmacists to safely care for both chronic and minor conditions – with physician involvement – can increase access by widening the pool of health care practitioners who care for Floridians with these illnesses.

## **State Affairs Committee Passes Accountability Bills**

Last week, the State Affairs Committee passed two bills that increase accountability in government.

**HB 9** seeks to remedy the repeated instances of questionable spending by community redevelopment agencies (CRA) in Florida. The bill provides that new CRAs may only be created by approval of two-thirds of the electors voting in a county-wide referendum held during a primary or general election. Among other notable requirements, the bill requires that money in the redevelopment trust fund may only be expended pursuant to an annual budget adopted by the board of commissioners and only for those purposes specified in law. Finally, the bill requires commissioners to undergo four hours of ethics training annually.

**HB 641** provides that the board of supervisors of a community development district must authorize general obligation bonds, benefit bonds, or revenue bonds by a two-thirds vote of all the board members. Currently the board must approve such resolutions by a simple majority vote of its board members.

## **Public Integrity & Ethics Committee Passes Ethics Bills**

Last week, the Public Integrity & Ethics Committee passed two bills to ensure our government is more accountable and transparent to the people of Florida.

**HB 1** reforms conflicts of interest law so government employees and elected officials do not use their positions for private gain. Provisions in the bill include 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.

**HB 1047** includes provisions designed to promote integrity while identifying and eliminating waste, fraud, abuse, mismanagement, and misconduct in government. Some of the provisions in the bill include creating the Florida Integrity Office, enhancing procurement law for state entities, and creating financial incentives for government employee's and state contracted employees who report cases of misconduct or abuse in government under the Whistle-blower's Act.



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## **Appropriations Committee Passes Bill on Electronic Filing Systems for Financial Disclosures**

The Appropriations Committee heard **HB 7021** last week, which 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.

These bills not only provide Floridians with more transparency and accountability, but they also create a higher ethical standard to ensure that our state government's foundation and principles stay strong.