



Legislative leaders concluded their negotiations on next year's \$45-billion state budget last Friday at 6:00 p.m. The budget was sent to the printer, and will be ready for final votes in the House and Senate by Wednesday of this week. It is speculated that lawmakers will have enough time left this session to override vetoes that the Governor may make.

Normally, the Governor has 15 days to review the budget prior to making his veto decisions (the Governor has line-item veto authority). However, when a bill reaches the Governor's desk while the legislature is still in session he only has seven days to act. With two full weeks remaining, there is plenty of time for a "grand finale" finish.

A full report on the budget will be featured in next week's *LegisLetter*.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need further information about any issue which may concern you. I can be reached at 644-4453 or by e-mail, kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu.

Kathleen Daly

Quote of the Week...

"If state workers in our area fell down dead tomorrow, it would take a week to get the smiles off their faces," said Senator Pat Thomas, D-Quincy. "It's the best pay package that I can remember."

Senator Pat Thomas remarks on the state pay package that was approved last Friday.

Source: Tallahassee Democrat, April 18, 1998

Pay Package Finalized

Lawmakers agreed last Friday to increase salaries for state employees on October 1, 1998. Employees who earn \$20,000 or less will be given a \$1,200 annual pay raise. Those who earn \$20,001-36,000 will receive a \$1,000 boost and those who earn more than \$36,001 will get a 2.78 percent raise.

Health premiums will increase on July 1, 1998, but the state will pick up that tab. Premiums will increase again on January 1, 1999, with the state again covering a portion of the increase. Consequently, a state employee who has family coverage will realize an increase in their health costs care of approximately \$14.00 a month after the first of the year.

Session Schedule April 20-April 24, 1998

Senate:

Tuesday, April 21	4:00pm-6:00pm
Wednesday, April 22	9:00am-12:30pm 3:00pm-6:00pm
Thursday, April 23	9:00am-6:00pm
Friday, April 24	9:00am-6:00pm

House:

Monday, April 20	1:30pm-6:00pm
Tuesday, April 21	1:30pm-6:00pm
Wednesday, April 22	2:00pm-6:00pm
Thursday, April 23	8:30am-6:00pm
Friday, April 24	8:30am-6:00pm

Joint Session:

Wednesday, April 22	1:00pm-2:00pm
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Spotlight on Bills

Bills of Interest Update

CS/SB 1358/160: Management Efficiency by Senator John Grant, FSU Alumnus, and Senator George Kirkpatrick passed favorably as a Committee Substitute to the Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 1358/160 out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee last week. There is a similar bill in the House, **HB 755** by Representative Lee Constantine which passed out of the House and has been referred to the Senate Education, Governmental Reform and Oversight and Ways and Means Committees. The management efficiency bill will give universities more flexibility and accountability in certain administrative areas, such as property acquisition and record-keeping and reporting requirements by the BOR and universities.

HB 4159: Naming Bill by the House Colleges and Universities Committee was merged with Committee Substitute for House Bill 3065 sponsored by the House Governmental Operations Committee. **CS/HB 3065** was read for the third time on the Senate floor last week and passed as amended. **CS/HB 3065** was immediately certified and is in messages to the House. The similar bill, **CS/SB 752** by the Senate Education Committee has been placed on the special order calendar in the Senate. **CS/HB 3065** contains language that names the recording studio donated to Florida State University by Echelon International Development Corporation, as "Critchfield Hall."

HB 4259: Governance of Community Colleges by the House Community Colleges and Career Prep Committee was read a third time on the House floor last week and passed as amended. **HB 4259** was immediately certified and is in messages to the Senate. There is a similar bill moving through the Senate, **SB 2100** sponsored by Senator Howard Forman. **SB 2100** passed as a Committee Substitute in the Senate Education Committee last week and is now in Senate Ways & Means. One of the governance provisions in this bill includes directing the State Board of Community Colleges to investigate the need for, and feasibility of, limited baccalaureate degrees at community colleges.

Tuition and Matriculation Fees

Senator George Kirkpatrick is sponsoring **Senate Bill 1854** which authorizes a public university to increase matriculation and tuition fees for students in programs of dentistry, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, and law. The increases may not exceed 110 percent of the national average and must be increased according to a plan approved by the Board of Regents. Fees may be raised over the next 3 to 5 years to reach the maximum allowed. Each plan must provide for need-based financial assistance so that students are not denied access because of the higher fees. The university may retain any revenue generated by the fee differential. **SB 1854** is in the Senate Education Committee and is on the agenda to be discussed today. There is a similar bill moving through the House, **HB 4169** by Representative Tom Warner. **HB 4169** was withdrawn from the House Colleges and Universities Committee and is now in the House Education Appropriations Committee.

Postsecondary Student Financial Aid

Senate Bill 1852, sponsored by Senator George Kirkpatrick, establishes the Florida Student Financial Aid Corporation to administer all the state's financial assistance programs. This bill substantially creates several sections of the Florida Statutes, including: the creation of the Florida Student Financial Aid Corporation; creation of the powers and duties of the board; creation of the fiscal provisions of the board, including a reserve fund, a guarantee account for federal loans, and a separate account for each type of state scholarship; creation of the provisions governing the administration of guaranteed student loans; requiring agencies and political subdivisions of the state to cooperate with the corporation. **SB 1852** is in the Senate Education Committee and is on the agenda to be discussed today.

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