



Tort Reform, budgets, special elections and medical schools were the big headlines during the second week of the legislative session.

Adhering to their pre-printed schedules, legislators wasted no time passing their spending plans out of both the House and Senate Education Budget Committees (**see related story for details**). Attention will turn this week to the full fiscal committees, where budget deliberations will continue. At this early point, the Senate has more money in its budget for the SUS, but the House allocation is more in line with the SUS request.

Major bills continue to move through the process. The 10-20-Life bill, the legislation enacting mandatory prison sentences for anyone carrying or using a gun during a serious crime, passed both chambers last week. House and Senate measures limiting civil lawsuits against businesses passed last week as well. Both bills are facing compromises by House and Senate members before a final version is sent to the Governor.

Former House member and FSU alumnus Jim King was elected to the Florida Senate last week in a special election. He filled the seat vacated by former Senator Bill Bankhead, who was appointed by Governor Bush to head the Department of Juvenile Justice.

In a highly touted meeting last Friday, the Board of Regents unanimously approved Chancellor Herbert's recommendations to expand PIMS programs at several state universities, in lieu of a four year medical school at Florida State University (**see related story**).

This session is moving along at an unusually rapid pace. Please feel free to call me if you need information about bills or other legislative issues. I can be reached at **644-4453** or by e-mail at **kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu**.

BOR MAKES RECOMMENDATION ON MEDICAL EDUCATION

On Friday, March 12, Chancellor Adam Herbert and the Board of Regents unanimously recommended the Florida State University Program in Medical Science (PIMS) be expanded and extended to two years, rather than the four we were seeking. Other recommendations included adding new PIMS programs to FAU, FIU, UCF and FAMU that are to be modeled on the very successful Program in Medical Science program at FSU. Legislators, however, will have to appropriate the funds to expand these new programs. The expectation is that there will be further discussion on this issue prior to the conclusion of the session.

Special Elections Update

Special Elections were held last Tuesday, March 9, for one Senate seat and two House seats across the state. In Senate District 8 (covering Flagler and parts of Duval, Marion, St. Johns and Volusia counties), FSU alumnus **Jim King (Rep.)** captured 67 percent of the vote over his democratic opponent. In House District 35 (covering parts of Orange and Seminole counties), the seat held by former **Representative Bob Brooks (Rep.)** was filled by **Tony Suarez (Dem.)**, who garnered 50.7 percent of the vote. Finally, in House District 61 (covering parts of Hillsborough and Pasco counties), **Ken Littlefield (Rep.)** replaced his brother, former House member **Carl Littlefield**, by winning 54.1 percent of the

Session Schedule for March 15-19, 1999

House

Tuesday, Mar. 16 8:50 am - 12:00 pm
 Wednesday, Mar. 17 8:50 am - 12:00 pm

Senate

Tuesday, Mar. 16 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
 Wednesday, Mar. 17 10:00 am - 12 pm

Quote of the Week

"I refuse to allow my \$30,000 loss to interfere with my million-dollar attitude today."

Newly elected Senator Jim King, formerly of the House of Reps., commenting on the robbery of his Tallahassee home on the day that he took his Senate oath of office
 -Tallahassee Democrat

Spotlight on Bills

The House Governmental Operations Committee passed out three bills of interest this week. **HB 829**, Art in State Buildings, sponsored by **Representative Beverly Kilmer, R-Marianna**, makes it optional to include monies for purchasing artwork within budgets for new state buildings, and cuts in half the percentage of the total budget that could be used to purchase art. The bill now moves to the General Government Appropriations Committee. **HB 61**, by **Representative Evelyn Lynn, R-Ormond Beach**, allows employers of Florida Retirement System (FRS) Senior Management Service Class members to discontinue payment of unfunded liability contributions for those members who opted to participate in a non-state annuity plan. The bill will next be heard in the General Appropriations Committee. **PCB GO 99-03**, also relating to the FRS, clarifies the basis of payments and modifies the limitation on benefits for service under more than one retirement plan. The bill will now be assigned a House bill number.

PCB CU 99-07, a proposed committee bill pertaining to the Bright Futures scholarships passed the House Colleges and Universities Committee last week. These scholarships recognize academic achievement among Florida high school graduates. There are 3 types of awards given: the Florida Academic Scholarship, the Florida Merit Scholarship and the Florida Vocational Gold Seal Scholarship. The bill will raise the minimum SAT requirement for the Academic Scholars to 1270, and to 1020 for the Merit Scholars over the next 3 years. The bill also requires applicants to apply for Pell Grants. The Senate companion, SB 1380 by **Senator Don Sullivan, R- St. Petersburg**, has not yet been heard in committee.

BUDGETS PASS FIRST HURDLE

The Education Subcommittees in the House and Senate passed their budgets on Thursday. They now move to the full fiscal committees this week. Below is a brief comparison, at this early stage, of the two budgets.

■The Challenge Grant Program has been allocated \$18.2 million in recurring dollars by the House. The Senate, however, combined the Challenge Grant program with the Critical Deferred Maintenance category for a total of \$75 million. **The SUS recommended \$36 million for the Challenge Grant program and another \$200 million over 2 years for deferred maintenance.**

■Fee Waivers/Student Fee Trust Fund: \$0 in the House and Senate. However, for State and SUS Employee Free Courses, the **SUS recommended \$17 million. The House budgeted \$17.6 million.**

■Enrollment: House: applied corridor reduction using Fall estimated enrollment (219 FTE) instead of using Spring enrollment (44 FTE); total corridor adjustment reduction — \$3,572,350; no lower level FTE were funded. Senate: recommended a net reduction total of 1,461 FTE (861 FTE at the graduate level); 4,005 FTE were added back (1,603 lower; 840 upper; and 1,562 graduate without flexibility); total 1998-1999 enrollment funding reduction — \$22,243,494.

■Americans with Disabilities: \$0 in both the House and Senate. **The SUS requested \$1.3 million.**

■PO&M: \$6.8 million by the Senate and \$7.8 million by the House. **The SUS requested \$7.8 million.**

■Distance Learning Infrastructure: \$1.5 million in the Senate; \$0 in the House. Florida Academic Counselor and Tracking Systems (FACTS): \$0 in the Senate but \$4.6 million in the House. Postsecondary Distance Learning Institute: \$0 in the Senate, \$350,000 in the House. **The SUS requested \$37.5 million for these three programs combined.**

■Enhanced Institutional Performance and Accountability: \$54.1 million in the Senate and \$72 million in the House. **The SUS recommended \$72 million.**

■The House authorizes a 5 percent differential tuition increase, the Senate authorizes a 10 percent increase to fund the enhancement pot above.

■The House cut \$13.5 million in academic administration, with no redirection as of yet. The Senate redirects \$3.6 million for out-of-state alternate admits.

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