



History was made during the first week of the 2000 Legislative Session, for several reasons. As Governor Jeb Bush addressed the Legislature during his state-of-the-state speech on the opening day of the session, thousands of people marched and protested his One Florida Initiative outside of the Capitol. It was the largest outpouring of public protest at the Capitol during a legislative session, ever. The march drew national names to Tallahassee, including the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Kweisi Mfume, and Martin Luther King III, in addition to the national media.

History was made again the next day when the House Committee on Health Care Services cast a unanimous vote in favor of a four-year medical school at **Florida State University**. This would be the first new medical school to be established in this country in the last 20 years.

Legislators appear to be wasting no time this year in developing a budget. Both the House and Senate education budget committees have already released a first draft of their budget recommendations (**see related story**). Likewise, some other big issues are expected to receive a hearing already this week. Among these is a House ethics bill that would require outgoing public officials to file financial disclosure statements for their last year in office and would give the Ethics Commission a greater ability to investigate potential violations.

This Wednesday will be a garnet and gold day at the Capitol. The FSU Pep Band, Cheerleaders and Circus will assist in a ceremony celebrating our National Championship, while displays that promote our academic programs will also be featured during **FSU Day at the Capitol on March 15**.

You can catch all of the exciting, live debates between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, as well as updates on each day's big issues, on the Florida Channel (local cable channel 47). As always, I welcome your comments and any requests for bills and their analysis. You can reach me at **644-4453** or by e-mail, **kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu**.

## BUDGET ON FAST TRACK

It's only day five of this year's 60-day legislative session, but the state's legislators are expected to have their respective budgets ready for a full vote by the end of next week. Last Thursday, the House and Senate education budget committees released their preliminary funding recommendations. This week the Senate will make key decisions on university tuition rates. Overall, the House increase for the SUS is about \$208 million, with about half of that in non-recurring dollars, including \$67 million for the Challenge Grant Program. The Senate adds \$123 million, of which \$75 million is non-recurring revenue including \$27 million for the Challenge Grant Program.

### HOUSE RECOMMENDATIONS

- \***Florida State University Medical School** — \$9.6 million recurring  
\$12.2 million non-recurring and \$8 million recurring (for Basic Sciences)
- \***Graduate Fee Waivers** — \$12.1 million
- \***Enrollment Plan** — \$53.8 million for 5000 FTEs for the SUS, 986 FTEs for FSU.
- \***Infrastructure (SUS)** — \$20 million
- \***Enhancement Funding** — \$0
- \***Carry-forward dollars** — \$19.8 million cut, \$2 million cut for FSU

### SENATE RECOMMENDATIONS

- \***No budget cuts**
- \***Florida State University Medical School** — \$0
- \***Graduate Fee Waivers** — \$0
- \***Enrollment Plan** — Provides for some new FTEs with \$12 million (77 Graduate FTEs for FSU)
- \***FACTS** — \$2.3 Million
- \***Enhancement Funding** — \$0
- \***Faculty Market Equity** — \$6 Million
- \***Campus Technology** — \$10 Million



# Spotlight on Bills

## Debit and Credit Cards at State Universities

**HB 525 by Representative Leslie Waters (R-Largo)** authorizes state universities to accept debit and credit cards in payment of tuition and fees without charging a convenience fee. It also allows the universities to cover the expense of accepting these cards either with non-appropriated funds or by developing contracts with financial institutions. The bill requires that universities provide ways for students to educate themselves on credit card use and debt management, specifically suggesting seminars or classes in "freshmen life skills." The bill will be the focus of a workshop of the House Colleges and Universities Committee on Monday afternoon, March 13. A similar bill, **SB 878 sponsored by Senator George Kirkpatrick (R-Gainesville)**, has been introduced and referred to the Senate Education Committee and the Committee on Governmental Oversight and Productivity.

## Supervised Family Visitation

**HB 1871 by the Committee on Family Law and Children** was passed out of that committee last week by a unanimous vote. The bill creates an Office for Certification and Monitoring of Supervised Visitation Programs within the Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation, which is responsible for the certification and monitoring of supervised visitation programs. FSU's School of Social work is named in the bill. A comparable bill has been introduced in the Senate, **SB 310 by Senator George Kirkpatrick (R-Gainesville)** and has been referred to the Judiciary Committee and the Committee on Children and Families.

## Direct Support Organizations

**HB 505 by the House Colleges and Universities Committee** passed out of that committee last week by unanimous vote. This bill revises the law relating to post-secondary direct support organizations by prohibiting them from giving directly or indirectly to political committees or "committees of continuous existence as defined in s.106.011, F.S." The bill has an identical bill in the Senate, **CS/S 890, by the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections and Senator Patsy Kurth (D-Palm Bay)**.

## Online Sunshine

Florida's Legislature has gone to the web! Online Sunshine is a direct resource to Florida's capitol. The website contains a variety of legislative information, including: bills, calendars, journals, directories, House/Senate Handbooks, House and Senate information, Citizen's Guides, and a Kid's page. Online Sunshine is accessible via the internet URL/location <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/>

### SESSION SCHEDULE

March 13-17, 2000

#### HOUSE

Wednesday March 15 8:50 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

#### SENATE

Wednesday, March 15 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

Thursday, March 16 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

### *We're Here to Assist You!*

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