



Conferees were named and the conference schedule was set last week, the fifth week of this legislative session. The Education Conferees will meet this afternoon to begin working out the major differences in the education budget. Senate President Jennings and House Speaker Thrasher urged the conferees to complete their work before the Passover/Easter holiday next week. Differences not worked out by that time will be "bumped up" to the leadership for resolution. The budget requires a "cooling-off" period, so the two sides must agree on a spending plan by May 2 to finish this session on time.

On Friday, lawmakers learned they will have an additional \$434.1 million in new money to appropriate, thanks to surges in car and truck sales, along with construction and the stock market. The new dollar figures come from the Revenue Estimating Conference, which last reviewed state revenue projections in November.

This week, the sixth week of the legislative session, is the last week for House substantive committees to meet. The Senate committees will continue through next week. The SUS has several important bills up for a hearing in both the House and the Senate committees (**see spotlight on bills**).

Several major issues are still working their way through the process and have a long way to go before reaching consensus. One such issue is the revamping of the pension plan for state employees. The House plan offers more portability of employees' retirement options; it provides for a change from a "defined benefit system" to a "defined contribution" plan. The Senate is expected to consider a similar bill either this week or next.

The FSU medical school bill passed the House budget committee last week by a vote of 11-1; Representative **Cynthia Chestnut (D, Gainesville, FSU Alum)** was the only dissenting vote. The bill is now ready to be heard on the House floor, probably next week. The Senate companion bill, SB 1692, will most likely come up in a meeting of the Health, Aging and Long-term Care Committee next week.

As always, I welcome your comments and questions, and appreciate your input throughout this busy time of year. I can be reached at **644-4453** or by e-mail at **kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu**.

2000 Education Conferees Announced

Senate President Toni Jennings and House Speaker John Thrasher announced the 2000 Education Conferees last Thursday. These conferees are appointed to work out the differences between the House and Senate budgets.

HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE:

Representative Stephen Wise (R, Jacksonville), Chair
Representative Cynthia Chestnut (D, Gainesville, FSU Alum)

Representative Lee Constantine (R, Altamonte Springs)
Representative Evelyn Lynn (R, Ormond Beach)
Representative Jerry Melvin (R, Ft. Walton Beach)
Representative Marjorie Turnbull (D, Tallahassee)
Representative JD Alexander (R, Frostproof), Alternate
Representative Ron Greenstein (D, Coconut Creek), Alternate

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE:

Senator Donald Sullivan (R, Seminole), Chair
Senator Charles Clary (R, Destin)
Senator Betty Holzendorf (D, Jacksonville)
Senator Mario Diaz-Balart (R, Miami), Alternate

HOUSE AT LARGE COMMITTEE:

Representative Ken Pruitt (R, Port St. Lucie), Chair
Representative Les Miller (D, Tampa), Vice Chair
Representative Rudy Bradley (D, St. Petersburg)
Representative Carlos Lacasa (R, Miami)
Representative Dennis Jones (R, Treasure Island)
Representative Tom Feeney (R, Oviedo)
Representative Paula Dockery (R, Lakeland)
Representative Rudy Garcia (R, Hialeah)
Representative Willie Logan (D, Opa-locka)
Representative Al Lawson (D, Tallahassee, FSU Alum)
Representative Jerry Maygarden (R, Pensacola)
Representative Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D, Davie)
Representative Beryl Roberts (D, Miami, FSU Alum)
Representative David Bitner (R, Port Charlotte), Alternate
Representative Elaine Bloom (D, Miami Beach), Alternate

SENATE AT LARGE COMMITTEE:

Senator Locke Burt (R, Ormond Beach), Chair
Senator Buddy Dyer (R, Destin)
Senator Jim Horne (R, Orange Park, FSU Alum)
Senator Jack Latvala (R, Palm Harbor)
Senator "Doc" Myers (R, Hobe Sound)



Spotlight on Bills

New Universities

SB 2448 by Senator Don Sullivan (R-St. Petersburg), will be heard in the Senate Education Committee on April 10. This bill would create four new universities in Florida: Suncoast University in Pinellas County, Los Olas University in Broward County, Treasure Coast University in Indian River County and Ringling University in Sarasota County. The bill states there is a rising need for baccalaureate programs in the state and cites "lower operating costs, a focus on undergraduate education and a limited institutional mission..." as some of the advantages for making new degree programs available through universities that are not research oriented. It is anticipated that the bill will quickly be amended to create only three new universities. The House companion is **HB 2447 by Representative Debby Sanderson (R-Ft. Lauderdale)**.

State Group Insurance Program

SB 1712 by Senator Skip Campbell (D-Tamarac), provides open enrollment to state employees who have retired so that they can access state group insurance. The bill passed favorably out of the Government Oversight and Productivity Committee and now moves to the Fiscal Policy Committee.

Athletic Agents

SB 2468 by Senator Jim King (R-Jacksonville), passed out of the Senate Regulated Industries Committee last week by unanimous vote. This is the companion bill to **HB 1521 by Representative Bill Andrews (R-Delray Beach)** and addresses "illegal inducements" to student athletes and the damages universities could receive as a result of law suits involving agents who have engaged in illegal behavior.

UPDATE:

Bobby Bowden Field, SB 2316 by Senator Pat Thomas (D-Quincy) passed out of the Senate last week by unanimous vote and was received by the House and placed on the calendar.

Drug-Free Work Places, HB 1519 by Representative Evelyn Lynn (R-Ormond Beach) has been passed out of the Governmental Operations Committee and is now in Insurance.

Alcoholic Beverages and Student Curriculum, CS/HB 5, by Representative Sally Heyman (D-North Miami Beach) has passed out of both the House and the Senate and is in returning messages in the House.

Trust Fund for Major Gifts, HB 2035 by Representative Lee Constantine (R-Altamonte Springs) is scheduled to be heard April 11 in the House Education Appropriations Committee. The comparable Senate bill, **SB 2092 by Senator Don Sullivan (R-St. Petersburg)**, will be heard by the Senate Education Committee on April 10.

Student Discipline, HB 1883 by Representative Willie Logan (D-Opa Locka), passed unanimously out of the House Colleges and Universities Committee last week after having been substantially amended. It now defers to the Board of Regents task force recommendations.

Linkage Institutes, HB 825 by Representative Chris Hart (R-Tampa), passed unanimously out of House Education Innovation Committee and now moves to Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations. This bill houses the linkage institutes within the Department of State.

Supervised Family Visitation, HB 1871 by the Committee on Family Law and Children, was passed favorably out of House Governmental Rules & Regulations and now moves to Health & Human Services Appropriations. A similar Senate bill, **CS/SB 310 by Senator George Kirkpatrick (R-Gainesville)** was passed out of the Judiciary Committee last week.

Credit & Debit Cards, SB 878 sponsored by Senator George Kirkpatrick (R-Gainesville), was unanimously passed out of the Senate Education Committee last week and will now move to Governmental Oversight and Productivity.

Direct Support Organizations, CS/SB 890 by the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections and Senator Patsy Kurth (R-Palm Bay), passed unanimously out of the Senate last week and is now in House messages.

Rulemaking Authority within the State University System, CS/HB 1567 by the House Committee on Colleges & Universities and Representative Bob Casey (R-Gainesville), has been withdrawn from the Finance & Taxation Committee and placed in Education Appropriations

SESSION SCHEDULE April 10-14, 2000

SENATE

Tuesday, April 11 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday, April 12 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

HOUSE

Wednesday, April 12 9:20 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

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