

LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Volume Thirteen/ Number Three • March 17, 2003



The budget picture worsened as the second week of the session came to a close. On Friday, the Revenue Estimating Conference met to give House and Senate budget writers a projection for the fiscal year that starts on July 1. The panel lowered the \$800 million growth projection made in November by almost \$350 million, leaving legislators to wonder how they might balance the state's \$50 billion budget. House Speaker Johnnie Byrd (R-Plant City) was quoted as saying he would issue "major cuts in services, but not raise new taxes." Senate President Jim King (R-Jacksonville, FSU Alumnus), meanwhile, said that although the Senate would look at new revenue sources, such as video gaming terminals at horse and dog tracks, his chamber will "do whatever is necessary to balance our budget." Both the House and Senate Education Appropriations Subcommittees will meet this week to pass out their preliminary budget plans.

Last week the House Higher Education Subcommittee deliberated and passed a Higher Education Finance Policy Proposed Committee Bill (see related story). The bill offers changes to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, creates an optional admissions deposit, along with two new fees, repeals the mandatory CLEP provisions for Bright Futures students, and clarifies the definition of "in state" for tuition purposes. The bill will be heard in the full K-20 Committee this afternoon. Also, a bill capping public funds for SUS presidents' salaries to \$225,000 passed unanimously out of the Senate Education Committee last Wednesday.

We are putting the finishing touches on our plans for FSU Day at the Capitol, which is shaping up to be our best yet. Please mark the date on your calendar - Wednesday, April 2 - and plan to attend, wearing your garnet and gold, of course!

Live and taped coverage of each chamber's sessions and committee meetings are broadcast on the Florida Channel, 24 hours a day, Monday through Sunday on local cable channel 4.

Please feel free to contact me at 644-4453, or by e-mail at kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu, if you have questions or need information about a bill and its analysis. As always, I welcome your comments.

Kathleen

Higher Ed Proposed Committee Bill Passes

The House Higher Education Subcommittee last week passed their first proposed committee bill (PCB) relating to higher education finance policy. The bill:

- ◆Creates an optional \$200.00 admissions deposit, subject to Board of Trustees approval.
- ◆Creates an optional technology fee, capped at 5 percent of tuition, and subject to approval by the Board of Trustees.
- ◆Creates an optional enhancement fee, capped at 5 percent of tuition, and subject to approval by the Board of Trustees, which a panel of students and administrators will decide how to spend on each campus. This enhancement fee is defined in the proposal as one that will be used for enhancing the "instructional and university experience for students."
- ◆Repeals the CLEP mandate for Bright Futures scholars.
- ◆Clarifies tuition residency law by further defining qualifications for in-state residents.
- ◆Revises the Bright Futures Scholarship Program by raising the SAT for the Florida Academic Scholars to 1270, and a Florida Medallion Scholar to 1050 by next year. The PCB does not contain a need-based component, requires universities to subsidize the Bright Futures award, and allows the Legislature to adjust the criteria for Bright Futures Scholarships by the year 2007-08.

This bill will be heard in the full K-20 Committee this afternoon, and is expected to pass after further amendments.

Spotlight on Bills

HB 199 - Florida Prepaid College Program, by Representative John Carassas (R-Largo) Provides that in the event the state discontinues the Prepaid program, any qualified beneficiary who has been accepted in the program, and is within 18 years of entering an institution of higher learning, will be entitled to the complete benefits of his or her contract. **Senator Jeff Atwater (R-Palm Beach Gardens)**, filed the identical SB 1396 in the Senate.

HB 319 - Governance, State Universities, by Representative Dave Mealor (R-Lake Mary) Allows the Board of Governors to oversee the state universities pursuant to section 7(d), Article IX of the State Constitution. There is no Senate companion at this time.

SB 2344 - Resident Status/Tuition, by Senator Alex Villalobos (R-Miami, FSU Alumnus) Provides that students who have lived in Florida for at least 3 consecutive years, received a high-school diploma or its equivalent, attended a Florida high school for at least 3 consecutive years, and provided an affidavit stating they will file an application to become a permanent resident of the United States, shall be classified as residents for tuition purposes at a state community college or university. **Representative Juan Zapata (R-Miami)** filed identical bill, **HB 119**, in the House.

HB 169 - Autism Spectrum Disorder/Health Insurance, by Representative Nan Rich (D-Sunrise) Provides that any health insurer or health maintenance organization that issues major medical-expense coverage in Florida may not exclude coverage for the treatment of autism spectrum disorder. **Senator Steven Geller (D-Hallandale Beach, FSU Alumnus)** filed the Senate companion, **SB 84**.

HB 137 - Sales Tax Holiday, by Representative Bev Kilmer (R - Marianna) provides for a 2 to 9 day period in August of each year for an exemption from sales tax for the purchase of clothing, including but not limited to wearing apparel and footwear, wallets or bags, with a value of \$50.00 or less. **Senator Anna Cowin (R - Leesburg)** filed the companion bill, **SB 474**.

SB 1032 - Teacher Recruitment and Retention by the Committee on Education, requires the Department of Education to develop a long-range plan for teacher recruitment and retention. The plan must include a model peer-mentoring program for new teachers and may include other incentives. The House has not filed a companion at this time.

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE

Tuesday, March 18
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 19
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

HOUSE

Wednesday, March 19
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Friday, March 21
9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL
RELATIONS

Kathleen M. Daly
Director

Lauren Larson
Coordinator, Information/Publications

Toni Moore
Senior Administrative Assistant

Chris Adcock
Executive Secretary

The Florida State University
216 Westcott Building
Tallahassee, FL 32306