

LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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This Wednesday marks the halfway point of the 2003 session, and every issue of substance – including medical malpractice, workers' compensation reform, and all of the higher-education proposals – have yet to be resolved.

The full House and Senate Appropriations Committees passed their budget plans on Friday, which advances them to their respective chambers for consideration later this week (**see related story**).

There are vast differences between the House and Senate budget plans. These differences, along with the fact that few other major bills have passed to this point, make it unlikely the session will conclude on its scheduled stop date of May 2.

To complicate things further, compromise between the chambers may be impeded because both may have to approve a modified reapportionment plan (which was prompted by problems in the map the House originally approved) that was OK'd by a federal court last summer. Some pundits believe **Senate President Jim King (R-Jacksonville, FSU Alumn)** will use passage of these modified House maps to influence that chamber toward the Senate's budget, as well as other priorities. "It is leverage, obviously," King said.

On a lighter note, this Wednesday, April 2, is FSU Day at the Capitol. This year's event promises to be the best ever, so mark your calendar, and plan to attend this Garnet and Golden day (**see related story**).

As always, feel free to contact me if you have comments or questions about legislation, or specific issues of concern. I can be reached at **(850) 644-4453** or kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu.

Kathleen

FSU Day at the Capitol

On **Wednesday, April 2**, state legislators, FSU celebrities, University officials, employees and supporters will celebrate the school's past, present and future at the Seventh Annual FSU Day at the Capitol.

This will be the biggest FSU Day to date with over 40 academic and student displays, entertainment by FSU student organizations and appearances by celebrity FSU graduates.

The festivities will begin on **Tuesday, April 1**, with presentations and a resolution on the floor of the House of Representatives. Then on Wednesday, the celebration continues with the Senate presentation of the resolution proclaiming April 2, 2003 as FSU Day. This presentation will include a special prayer led by Coach Bobby Bowden and the pledge of allegiance led by Coach Mike Martin.

At 10:00 a.m., the academic and student displays will be open on the plaza level, second and third floor rotundas. These displays will feature several colleges and departments within the University, as well as some of the premier centers and institutes that make their home at FSU; i.e. the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, the World War II Institute and the newly opened Challenger Learning Center.

The focus of the program will then shift to the courtyard at 11:30 a.m. where there will be performances by the Chiefly Brass, the Flying High Circus, Cheerleaders and Salsa Florida. Seminole Tribe members will present President T.K. Wetherell with an authentic Seminole jacket. The President will also recognize our 21 alumni in the Legislature with special recognition of **Speaker-designate Allan Bense ('72, '74)** and **Senate President Jim King ('61, '62)**. Appearances by FSU Celebrity alumni will also include: Actress Jane Alexander, NFL's Peter Boulware, Derrick Brooks, Corey Simon, Greg Spires, and Super Bowl MVP Dexter Jackson; and Professor Mark Winegardner, author of the "Godfather" sequel.

FSU Day at the Capitol will conclude at 2:00 p.m. on April 2, however, as is evident by the support of our alumni and friends, the celebration of our University's history and future can be witnessed everyday.



Spotlight on Bills

SB1332, Contractor Bonds/ Public Buildings by Senator Les Miller, Jr. (D-Tampa). Modifies the contract amount limits for payment and performance bonds of contractors for public building construction. The Senate companion is **HB 259 by Representative Arthenia Joyner (D-Tampa).**

SB1268, Lottery/Unclaimed Prize Money by Senator Evelyn Lynn (R-Ormond Beach). Provides that unclaimed prize money will be dispersed to public schools, community colleges, and universities on pro rata basis based on enrollment numbers. The Senate companion is **HB 893 by Representative Leslie Waters (R-St. Petersburg, FSU Alum).**

SB1032, Teacher Recruitment & Retention by the Education Committee. Provides requirements for DOE retention of qualified teachers; requires DOE to cultivate a long-range plan for the recruitment and retention of educators; identifies the specific contents of the plan; requires school districts to consider incorporating the specified requisites of the plan; requires DOE to report to the Legislature on an

annual basis, the progress of the incorporated programs contained in said plan. The House has not filed a companion bill at this time.

HB119, Students/Resident Status/Tuition by Representative Juan Zapata (R-Miami). Categorizes certain students as residents for tuition purposes. The Senate has filed the identical bill, **SB 2344, by Senator Alex Villalobos (R-Miami, FSU Alum).**

HB193, School Readiness Programs by Gustavo Barreiro (R-Miami). Requires the Florida Partnership for School Readiness and the School Readiness coalitions to begin planning programs which will allow admission of all 4-year-old children to school-based pre-kindergarten programs at zero cost to the children’s families; allows for the funding of these programs; amends the provisions regarding these coalitions. The Senate has filed the identical bill, **SB 1334, by Senator Rudy Garcia (R-Hialeah).**

HB65, Schools/Small School Requirement by Representative Jeff Kottkamp (R-Cape Coral, FSU Alum). Repeals the provision of the small school requisite; amends the cross-references and conforms the language. Both the House and Senate have filed similar bills.

BUDGET UPDATE

The budget battle intensified last week as each chamber’s spending plan passed its appropriations committee. The Senate’s \$52 billion budget advances to the full Senate on Thursday, while the House plan advances on Friday.

The differences between the two spending plans are considerable. The House boosts K-12 teacher pay, while the Senate does not. The House’s proposed cut of \$118 million in general revenue for the SUS still stands, but they do allow for a 12.5 percent tuition hike. Meanwhile, the Senate’s cuts to the SUS are still at \$36 million, but they allow for tuition increases of only 7.5 percent. Neither budget includes enrollment-growth funding, the lottery-bonding proposal – which allows for the buy down of the major gifts backlog, or for significant flexibility in tuition and fees, all of which were listed as FSU priorities at the start of the session.

Also last week, the House rejected a proposal to add an amendment to the budget that would have limited participation in the Bright Futures scholarship program to families with incomes of \$75,000 per year or less.

The Senate admits that its budget is “harmful,” an admission that is partly designed to build the case for more revenue. The House, meanwhile, praises its own budget, maintaining that it funds the state’s “core” programs, while using \$1.3 billion in trust-fund monies and other non-recurring resources to fund recurring programs.

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE

Wednesday, April 2
10:15 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Thursday, April 3
1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Friday, April 4
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

HOUSE

Tuesday, April 1
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Friday, April 4
9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.



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