

LegisLetter

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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The constitution requires the Legislature to do one thing during their annual 60-day session—pass a budget. Well, sixty days are up on Friday, and right now it appears this task will not be completed within that time.

Budget negotiators have settled on the amount of money they have to spend, but they are bogged down on how to allocate those dollars between education, health and human services, environmental protection, and state employee salaries, to name but a few. Senate President Jim King and House Speaker Johnnie Byrd talked this weekend in an effort to work out these details. But as of late Sunday afternoon, they hadn't been able to resolve any of these matters. Once they do come to a compromise, the Florida Constitution requires the budget to "cool" for 72 hours (to allow legislators to review it) before either chamber can vote on it. That means agreement would have to be reached by Tuesday night for this session to end on time. Since this, seemingly, is unlikely, the House and Senate leadership has already indicated that the session will extend for an additional week, until May 10.

The SUS's substantive legislation is poised and ready to pass this week, and move on to the Governor. Included in the House and Senate bills are several "glitch" items, such as workers' comp and pre-tax benefits language, as well as non-glitch items like an admissions deposit, residency for purposes of tuition requirements, limits to the Major Gifts program, and new UMIFA language. In addition, the CLEP mandate for Bright Futures students is expected to be repealed, and the university building naming bill, and legislation limiting university presidents' salaries to \$225,000 of state funds, are expected to pass this week.

In these final days (weeks?) of the Legislative Session, scenarios change rapidly and frequently. Up-to-the-minute information is available through The Florida Channel (locally on WFSU, cable channel 4); check your local listings. And as always, please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. I can be reached at (850) 644-4453, or by e-mail at kdaly@govrel.fsu.edu.

Kathleen

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE

Monday, April 28

10:00 a.m. - completion of agenda

Tuesday, April 29

9:30 a.m. - completion of agenda

Wednesday, April 30

9:30 a.m. - completion of agenda

Thursday, May 1

9:30 a.m. - completion of agenda

Friday, May 2

9:30 a.m. - Sine die

HOUSE

Monday, April 28

10:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 29

10:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 30

10:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 1

10:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Friday, May 2

10:30 a.m. - Sine die

Spotlight on Bills

HB 1367 — Public School Student Progression by Representative Bob Henriquez, (D-Tampa) and Representative Rene Garcia, (R-Hialeah). An act concerning public school student development; requires the comprehensive procedure for student advancement to involve evaluation of performance in social studies; conforming requirements regarding subject area grade level advancement of students in Department of Juvenile Justice education programs. This bill passed the House last week. The identical bill, **SB 2272, by Senator Steven Geller, (D-Hallandale Beach, FSU Alum)** is in the Senate Education Appropriations Subcommittee.

HB 1739 — Access to Postsecondary Education by the Committee on Education K-20 and others. Develops a stipulation for access to postsecondary education and meaningful careers for students with disabilities; revises the stipulation relating to high school graduation requirements; requires the State Education Board to adopt rules providing for FCAT accommodations and modifications of procedures for students with disabilities; revises the stipulation relating to admissions of students to community colleges. The bill passed both the House and Senate and was signed into law by the Governor last week.

SB 958 — Retirement/District School Board/FRS by the Governmental Oversight and Productivity Committee. Amends the options of employees who participate in the Community College Optional Retirement Program; amends specific terms of positions where the district school board can employ the member after a certain time; amends the payroll contribution rates for this FRS plan for the 2003-2004 fiscal year; decreases the estimation of expenses, both administrative and educational. This bill passed out of the Senate on Friday. The House filed similar bills.

SB 474 — Florida Resident's Tax Relief Act by Senator Anna Cowin, (R-Leesburg). Creates the Florida Residents' Tax Relief Act; specifies a five-day period during which the sale of school supplies or certain uniform school clothing shall be exempt from sales tax; defines term "school supplies" for purposes of exemption. This bill is now in Finance and Taxation. The House companion bill, **HB137, by Representative Bev Kilmer, (R-Marianna)** specifies a nine-day period of exemption on these items and is on the House Special Order Calendar.

SB 1400 — High Speed Ground Transportation System by Senator Ron Klein, (D-Delray Beach) Includes returning the High-speed Ground Transportation issue to the voters to revoke the constitutional amendment that requires the growth and operation of a high-speed ground transportation system in state. This bill passed the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation. However, the House filed a similar bill, **HB 309, by Representative Bob Allen, (R-Merritt Island),** which, after much discussion, was rejected in the House last week. This bill requires three-fifths support in both legislative chambers to pass.

SB 2136 — Postsecondary Student Fees by Senator Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, (D-Pembroke Pines) Authorizes university boards of trustees to impose a nonrefundable admission deposit. Provides for use of the deposit if the student fails to enroll following admission. This bill is set for its final reading in the Senate this week. The House filed a similar bill, **HB 619, by Representative Lorraine Ausley, (D-Tallahassee)** which is sitting in House Appropriations.

HB 319 — Board of Governors/State University by Representative David Meador, (R-Lake Mary). Establishes a Board of Governors; allows membership and terms of office; revises membership

of university boards of trustees & terms of office; creates the Florida Uniform Management of Institutional Funds Act (UMIFA); provides for expenditure of endowment funds by governing board; provides investment authority, delegates the investment and management costs. The bill also contains Rep. Ausley's admissions deposit language. This bill is scheduled for its final reading this week. The Senate filed the similar bill, **SB 1520 by Senator Lee Constantine, (R-Altamonte Springs),** which will be heard by the full Senate this week.

HB 1169 Local Government Prompt Payment Act by Representative Ron Reagan, (R-Sarasota) Creates the Local Government Prompt Payment Act; describes the term "local governmental entity" to encompass community colleges; amends the requirements for the timely payment for purchases of construction services to within 30 days for construction projects \$10 million or less and within 90 days for projects estimated at \$10 million or more. The bill will be heard by the full House this week. The Senate companion bill **SB 1724 by Senator Michael Bennett, (R-Bradenton),** is set for the Senate Special Order Calendar for this week.



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