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State revenue estimators met on Friday to determine the amount of funds available for the coming fiscal year. While their report was on the plus side for the first time in several years, uncertainties surrounding the federal government's latest budget disagreements put a damper on this good news (see related story).

The Florida Senate plans to begin its budget-appropriation discussions this week, while deliberations in the House will probably take place within the next week or two.

Meanwhile, bills important to Florida State continue to move through legislative committees. The University Preeminence bill will have second hearings in both the House and Senate education committees this week, while a bill that would exempt executive searches at postsecondary institutions from public records will be heard for the first time tomorrow. Please see the Spotlight on Bills section of this newsletter for more on legislation currently moving through the process.

A major occurrence last week was the resignation of Lt. Gov. Jennifer Carroll. While details are still sketchy, consulting work provided by Ms. Carroll to operators of a statewide network of Internet cafes apparently instigated an investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. The broader investigation of Internet cafes by law enforcement agencies prompted the legislature to quickly hear and pass bills out of committee that would make Internet cafes illegal in Florida. As for Lt. Gov. Carroll's replacement, Gov. Scott said he plans to wait until the 2013 Legislative Session concludes in May before making an appointment.

If you would like to follow the legislative process, The Florida Channel provides live and taped coverage of the 2013 legislative session, with reports on local-cable channel 4 and online at www.TheFloridaChannel.org.

As always, please feel free to contact me with questions about issues moving through the legislative process. I can be reached at kdaly@fsu.edu or **(850) 644-4453**.

Kathleen

SESSION SCHEDULE

SENATE SESSION TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

HOUSE SESSION THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 12:30 p.m. until completion.

State Revenue Predicted to Increase

In a report released Friday, Florida's economic forecasters projected a moderate increase in state revenue collections through 2014. These totals include \$153 million for the current fiscal year and \$106.5 million for FY 2014, which begins July 1.

State economists have been working to balance two opposing forces at work on Florida's revenue picture. While the state economy appears to be on the rebound, the federal government's reversal of a payroll tax cut, which expired during the

"fiscal cliff" negotiations, plus the across-the-board spending cuts – the "sequester" – threaten to slow Florida's growth. (The state budget, which is currently around \$70 billion, includes required contributions to federal programs such as Medicaid and transportation.)

The modest bumps in state revenue probably won't significantly change this session's budget picture – or impact this week's Senate budget negotiations – but they are encouraging. The Senate's spending-

plan allocations may be released as early as Wednesday, according to the chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. The House has not indicated when they will release their first budget draft.

Overall, state lawmakers have \$3.5 billion more to work with for the coming year compared to last year. Even with the policy decisions and budget priorities currently proposed, the legislature should still have an additional \$1.1 billion to work with.

SPOTLIGHT ON **BILLS**

HB 359 – Public Meetings by Representative Cary Pigman (R – Sebring), provides that a meeting or portion of a meeting of a DSO board of directors, or the board's executive committee or other committee of the board, at which documents exempt from public records laws are discussed, is exempt from public meetings requirements. The bill further specifies that meetings or portions of meetings discussing the expenditure of public funds or public records be subject to public meetings laws.

The bill provides for repeal of the exemption on October 2, 2018, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature. The bill was amended last week to narrow the scope of the public meetings exemption, limiting its applicability to meetings at

which the identity of a donor or prospective donor, any proposal seeking research funding from the organization, or a plan or program for either initiating or supporting research is discussed. It also adds greater detail to the bill's statement of public necessity. This change aligns the exemption more closely with the statement of public necessity and serves to avoid constitutional issues related to overbroad public meetings exemptions. The Senate companion, **SB 1276 by Senator Bill Montford (D – Tallahassee, FSU Alum)** will be heard later today in the Education Committee.

HB 163 – Ticketholders' Rights by Representative Jimmy Smith (R – Lecanto), provides that an event or admission ticket purchased by a consumer is considered

personal property of that consumer. Additionally, the bill provides that any restriction imposed on the purchase of the ticket, which prohibits the consumer from transferring or reselling the ticket to another consumer, or which imposes conditions upon or prescribes the means or methods of such transaction, is void. The bill reported favorable by the Business and Profession Regulation Subcommittee last week and is now in the Regulatory Affairs Committee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 394 by Senator Alan Hays (R – Umatilla)** has been referred to the Commerce and Tourism, Judiciary and Rules Committees.

CS HB 53 – Student Assessment Program for Public Schools by Representative Manny Diaz (R – Hialeah), pro-

vides that beginning with the 2014-15 school year, each school district must adopt a rigorous student assessment for each subject and grade level not tested by statewide assessments. Such assessments must be used to measure student learning gains and mastery of course content and to evaluate the performance of classroom teachers of these courses.

In addition, Florida law requires each district school board to periodically assess student performance based upon the content established in the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and local goals that are consistent with the state plan for education and that supplement the knowledge and skills necessary for successful grade-to-grade progression and high school graduation. The law does not specifically require school districts to establish schedules for administering district assessments.

The bill requires each school district to establish schedules for administering district assessments. The district school board as an agenda item at a board meeting must approve these schedules. The schedules must be published on the school district website in a manner that clearly identifies each applicable district assessment and reported to the Department of Education annually by October 1. The bill passed out of the Education Committee last week. A similar bill in the Senate, **SB 478 by Senator Anitere Flores (R – Miami)** has been referred to the Education Committee, Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and the Appropriations Committee.

HB 139, Minimum Salaries for New and Experienced Full-Time Teachers in Public Schools by Representative Kevin Rader (D – Boca Raton), proposes an amendment to s. 1, Art. IX of State Constitution to set minimum salaries for new and experienced full-time teachers in public schools. By 2015, the minimum salary for a new full-time teacher in a public school must

be at least the national average salary for new full-time teachers in public schools, and the average salary for an experienced full-time teacher in a public school must be at least the national average salary for experienced full-time teachers in public schools. Salary adjustments required by amendment are independent of employee benefits and must not result in decreased employee benefits. The State, rather than school districts, must fund required salary increases. The bill is in the K-12 Subcommittee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 198 by Senator Joe Abruzzo (D – Wellington)** has been referred to the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and the Education, Judiciary, Appropriations, and Rules committees.

SB 920 – State University System by Senator Nancy De-tert (R – Venice), establishes a mechanism for full time resident students continuously enrolled at a state university to maintain the same tuition and fees for a period of four consecutive years. The bill provides that tuition and fees charged by state universities must remain unchanged for four consecutive years beginning with the time of an undergraduate student's initial enrollment at a state university if the student meets the following conditions:

- Enrolls full time at a state university for the first time beginning the fall 2013 semester or during an academic term thereafter;
- Remains continuously enrolled at the state university for four consecutive years;
- Qualifies as a resident for tuition purposes; and
- Completes degree requirements within 4 academic years unless the degree requirements exceed 120 semester hours as approved by the Florida Board of Governors.

The bill reported favorably in the Education Committee last week and is now in the Appropriations Subcom-

mittee on Education. There is no House companion at this time.

UPDATE ON BILLS

CS HB 7011 – Florida Retirement System by Representative Jason Brodeur (R – Sanford), limits the ability of members of the optional retirement program to transfer to the Florida Retirement System and provides for compulsory membership in FRS Investment Plan for employees initially enrolled after January 1, 2014. The bill was amended last week to make minor adjustments to certain employer contribution rates for the Florida Retirement System related to funding the Unfunded Actuarial Liability. The bill reported favorably by the State Affairs Committee. The Senate companion, **SB 1392 by Senator Wilton Simpson (R – New Port Richey)** reported favorably by the Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee last week.

HB 863 -- Teacher Preparation and Accountability by Representative Ross Spano (R – Riverview, FSU Alum), revises provisions relating to state-approved teacher preparation programs. The bill was amended last week to remove the requirement that principals establish and maintain an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) for each instructional employee. Principals still have the option to continue using the IPDP if they so choose. The bill will be heard in the Education Appropriations Subcommittee on Tuesday. The Senate companion, **SB 1664 by Senator John Legg (R – Lutz)** will be heard in the Education committee today.

SB 1076 – Career and Professional Education Act by Senator John Legg (R – Lutz), revises educational programs and creates certain funding incentives to increase the likelihood that educational programs in Florida's public schools, colleges, and universities will better prepare students for future occupations

and careers. The bill was amended last week to require the Florida Virtual Campus to provide information about industry certifications and to clarify that state university performance funding for computer and information technology programs will be awarded competitively in 2013-2014, and the universities that received performance funding in this category in 2012-2013 will receive awards in the same amounts in 2013-2014. The bill reported favorably in the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education last week. The house companion, **HB 7057 by Representative Jeanette Nunez (R – Miami)** will be heard in the Education Appropriations Subcommittee this week.

PCB HEWS 13-01 – Postsecondary Education by Representative Jeanette Nunez (R – Miami), amends provisions of law relating to the State University System (SUS), the Florida College System (FCS), school districts, developmental and general education requirements, adult education, workforce education, and various other provisions, including university preeminence. The bill was amended last week to:

- Provides flexibility in the implementation date to allow for potential delays associated with the SACS accreditation process;
- Adds gap analysis information provided by the Board of Governors to the information that must be considered by the program when identifying workforce needs; and
- Requires the program to share information related to program planning and effectiveness with

the Board of Governors, the State Board of Education, and the chancellors of the State University System and the Florida College System.

The proposed bill was filed as Committee 7057 and has its second hearing tomorrow.



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