



Volume **19** | Number **1** | **January 9, 2012**

Every ten years the Florida Legislature is required by the state constitution to convene its annual 60-day session earlier than usual in order to realign state and Congressional election districts in accordance with census data. This is one of those years and, consequently, the 2012 legislative session begins tomorrow.

In addition to the politically contentious redistricting issues, Florida legislators will also consider the possibility of allowing casino gambling in our state, an internet sales tax, a host of veterans issues, sweeping changes to state-employee health benefits, and potential reforms to higher education (see Spotlight on Bills).

In spite of national data to the contrary, state economists predict revenues for the coming fiscal year will total roughly \$2 billion less than the previous year. With its authority to appropriate, the legislature will thereby determine whether higher education budgets will be cut yet again, or level funded for the first time in years.

For his part, Governor Scott has recommended no cuts to state-university budgets, but also no increases in their tuition levels (see related story).

In any case, there is no ambiguity regarding the Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) fund, which is financed by gross-receipts tax revenue and funds building projects on university campuses. Last week, the forecast for those revenues was lowered to approximately \$33.5 million, supporting the state economists projection last October that there would be no revenue for bond-financed construction on our campuses.

Discussion of higher education is expected to consume this first week of the legislative session. In fact, President Barron is scheduled to present to three different education committees later in the week, including an institutional overview on Friday to the House Education Committee.

Dr. Barron's testimony will be telecast live by the Florida Channel, local cable channel 4, and so will tomorrow's opening day ceremonies, which include the governor's State of the State address at 11:00 am.

This legislative update will be emailed weekly for the next nine or so weeks. Should you need copies of pending bills and their analysis, please feel free to contact me at **(850) 644-4453** or **kdaly@fsu.edu**.

Kathleen

Governor's Budget Recommendations Released last month

On December 7th, the Governor released his \$66.4 billion budget recommendations. These recommendations reduce the 2012-13 spending plan by 4.6% or nearly \$3 billion under the current fiscal year's budget to levels close to FY 2005-06. The plan however, includes over \$1 billion in new state K-12 funding, and includes the \$3.3 million FSU request for the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory. Additionally, the Governor's plan does not provide PECO funds for construction projects, continues tuition at the current rate and does not provide state employee pay increases. While the Governor did not recommend sweeping

changes to the state employee health benefits package, he did recommend that all employees pay the same amount for their coverage no matter their classification. Finally, the Governor's recommended the elimination of nearly 4,500 state jobs. Many of those positions are already vacant, leaving about 600 employees potentially jobless should the Legislature follow this recommendation.

Keep in mind that only the Legislature has the authority to appropriate and these are merely budget suggestions from the Governor to the Legislature.



FSU Day at the Capitol

FSU Day at the Capitol is a popular tradition during the session and a wonderful opportunity to bring Florida State University to our friends in the Legislature. With this event, we emphasize the University's long and proud heritage and bring attention to the extraordinary accomplishments of students and faculty. This year, FSU Day at the Capitol is scheduled for Tuesday, February 7, 2012. Additionally, we are expanding the festivities with a "Seminole Evening" reception the evening of February 6th on the 22nd floor of the capitol.

Please join us for a day filled with informative displays in the plaza level, second and third floor rotundas from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., as well as appearances by FSU celebrities, performances by the Pep Band, cheerleaders and the Flying High Circus during the lunch hour in the courtyard beginning at 11:30 a.m. Refreshments will be available for all to enjoy.

Please contact Toni Moore at 644-3847 if your department has not yet signed up for a display.

Mark your calendars now! We look forward to seeing you in your Garnet and Gold on February 7.



Advocate for Florida State

The 2012 Legislative Session begins tomorrow. Please go to advocateforfloridastate.fsu.edu and take time to look at the president's message and the university's legislative priorities. If you haven't already done so, we encourage you to register today and join the group of Florida State University alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends who want to help our University.

We advocate the University's positions on higher education funding and other issues to our state elected officials. By emailing, calling, writing or meeting with our legislators, we communicate the importance of FSU's educational, research and community service missions to the state and to us personally.

Through our team effort, we tell our story and generate support for Florida State.

SPOTLIGHT ON BILLS

SB 1366, Education by Senator Don Gaetz (R – Destin)

requires the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to prepare or contract with an entity to prepare, and economic security report of employment and earning outcomes for degrees earned at a state university. Additionally, the bill requires the DEO to refer secondary school students who have been identified as having earned an industry certification in science, technology, engineering or mathematics to an online registration website or a private placement service that links the student to information, resources and employment opportunities. Further the bill requires the State Board of Education in consultation with the Board of Governors and the DOE to adopt a unified state plan to improve K-20 education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, etc. There is no House companion at this time.

SB 1508, Board of Governors, by Senator Bill Montford (D – Tallahassee, FSU Alum)

is a joint resolution proposing an amendment to Section 7 of Article IX of the State Constitution to replace the president of the Florida Student Association or the equivalent as a member of the Statewide Board of Governors with the student body president of a state university. A similar bill in the House, **HB 931 by Representative Matt Gaetz (R – Shalimar, FSU Alum)** has been filed.

HB 977, Current and Former Military Personnel by Representative Bryan Nelson (R – Apopka)

renames and revises Florida Service-Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Opportunity Act to expand vendor preference in state contracting to include certain businesses owned and

operated by wartime veterans or veterans of the period of war. Additionally, the bill creates “T. Patt Maney Veterans’ Treatment Intervention Act” and provides that person who alleges that he or she committed criminal offense as result of posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, substance use disorder, or psychological problems stemming from service in combat theater in U.S. military may have hearing on that issue before sentencing. The bill also creates the misdemeanor pretrial veterans’ treatment intervention program. Also, the bill requires that any veteran who meets specified criteria be admitted to any Florida College System institution or state university of veteran’s choice. The bill is now in the Economic Affairs Committee. There are several companions to this bill. Following are some of them.

HB 45, Postsecondary Education Course Registration for Veterans by Representative Jimmie Smith (R – Lecanto)

requires Florida College System institutions and state universities to provide priority course registration for veterans and provides eligibility requirements. Additionally, the bill encourages certain independent postsecondary educational institutions to provide priority course registration for veterans. The bill reported favorably in the K-20 Innovation Subcommittee and is now in the Community & Military Affairs Subcommittee. A similar bill in the Senate, **SB 94 by Senator Mike Fasano (R – New Port Richey)** is now in the Budget Subcommittee on Higher Education Appropriations.

SB 164, Resident Status for Tuition Purposes by Senator Mike Fasano (R – New Port Richey)

allows veterans of the U.S. Armed Services who physically attend a public college,

university or institution of higher learning in Florida, to be automatically classified as a resident of the state for tuition purposes. This bill essentially waives the current one year requirement for veterans to establish residency in the state before they can qualify for in-state tuition rates. The bill is now in the Higher Education Committee. The identical bill in the House, **HB 131 by Representative Clay Ingram (R – Pensacola, FSU Alum)** is now in the K-20 Innovation Subcommittee.

SB 1018, Resident Status for Tuition Purposes by Senator Rene Garcia (R – Hialeah)

classifies as a resident for tuition purposes a United States citizen who attends a Florida high school for at least two consecutive years and submits his or her high school transcript to, and enrolls in, an institution of higher education within 12 months after graduating from a Florida high school. The bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules and the Board of Governors of the State University System to adopt regulations, etc. The bill has been referred to Higher Education, Budget, and Rules Committees. A comparable bill in the House, **HB 441 by Representative Reggie Fullwood (D – Jacksonville)** has been referred to the K-20 Innovation Subcommittee, Rulemaking & Regulation Subcommittee, Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, and the Education Committee.

HB 873, Athlete Agents by Representative Doug Broxson (R – Milton)

requires that and individual who practices as an athlete agent be licensed as professional athlete agent or limited athlete agent by DBPR. The bill provides that an agent contract may conform to form approved by national professional sports association for sport in which student athlete will be

represented under certain circumstances. The bill requires that an athlete agent deposit a surety bond with the department before contacting an athlete or entering into agent contract or contract for financial services with a student athlete under certain conditions. Further, the bill prohibits an athlete agent from offering or furnishing anything of value to a student athlete or individual related to the student athlete before the student completes his or her last intercollegiate sports contest. Additionally, the bill requires the department to send notice of athlete agent's conviction of offense to each national professional sports association that has certified said agent. The bill authorizes a student athlete to sue for damages and requires the department to publish on its Internet website information prescribing responsibilities of colleges & universities, and requires the department to notify the athletic director or other appropriate official of each college or university of any changes to responsibilities, etc. The bill is now in the Business & Consumer Affairs Subcommittee. The identical bill in the **Senate, SB 630 by Senator Jim Norman (R – Tampa)**, has been referred to the Regulated Industries, Criminal Justice, and Budget Committees.

SB 1020, Naming of Public Buildings and Facilities by Senator Rene Garcia (R – Hialeah), proposes an amendment to the State Constitution to prohibit the naming of public buildings and facilities for a person not deceased for a certain period of time unless approved by a four-fifths vote of the governmental body enacting the designation, except that no such building or facility may be named for a public officer while that person is in public office, etc. The bill has been referred to the Governmental Oversight and Accountability, Community Affairs, Judiciary committees. The identical bill in the **House, HB 41 by Representative Matthew Caldwell (R – Ft. Myers)** is now in Government Operations Subcommittee.

SB 762, Practice of Professions Regulated by Department of Business and Professional Regulation by Senator Alan Hays (R – Umatilla), reduces the maximum amount of continuing education that may be required by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation or one of its boards to reactivate certain inactive licenses.

The bill reduces the maximum amount of continuing education that may be required by the Board of Architecture and Interior Design to reactivate an inactive registered architect or an interior designer license. Further, the bill reduces the maximum amount of continuing education that may be required by the Board of Landscape Architecture to reactivate certain inactive licenses, etc. The bill has been referred to the Regulated Industries, Criminal Justice, and Budget committees. A similar bill in the House, **HB 517 by Representative James Grant (R – Tampa)** is now in Rulemaking & Regulation Subcommittee.

HB 323, Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement by Representative Michelle Rehwinkel-Vasilinda (D – Tallahassee), is a memorial that urges Congress to enact legislation to authorize states that have complied with Streamlined Sales & Use Tax Agreement to require out-of-state sellers (internet sellers) to collect each such state's sales & use tax. The bill is now in Federal Affairs Subcommittee. The identical bill in the Senate, **SB 126 by Senator Evelyn Lynn (R – Ormond Beach)** is now in Budget Subcommittee on Finance and Tax.

SESSION SCHEDULE

HOUSE SESSION TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 9:30 a.m TO 11:00 a.m.

SENATE SESSION TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 10:00 a.m. TO 11:00 a.m. 2:30 p.m. TO 4:30 p.m.

JOINT SESSION TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 11:00 a.m. UNTIL COMPLETION



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