



## Issue Spotlight: Building Public Trust

The Florida House is committed to ensuring government is accountable and transparent, and government officials are held to the highest ethical standards. In doing so, the House hopes to continue building public trust.

The House started this mission with itself, by passing the strongest transparency and accountability requirements in the body's history, including a six year lobbying ban and a reformed budget process. Now the House is pursuing these types of reforms for all other levels of government in the state.

Below are brief descriptions of bills that offer opportunities to advance this mission. Please refer to bill texts and analyses for more complete and specific information on each bill.

### *Extended Lobby Ban – CS/HB 7003 & CS/HJR 7001, Chairman Metz*

- It's time to close the revolving door of former elected officials becoming lobbyists.
- **CS/HB 7003** extends the current statutory lobby ban from two years to six years. The bill prevents legislators and statewide elected officers from lobbying their former government body for six years after leaving office.
- **CS/HJR 7001** proposes an amendment to Florida's Constitution that would apply the same extension of the post-service lobbying ban from two years to six years.
  - If passed by a three-fifths vote in both the House and Senate, the proposed constitutional amendment would be placed on the 2018 ballot for voter approval.
- The new six-year ban would be the first of its kind and the strictest in America.
- **STATUS:** CS/HB 7003 passed the House on 3/10/2017, and CS/HJR 7001 passed the House on 3/30/2017.

### *Ethics Reform – CS/HB 7083, Rep. Sullivan*

- Enacts reforms to conflict of interest laws so government employees and elected officials serve the public and do not use their positions for private gain.
- Some of the reforms related to conflicts of interest in the bill include:
  - Prohibiting state and local officers or employees from soliciting a conflicting job.
  - Requiring disclosure and reporting on offers of conflicting employment.
  - Requiring state legislators and statewide elected officers to disclose changes in employment and pay raises immediately when the employer has interests in the legislative process.
  - Imposing a two-year ban on agency directors from lobbying any state agency.
- **STATUS:** CS/HB 7083 passed the House on 4/20/2017.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

## ***Local Government Ethics Reform – CS/HB 7021, Chairman Metz***

- Ethics reforms should not stop at the state level. Local government officials, like state officials, should be held to the highest ethical standard.
- Some of the ethics reforms for local governments in the bill include:
  - Requiring certain elected local officers to file a more detailed financial disclosure.
  - Expanding annual ethics training requirements for local officers.
  - Expanding restrictions when a conflict of interest exists.
  - Requiring lobbyists to register with a statewide database before they can lobby local government bodies.
- **STATUS:** CS/HB 7021 passed the House on 3/30/2017.

## ***Government Accountability – CS/CS/CS/HB 479, Chairman Metz***

- The bill makes government more transparent, efficient, and accountable to taxpayers.
- Some of the reforms to hold government accountable include:
  - Ensuring state agencies and other government entities have internal controls in place to curb waste, fraud, and abuse and promote efficiency in their operations.
  - Increasing transparency by extending the amount of time budget documents for cities and counties must be available online so citizens know how their tax dollars are being spent.
  - Limiting the amount that may be reimbursed per day for travel lodging expenses for certain employees under certain circumstances.
  - Reforming public testimony laws so people will have the opportunity to speak at local board and commission meetings without having to submit their comments in advance.
- **STATUS:** CS/CS/CS HB 479 passed the House on 3/30/2017.

## ***Agency Inspectors General – HB 207, Rep. Plakon***

- We strive to be fiscally responsible and crack down on wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars.
- Recent reports found a state agency hosted a dinner that served filet mignon, lobster, and top shelf liquor *with taxpayer money*.
  - The agency's inspector general, along with 60 other employees, later received a bonus.
- The bill prohibits state agency inspector generals from receiving bonuses for work performance.
  - This change is needed to ensure agency inspector generals remain as independent as possible and prevent wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars under their watch.
- **STATUS:** HB 207 passed the House 3/30/2017.