



HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

The Majority Office created the below articles as content for your newsletters. The Majority Office also created the following video that highlights the “Top 5” things that happened in the House throughout the week: <https://youtu.be/DQWjlbGsgwg>.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All communications distributed in mass, including in electronic format, require review and approval *prior to* distribution. The articles included below have been preapproved. However, please remember that you still need approval from the Majority Office before distributing an article if you change it or if you include it with other unapproved material. Refer to chapter 4 of the Administrative Policy Manual for more information on the House mass communications policy.

House Subcommittee Passes Professional Deregulation Bill

This week, the Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee passed a comprehensive bill seeking to deregulate certain professions. The goal of the bill is to provide more job opportunities for Floridians while protecting their health and safety.

The bill would prevent certain professions from being regulated by the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, reduce the hours of training required to obtain certain licenses, and eliminate the requirement that certain licensees obtain a certificate of authorization for their businesses, as well as other changes.

There are numerous professions effected by the bill, including: interior designers; hair braiders; hair wrappers; body wrappers; boxing announcers; boxing timekeepers; labor organizations and business agents; talent agencies; auctioneers; barbers; restricted barbers; nail specialists; facial specialists; full specialists; asbestos abatement consultants and contractors; architects; landscape architects; geologists; and yacht and ship brokers.

I fully support professional deregulation because it removes unnecessary government barriers, is a key component in allowing businesses to grow more easily and will create more job opportunities for Floridians.

House Committee Passes Bill to Limit Gambling

The Ways & Means Committee passed a bill this week that seeks to authorize the Governor’s execution of a new Gaming Compact with the Seminole Tribe of Florida and resolve issues related to pari-mutuel wagering, cardroom gambling, slot machine gambling, and other gambling.

The bill will create a new 20 year compact between the State and the Seminole Tribe of Florida. State revenues from the new compact will be used exclusively for education, focusing on recruiting and retaining the best teachers in the K-12 school system, helping under-served students from persistently failing schools, and increasing funding for distinguished faculty in higher education.

The bill also closes loopholes and shuts down card games not authorized by the Legislature, limits gambling to current locations, eliminates inactive and delinquent gambling permits, and prohibits the



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issuance of new gambling permits. This bill will more effectively restrict gambling in our state to current levels at existing locations, which will protect Florida's national and international brand as a family friendly place to live, work, and visit for many years to come.

I believe this bill strikes a reasonable balance between controlling gambling and establishing long-term certainty and predictability for existing gambling entities in our state, while providing much needed funding for education. I will keep you updated as the bill continues to move through the legislative process.

House Committee Passes Legislation to Hold Government Accountable

On Wednesday, the House Government Accountability Committee passed HB 479, which further increases accountability and transparency in government.

The bill holds government accountable by ensuring state agencies and other government entities have internal controls in place to curb waste, fraud, and abuse and promote efficiency in their operations. The bill increases 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. Finally, the bill reforms 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.

I support this bill and pledge to continue looking for ways to make government more transparent, efficient, and accountable to taxpayers. The next stop for HB 479 is the House floor, where all members of the Florida House of Representatives will vote on the bill.

House Committee Votes to Hold Public Employee Unions Accountable

The House Government Accountability Committee passed HB 11, which reforms the annual public employee union recertification process to increase transparency and accountability. HB 11 requires public employee unions to be transparent by reporting in their annual registration renewal application the number of employees eligible to be in the union and the number of employees who do and do not pay dues to the union. If 50 percent or more of eligible union members do not pay dues, the union must reapply for certification. A union that does not comply with these requirements will have its certification revoked. Unions that represent law enforcement officers, firefighters, and corrections officers are *not* included in these changes, except for the reporting requirement.

HB 11 is a positive step in increasing transparency and holding public employee unions accountable to the workers they represent. The next stop for HB 11 is the House floor, where all members of the Florida House of Representatives will vote on the bill.

Florida House Votes to Repeal Red Light Cameras

This week, the Florida House passed HB 6007 to repeal the authorization for the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and local governments to install and maintain red light cameras. The decision



follows previous reviews by House committees of the 2015-2016 Red Light Camera Summary Report, which shows an *increase* in total crashes and injuries at intersections with red light cameras.

I supported the repeal. Although the intent behind red light cameras may be positive, the data shows they do not work.

House Subcommittee Passes Bill to Publish Student Assessments Online

The PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee passed HB 549, which requires the Department of Education (DOE) to publish statewide student assessments on their website.

Florida's statewide student assessment program is used to measure if students have mastered Florida's academic content standards. Currently, only sample questions of statewide assessments are posted on the DOE website. These sample questions are not taken from actual assessments; they are only meant to show the types of questions asked.

HB 549 requires that every three years the DOE publish any assessment administered during the previous school year on their website. The bill provides that only questions—not students' answers—will be published. This will begin in 2020 with the initial release including, at a minimum, the third grade English language arts and mathematics assessments, the tenth grade English language arts assessments, and the Algebra I end of course assessment.

I support this bill because parents should be able to know what are in these tests. Doing so will not only increase transparency and accountability with state assessments, but will also allow parents to be more engaged in their children's education.

Civil Justice Subcommittee Passes Condo Reforms

The Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee passed HB 1237, which proposes reforms to condominium laws. The bill seeks to address many of the issues raised in a recent grand jury investigation that found fraud and rampant abuse of power within condo associations.

Some of the many reforms the bill provides include the following: eliminating conflicts of interests by prohibiting contracts between a condo association and any company related to an officer or director of the association; allowing tenants the right to inspect their association's bylaws and rules; creating misdemeanor criminal penalties for persistent denial of access to official records; creating felony criminal penalties for fraudulent voting activities in association elections; and increasing the protections on a member's right to vote in association elections.

I support the bill and believe these measures are important steps to take in order to help limit the amount of fraud and abuse that has unfortunately plagued our state's condominium industry.



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House Committee Approves Local Government Ethics Reform

The Government Accountability Committee passed HB 7021 this week to reform ethics guidelines for local governments. Some important provisions of the bill include the following: 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; and requiring lobbyists to register with a statewide database before they can lobby local government bodies.

I support reforms like this on the state level of government and am certainly happy to support these reforms to improve accountability and transparency at the local level of government. The next stop for HB 7021 is the House floor, where all members of the Florida House of Representatives will vote on the bill.

Florida House Passes Bill Protecting Florida Property Owners

During the third week of session, the Florida House passed a bill that seeks to protect Florida property owners by limiting property tax assessments on non-homestead properties. HJR 21 is a proposed constitutional amendment that would **permanently** retain the current 10 percent cap on annual non-homestead parcel assessments approved by voters in 2008.

I proudly supported HJR 21 because I believe this effort is necessary to avoid a property tax increase on Floridians. I look forward to seeing this proposal on the ballot at the 2018 general election.