



## 2026 Legislative Session Interim Update - Week 5

The Legislature returned to Tallahassee this week to begin two more weeks of committee meetings before the start of the 2026 Legislative Session on January 13. It was a lighter committee week in the Senate compared to the House, where members tackled a range of issues from the minimum age to purchase a firearm and state-run health insurance, to sovereign immunity caps and four property tax proposals. The House also held the first committee meeting of the Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting. While the House is taking steps towards a potential mid-decade redistricting of the state's congressional map, Senate President Albritton announced on Thursday "there is no ongoing work regarding redistricting taking place in the Senate at this time." Governor DeSantis announced earlier this week his intention to call a special session on congressional redistricting in the spring of 2026.

Governor DeSantis will also release the details of his proposed budget in the coming days. This budget will be the last budget he submits prior to leaving office in early January 2027. The Legislature often uses the Governor's budget recommendations as a starting point for its own budget deliberations. In addition to his budget priorities, Governor DeSantis will likely propose several policies for legislative consideration, including property tax reduction proposals, limitations on mandatory vaccines for children, puppy mill crackdowns, and congressional redistricting. On Thursday, Governor DeSantis announced his proposal for a Citizen Bill of Rights for Artificial Intelligence. The Legislature will respond to the proposals and will also address hundreds of their own policy proposals in the upcoming legislative session.

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## AI Bill of Rights

On Thursday, Governor DeSantis [proposed legislation](#) to establish an "Artificial Intelligence Bill of Rights" for Floridians. The bill would prohibit certain uses of AI — such as deepfakes, exploitation of individuals' name/image/likeness without consent, "AI therapy," and unconsented data-sharing — require notice when people interact with AI systems, extend parental controls over minors' AI usage, and bar insurance companies from using AI as the sole basis to deny or adjust claims. It also seeks to restrict the development of hyperscale AI data centers by prohibiting taxpayer subsidies, preventing utility-cost pass-through to residents, preserving water resources and natural land, and allowing local governments to

## Legislation of Interest

(listed alphabetically)

**Acupuncture** – [HB 169](#) by Rep. Jose Alvarez (D-Kissimmee) revises licensure requirements for acupuncturists including allowing for the order and administration of herbs, homeopathic and other nutritional supplements.

**Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Autonomous Practice** – [SB 138](#) by Sen. Keith Truenow (R-Tavares) and [HB 301](#) by Rep. Jason Shoaf (R-Port St. Joe) authorize certain advanced practice registered nurses to engage in autonomous practice to provide mental health services as defined by the Board of Nursing.

**Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Initiative** - [SB 578](#) by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) and [HB 513](#) by Rep. Dean Black (R-Jacksonville) require the Department of Elderly Affairs to contract for the development and implementation of the Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Initiative.

**Autonomous Practice by a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist** – [SB 462](#) by Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) and [HB 375](#) by Rep. Mike Giallombardo (R-Cape Coral) authorize autonomous CRNAs to perform CRNA-specific acts, such as conducting a pre-anesthesia evaluation, ordering and administering the anesthetic as determined appropriate, monitoring and interpreting patient's vital signs, and managing the patient during surgery and in recovery, without an established supervisory protocol.

**Comprehensive Health Care for Residents** - [SB 740](#) by Sen. Rosalind Osgood (D-Tamarac) creates the Florida Health Board to promote the delivery of high-quality, coordinated health care services and administer the Florida Health Plan to all residents regardless of

**Medicaid Coverage of Blood Pressure Monitoring Devices** – [SB 736](#) by Sen. Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills) defines the terms “blood pressure cuff” and “validated at-home blood pressure monitor,” requires AHCA to provide coverage for validated at-home blood pressure monitors and blood pressure cuffs for certain Medicaid recipients who have a prescription for a validated at-home blood pressure monitor, and provides requirements for follow-up care for Medicaid recipients to continue receiving coverage.

**Naturopathic Medicine** – [HB 223](#) by Rep. David Smith (R-Winter Springs) reestablishes licensure and regulation of naturopathic physicians, and establishes new standards for the practice. The bill provides licensure authority over naturopathic physicians to the Department of Health and creates the Board of Naturopathic Medicine to assist DOH in the regulation of naturopathic physicians.

**Parental Rights** – [SB 166](#) by Sen. Erin Grail (R-Fort Pierce) and [HB 173](#) by Rep. Kim Kendall (R-St. Johns) revise requirements for the provision of maternal health and contraceptive information and services to minors. The bills require consent from a parent or guardian for a minor's treatment for certain diseases, repeal a provision relating to minors' access to outpatient crisis intervention services and treatment, and require school districts to provide parents with specified information before the district administers certain questionnaires or forms to students.

**Physician Assistants** – [SB 668](#) by Sen. Keith Truenow (R-Tavares) provides for the registration of physician assistants to engage in practice without physician supervision, provides financial

immigration status. The bill prohibits enrollees from incurring copayments, deductibles, coinsurance, or other point-of-service costs, creates the Florida Health Board with authority to set budgets, negotiate rates, and oversee compliance and quality standards, and creates the Office of Health Quality and Planning and Ombudsman Office for Patient Advocacy.

**Connecting to Care Act – SB 294** by Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) and **HB 407** by Rep. Jose Alvarez (D-Kissimmee) create the "Connecting to Care Act" and authorize a pharmacist to administer medication for the treatment of opiate addiction.

**Continuity of Care in Health Insurance Contracts – SB 114** by Sen. Shevrin Jones (D-Miami Gardens) requires health insurers and contracted health care practitioners to provide 60 days' notice before contract termination and allows certain policyholders to continue coverage and care for a specified timeframe.

**Coverage for Mammograms and Supplemental Breast Cancer Screenings – HB 137** by Rep Dianne Hart (D-Tampa) requires AHCA to provide coverage for yearly mammograms and yearly supplemental breast cancer screenings to certain Medicaid women and revises coverages for mammograms and supplemental breast cancer screenings under certain individual accident and health insurance policies.

**Employment Eligibility – HB 197** by Rep. Berny Jacques (R-Clearwater) requires all private employers, rather than only those employing more than specified number of employees, use E-Verify system to verify new employee's employment. ***HB 197 will be heard in the House Commerce Committee on Thursday, 12/11.***

**Florida Health Choices Program – HB 141** by Rep. Taylor Yarkosky (R-Clermont) renames the "Florida Health Choices Program" as "Florida Employee Health Choices Program" and revises purposes and components of program. The

responsibility requirements for registered physician assistants, specifies activities registered physician assistants may engage in without physician supervision while prohibiting surgical procedures deeper than subcutaneous tissue, and requires registered physician assistants to provide new patients with specified information either before or during the initial patient encounter.

**Practice of Chiropractic Medicine – HB 439** by Rep. Nan Cobb (R-Eustis) authorizes board certified chiropractic physicians to possess, prescribe, and administer vitamins, nutrient preparations, homeopathic remedies, dietary supplements, and epinephrine and authorizes licensed pharmacists to fill, compound, or dispense certain nutritional prescriptions prescribed by certified licensed chiropractic physicians.

**Recovery of Damages for Medical Negligence Resulting in Death – HB 6003** by Rep. Dana Tabulsky (R-Fort Peirce) and Rep. Dr. Anna Eskamani (D-Orlando) deletes a provision prohibiting the recovery of certain damages by specified parties related to the decedent in wrongful death proceedings.

***HB 6003 was approved by the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, 10/19 and now goes to the House floor.***

**Recruitment and Retention of Speech-language Pathologists – SB 574** by Sen. Shevrin Jones (D-Miami Gardens) and **HB 471** by Rep. Kevin Chambliss (D-Homestead) require the Florida Department of Education to develop and maintain a statewide strategic plan for the recruitment and retention of speech-language pathologists, specify components of the plan and strategies for recruitment and retention, and provide school district and charter school requirements relating to submitting specified data for the plan.

**Right of Medical Conscience of Health Care Providers and Health Care Payors – SB 670** by Sen. Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville) and **HB 551** by Rep. Dean

bill revises eligibility and participation requirements for vendors under the program, the types of health insurance products that are available for purchase through program, removes certain pricing transparency requirements, revises the structure of the insurance marketplace process under the program, removes the option for risk pooling under the program, and removes exemptions from certain requirements of Florida Insurance Code under the program. ***HB 141 was approved by the House Health Care Facilities and Systems Subcommittee on Tuesday, 12/2.***

**Interactions with Artificial Intelligence – HB 659** by Rep. Christine Hunschofsky (D-Coconut Creek) requires operators of companion chatbot platforms to display specified information on any application, browser, or format used to access companion chatbots on platform and implements protocols protecting users, especially minors, from harm and misleading content. The bill requires anonymous or standard age verification and additional safeguards for known minors, including break reminders and blocking explicit sexual content, requires such operators to file specified annual reports with Department of Legal Affairs, and provides that violation constitutes unfair or deceptive act or practice.

**Managed Care Plans – SB 568** by Sen. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) and **HB 531** by Rep. Webster Barnaby (R-Deland) revise Medicaid managed care contract requirements to prohibit managed care plans from reviewing certain prior authorization claims for medical necessity, and require that managed care plans provide coverage for durable medical equipment and complex rehabilitation technology from a qualified provider within the network of the enrollees choosing.

**Mandatory Human Reviews of Insurance Claim Denials – SB 202** by Sen. Jennifer Bradley (R-Flemming Island) requires that insurers' decisions to deny a claim or any portion of a claim be made by qualified human professionals and prohibits the use of algorithms, artificial intelligence, or

Black (R-Jacksonville) authorize a health care provider or health care payor to commence a civil action if the Attorney General fails to do so after 180 days for an alleged violation of the provider's or payor's medical conscience rights.

**Rural Communities – SB 250** by Sen. Corey Simon (R-Tallahassee) is a comprehensive package of legislative proposals to create opportunities for rural communities to expand education offerings, increase health care services, and modernize commerce. The bill invests in farm-to-market roads, requires the state land planning agency to give preference for technical assistance funding to local governments located in a rural area of opportunity, revises the conditions required for a county to be considered a fiscally constrained county, creates the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce, requires the Office of Rural Prosperity to administer the Renaissance Grants Program to provide block grants to eligible communities, creates the Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program within the Office of Rural Prosperity, expands the existing FRAME program to include medical doctors or osteopathic doctors who are board certified or board eligible in emergency medicine, establishes the Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and Education (SCORE) Grant Program, appropriates additional funding to enhance Medicaid payments to reimburse rural hospitals similar to Medicare reimbursement, and creates the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program within the Department of Transportation. More information [here](#). ***SB 250 will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, 12/10.***

**School Attendance Immunizations – SB 626** by Sen. Carlos Guillermo Smith (D-Orlando) adds hepatitis B, chickenpox, haemophilus influenzae type b, and pneumococcal disease to the list of immunizations in statute that are required for school attendance.

**Transparency in Health Care – SB 596** by

machine learning systems as the sole basis for determining whether to adjust or deny a claim. ***HB 527 will be heard in the House Insurance and Banking Subcommittee on Tuesday, 12/9.***

**Medicaid Providers - SB 40** by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) and **HB 163** by Rep. Felicia Robinson (D-Miami Gardens) require the AHCA to establish standards to ensure that Medicaid enrollees have access to network providers during state holidays and outside of regular business hours. ***SB 40 was approved by the Senate Health Policy Committee on Tuesday, 11/18.***

Sen. Ileana Garcia (R-Miami) defines the term “personal benefit,” requires health care practitioners to report any personal benefit received from a pharmaceutical company to DOH, requires the department to establish uniform reporting procedures and a publicly accessible online database for the reports, and requires the department to establish certain guidelines for health care practitioners.

**Use of Professional Nursing Titles - SB 36** by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) and **HB 237** by Rep. Michelle Salzman (R-Cantonment) authorize certain nurses the title Doctor of Nursing Practice and the abbreviation D.N.P., and the title of Doctor of Philosophy and the abbreviation PhD. The bills also require doctoral degree holders to specify their profession when using the term “doctor.”

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We hope this summary is helpful. We look forward to working with you during the 2026 Legislative Session. Please contact us if you have any questions.

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