



## 2026 Legislative Session Update - Week 6

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The legislature completed a pivotal week six of the nine-week 2026 legislative session. Many substantive committees wrapped up their work as the funnel that is the legislative process continues to narrow, and budget discussions move into the forefront. The House advanced off the floor its \$113.6 billion budget proposal, and the Senate followed suit with its own \$115 billion proposal, setting the stage for negotiations between the chambers. In his opening floor remarks on Thursday, Speaker Danny Perez emphasized that the Legislature had reached “the turning point of our Session,” cautioning members that disagreements over spending priorities could prolong the session beyond its scheduled end. He warned against adhering to an “artificial deadline,” signaling that the House would not rush negotiations simply to adjourn on time. At the same time, Speaker Perez underscored that the House was prepared to “talk to anyone, anytime, about anything.” Meanwhile, Senate President Ben Albritton avoided specific discussions of an extended or special session and continued to posture the Senate as a chamber of consensus, albeit with its own priorities. Around Tallahassee, legislative veterans are quietly double-checking their Spring Break trip cancellation insurance policies.

### Property Taxes

On Thursday, the Florida House passed **HJR 203 - Elimination of Non-school Property for Homesteads**, sponsored by Representative Monique Miller (R-Palm Bay), by an 80-30 vote. The proposed constitutional amendment would exempt homestead property from all ad valorem taxes other than school district levies beginning January 2027 and would prohibit local governments from reducing total funding for law enforcement, firefighters, and other first responders below their 2025-26 or 2026-27 funding level, whichever is higher.

Speaker Perez described the measure as “the most aggressive legislation ever passed by a legislative chamber on property taxes in the history of the United States.” Of the proposals advanced by the House Select Committee on Property Taxes, this was the measure ultimately brought to the floor for a full vote. The original proposal proposed a 10-year phase out, however an amendment adopted on the floor eliminated the phase-out and changed the

effective date to 2027. State economists project the proposal will cost cities, counties, water management districts, and other special taxing districts \$14.8 billion a year.

The Senate has not yet released its own property tax proposal, nor has the Governor. Governor DeSantis noted this week that his office is working with the Senate on a proposal. Senate President Albritton stated during his Thursday press availability that the Senate is focused on developing a proposal capable of building consensus, emphasizing that it is more important to get the policy right than to do it quickly. For the proposed constitutional amendment to appear on the 2026 ballot, the House and Senate must pass the same joint resolution. If placed on the ballot, the amendment requires at least 60 percent voter approval to take effect.

## FPTA Priority Legislation

**Physical Therapy Treatment Plans** – **SB 1262** by Sen. Nick DiCeglie (R-St. Petersburg) and **HB 869** by Rep. Adam Anderson (R-Tarpon Springs) exempt services for health promotion, injury prevention wellness, and fitness from the requirement that a physical therapist have a practitioner of record review and sign a plan of treatment. FPTA continues to educate legislators on the importance of physical therapy.

## Legislation of Interest (listed alphabetically)

**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.

*HB 301 has now been received by the Senate.*

**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.

*HB 513 was approved by House Health Care Budget Subcommittee on Monday, 2/16 and will be heard in the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, 2/24.*

**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

**Health Care Coverage** - **SB 1760** by Sen. Jason Brodeur (R-Lake Mary) establishes the Joint Legislative Committee on Medicaid Oversight, bill establishes the Joint Legislative Committee on Medicaid Oversight, creates additional Medicaid managed care plan reporting requirements for purposes of capitation rate setting and disclosure of financial relationships with affiliated entities, requires that a contract between AHCA and a Medicaid managed care plan must require that any third party administrative entity contracted by the plan must adhere to all pertinent requirements of the Medicaid program placed on the plan under the plan's contract with the AHCA, provides that payments made by a Medicaid managed care plan to affiliated entities in excess of market rates are excluded as an allowable expense when the AHCA calculates such plan's achieved savings rebate (ASR), revises ASR statutes to alter the amount of profit that a managed care plan may retain versus how much of such profit must be shared with the state, amends statutes relating to Medicaid managed care plan medical loss ratios (MLR) to correct a reference to federal regulations and to specify that MLRs must be calculated for each plan

certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) to perform CRNA-specific acts without an established supervisory physician protocol.

*HB 375 has been received by the Senate.*

**Background Screenings – SB 1168** by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and **HB 1069** by Rep. Dana Trabulsy (R-Fort Pierce) specify additional disqualifying offenses under the background screening requirements for certain persons, require AHCA to review and determine eligibility for all criminal history checks submitted to the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse by specified agencies, provide that, beginning on a specified date, an independent sanctioning authority is considered a qualified entity for the purpose of participating in the clearinghouse, and require qualified entities conducting background criminal history checks to designate a user administrator for a specified purpose.

*SB 1168 was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services on Wednesday, 2/18.*

**Department of Health – SB 902** by Sen. Ileana Garcia (R-Miami) and **HB 733** by Rep. Ann Gerwig (R-Wellington) broadens eligibility requirements for the dental student loan repayment program. The bills revise the definition of “low-THC cannabis,” require qualified physicians and medical directors of medical marijuana treatment centers to renew their training course certification biennially, prohibit medical marijuana treatment centers from being located within certain distance of specified areas, update DOH duties relating to the Early Steps Program and Early Steps Extended Option, revise eligibility requirements for developmental evaluation and early intervention services, revise transition to education requirements for children with disabilities, provide that committing criminal offense relating to murder is cause for immediate suspension of health care practitioner’s license, and revise eligible individuals for University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment’s autism micro-credential.

separately for each component of Statewide Medicaid Managed Care and for each plan in the aggregate, amends the Insurance Code relating to the oversight of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), creates prohibitions against PBM behavior relating to contracting with and reimbursing Pharmacies, prohibits a PBM from maintaining any ownership or investment interest in an affiliated manufacturer.

**Health Care Patient Protection – SB 68** by Sen. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) and **HB 355** by Rep. Vanessa Oliver (R-Punta Gorda) require AHCA, in consultation with the Florida Emergency Medical Services for Children State Partnership Program, to adopt rules that establish minimum standards for pediatric patient care in hospital emergency departments (ED). The bills require all hospitals with EDs to develop and implement policies and procedures for pediatric patient care in the ED, and to designate a physician, physician assistant, nurse, or paramedic to serve as the pediatric emergency care coordinator in the ED. Finally, the bills require all hospital EDs to conduct the National Pediatric Readiness Assessment in accordance with timelines established by the National Pediatric Readiness Project. *HB 355 passed the House 109-0 on 1/15 and is now in the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee.*

*SB 68 is waiting to be heard on the Senate floor.*

**Parkinson's Disease Registry – SB 1684** by Sen. Alexis Calatayud (R-Miami) and **HB 1443** by Rep. Demi Busatta (R-Coral Gables) require the Florida Institute for Parkinson’s Disease within the University of South Florida to establish a statewide Parkinson’s disease registry. The bills require physicians and advanced practice registered nurses who diagnose or treat a patient with Parkinson’s disease or atypical parkinsonism to report nationally recognized performance measures to the registry beginning January 1, 2027, and grant them liability protection for doing so. The Parkinson’s Disease Research Board (Board) must submit annual reports on the registry data to the Governor, President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House

*SB 902 was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services on Wednesday, 2/18 and will be heard in the Senate Rules Committee on Tuesday, 2/24. HB 733 will be heard in the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, 2/24.*

**Dry Needling** – **SB 914** by Sen. Alexis Calatayud (R-Miami) and **HB 867** by Rep. Adam Anderson (R-Tarpon Springs) define the terms “dry needling” and “myofascial trigger point,” requiring the Board of Occupational Therapy to establish minimum standards of practice for the performance of dry needling by occupational therapists, including specified standards, and require the board, if it deems it necessary for patient safety, to adopt additional supervision and training requirements for occupational therapists to perform dry needling on specified areas. *SB 914 was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services on Wednesday, 2/18 and will be heard in the Senate Rules Committee on Tuesday, 2/24. HB 867 will be heard on the House Special Order Calendar on Wednesday, 2/25.*

**Employment Eligibility** – **SB 1278** by Sen. Jonathan Martin (R-Fort Myers) and **HB 197** by Rep. Berny Jacques (R-Clearwater) require all private employers, rather than only those employing more than specified number of employees, to use E-Verify system to verify new employee's employment.

**Enforcement of Protections for Minors** – **SB 1010** by Sen. Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville) and **HB 743** by Rep. Melo (R-Naples) provide criminal penalties for health care practitioners who willfully or actively aid or abet a minor in obtaining sex-reassignment prescriptions or procedures.

**Health and Human Services** - **HB 693** by Rep. Mike Redondo (R-Miami) known as the “Big Beautiful Healthcare Frontier Act” and part of the Florida House’s “Florida’s New Frontier in Healthcare” proposal, aligns state rules with new federal

of Representatives beginning October 15, 2028. **SB 1686** and **HB 1445** by provide public records exemptions for specified patient information for Parkinson's disease registry. *SB 1684 and 1686 were approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services on Wednesday, 2/18 and both bills will be heard in the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee on Tuesday, 2/24. HB 1443 and HB 1445 were approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee on Wednesday, 2/18 and both bills will be heard on the House Special Order Calendar on Wednesday, 2/25.*

**Public Assistance** – **SB 1758** by Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Pensacola) authorizes AHCA to conduct retrospective reviews and audits of certain claims under the state Medicaid program, requires the agency to seek federal approval to implement mandatory work and community engagement requirements for able-bodied adults as a condition of obtaining and maintaining Medicaid coverage, requires AHCA, in consultation with the Department of Children and Families, to develop a business plan to implement specified provisions, revises the purpose of the Medicaid Pharmaceutical and Therapeutics Committee to include creation of a Medicaid preferred physician-administered drug list, a Medicaid preferred product list, and a high-cost drug list, and requires the department to develop and implement a food assistance payment accuracy improvement plan.

**Public Records/Uterine Fibroid Research Database** – **SB 864** by Sen. Barbara Sharief (D-Davie) and **HB 1515** by Rep. Lisa Dunkley (D-Lauderhill) provide an exemption from public records requirements for certain records and personal identifying information submitted to the Department of Health for inclusion in the uterine fibroid research database. *SB 864 will be heard in the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee on Tuesday, 2/24. HB 1515 will be heard in the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, 2/24.*

requirements for Medicaid, CHIP and SNAP, tightens eligibility and verification standards, and deregulates certain aspects of healthcare delivery — including removing certificate-of-need requirements for long-term care providers, extending independent practice rights for advanced-practice nurses, creating interstate licensure compacts for physician assistants and EMS professionals, and broadening the scope of dental hygienists. **HB 695**, also by Rep. Redondo, provides exemptions from public meetings requirements for the Interstate Commission for EMS Personnel Practice and the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact Commission.

*HB 693 and HB 695 will be heard in the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, 2/24.*

**Health Care – SB 1756** by Sen. Clay Yarborough (R-Jacksonville) and **HB 917** by Rep. Jeff Holcomb (R-Springhill) make changes to vaccination policy in Florida statutes including in public health advisories and public health emergencies, require licensed health care practitioners to inform a parent or legal guardian of a minor child of risks, benefits, safety, and efficacy of specified vaccines, obtain signatures from parents or legal guardians before the administration of a vaccine, and provide a parent or legal guardian with the option of alternative vaccination schedules. The bills authorize pharmacists to provide ivermectin without prescription and immunity from civil and criminal liability and disciplinary action. Finally, the bills authorize parents to exempt their children from health examinations or from administration of immunizing agents based on conscience grounds, and require DOH to make publicly available, by posting on its Internet website, exemption forms for parents and legal guardians. In addition, HB 917 contains provisions that creates liability for health care providers under the Florida Patient bill of rights and prohibits discrimination against a patient based on the patient's vaccination status.

*SB 1756 will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday, 2/24.*

### **Recovery of Damages for Medical Negligence Resulting in Death –**

**SB 1700** by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and **HB 6003** by Rep. Dana Trubulsky (R-Fort Peirce) and Rep. Anna Eskamani (D-Orlando) delete a provision prohibiting the recovery of certain damages by specified parties related to the decedent in wrongful death proceedings.

### **Respiratory Care Interstate Compact –**

**SB 970** by Sen. Tom Wright (R-Port Orange) and **HB 1235** by Rep. Bill Conerly (R-Lakewood Ranch) enact the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact and require member states to meet certain requirements to join and participate in the compact. The bills provide criteria that a respiratory therapist licensee must satisfy to practice under the compact, authorize a certain licensing authority or government agency to establish the scope of practice for a licensee providing therapy in a remote state, authorize member states to participate with other member states in joint investigations of licensees under certain circumstances, and establish the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact Commission. **SB 972**, also by Sen. Wright, and **HB 1237**, by Rep. Conerly provide a public records exemption for the Commission.

### **Statewide Provider and Health Plan Claim Dispute Resolution Program –**

**SB 1082** by Sen. Erin Grall (R-Fort Pierce) and **HB 1449** by Rep. Demi Busatta (R-Coral Gables) specify additional circumstances under which a disputed claim is not subject to review under the statewide provider and health plan claim dispute resolution program.

### **Temporary Certificates for Practice in Areas of Critical Need – SB 1480**

by Sen. Colleen Burton (R-Winter Haven) and **HB 809** by Rep. Benarroch (R-Naples) authorize a certificate holder to continue providing primary care services to patients in an area of critical need after the area has lost its designation if the practitioner maintains an active primary care treatment relationship in the area with at least one

**Health Care – SB 2538** by the Senate Appropriations Committee and **HB 5301** by Rep. Alex Andrade (R-Pensacola) are the health care budget bills that make statutory changes as a result of health care policy in the state proposed budgets.

*The House and Senate have agreed to work out the differences in HB 5301 and SB 2538 in the Budget Conference process.*

patient and satisfies all other applicable requirements.

*SB 1480 was approved by the Senate Rules Committee on Tuesday, 2/17 and was temporarily postponed on the Senate floor on Thursday 2/19.*

*HB 809 was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee on Wednesday, 2/18 and now goes to the House floor.*

#### **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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