



2026 Legislative Session Update - Week 7

Despite a hectic week seven of the nine-week legislative session, the political and policy discussions increasingly point toward both a possible extension of the regular session and an almost certain special session later this spring.

The week featured a flurry of legislative activity on hundreds of bills as the committee meeting process officially winds down and attention shifts to floor action in both chambers. Bill amendments were the tool as legislators and lobbyists alike searched for viable “vehicles” to keep priority bills alive, often adding new bill language or the content of other bills, thus making it essential to track and closely read every amendment. However, notably absent were public negotiations on the state budget. Perhaps behind-the-scenes negotiations will prompt a budget resolution, but with less than 11 days before a budget must be “on the desks” of legislators, the prospects of an on-time adjournment are quickly fading.

Adding to the dynamics, Governor DeSantis signaled this week that his key priority, property tax reform, will likely be the subject of a future special session. This is on top of the already scheduled special session for Congressional Redistricting the week of April 20.

House and Senate Release Tax Packages

On Tuesday afternoon, the House and Senate released their respective tax-cut packages. The House proposal (**HB 7031**) reduces recurring revenues by approximately \$27.6 million in FY 2026-27 and includes a broad array of sales tax exemptions, property tax modifications, and targeted tax credits. Notable provisions include temporary sales tax exemptions for certain propane tanks, firearm accessories, impact-resistant windows and doors, and outdoor supplies; date adjustments to the Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday; and new requirements for advertising platforms to collect sales tax on vacation rentals. The House package also makes significant property tax changes, particularly related to Space Florida projects, mobile home park assessment caps, homestead protections for certain overseas federal employees, Save Our Homes portability, and exempts children’s services councils from required sharing

of tax revenue with community development agencies. In addition, the bill updates Florida's corporate income tax code, amends certain corporate tax credits, and creates a new Homebuyer Workforce Tax Credit applicable against Corporate Income Tax or Insurance Premium Tax liabilities.

The Senate proposal (**SB 7046**) reduces revenues by \$34.1 million in FY 2026-27 and focuses on property tax policy, fiscally constrained counties, and local government limitations. It revises Live Local opt-out criteria, adjusts school tax distribution language, restricts special assessments in RV parks, modifies funding and distribution formulas for fiscally constrained counties (including a guaranteed \$50 million annual sales tax distribution), establishes a permanent exemption for small, liquefied petroleum gas tanks, and provides a fall hunting, fishing, and camping sales tax holiday. The Senate package also includes broader policy provisions prohibiting governmental adoption or funding of net-zero policies and establishing a maximum millage for taxing authorities that did not levy in the prior year. The two chambers will reconcile these differing approaches in conference to determine the scope and structure of the final tax-cut package.

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)

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 the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, 2/24 and now goes to the House floor.*

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

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

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 will be heard in the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee on Monday, 3/2.

HB 1069 was approved by the House Judiciary Committee on Thursday, 2/26 and now goes to the House floor.

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.

HB 733 was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, 2/24 and will be heard on the House Special Order Calendar on Wednesday, 3/4.

SB 902 was approved by the Senate Rules Committee on Tuesday, 2/24 and now goes to the Senate floor.

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

the state, amends state 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 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.

SB 1760 will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Monday, 3/2.

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.

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

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 Rules Committee on Tuesday, 2/24 and now goes to the Senate floor.*

HB 867 passed the House 112-2 on Wednesday, 2/25 and is now in the Senate Rules Committee.

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 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 were approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, 2/24 and will be heard on the House Special Order Calendar on Tuesday, 3/3.

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

registry data to the Governor, President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House 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 SB 1686 were approved by the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee on Tuesday, 2/24 and now go to the Senate floor.

HB 1443 passed the House 115-0 and HB 1445 passed the House 116-0 on Wednesday, 2/25 and are now in the Senate Rules Committee.

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.

SB 1758 will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Monday, 3/2.

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 was approved by the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee on Tuesday, 2/24 and now goes to the Senate floor.

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 was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday, 2/24 and will be heard in the Senate Rules Committee on Tuesday, 3/3.

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 2518 in the Budget Conference process.

HB 5301 will be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee on Monday, 3/2.

HB 1515 was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, 2/24 and will be heard on the House Special Order Calendar on Tuesday, 3/3.

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.

HB 1449 was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee on Thursday, 2/26 and now goes to the House floor.

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 patient and satisfies all other applicable requirements.

HB 809 will be heard on the House Special Order Calendar on Tuesday, 3/3.

SB 1480 is on the Senate Special Order Calendar.

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.”

SB 36 will be heard in the Senate Rules Committee on Tuesday, 3/3.

Legislative Session. Please contact us if you have any questions.

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