



Palm Beach County State Legislative Update

Department of Legislative Affairs

Legislative Session Week 6

February 12-16, 2024

Tax Relief Packages

The House Ways & Means Committee gave the green light to the House's annual tax package (**PCB WMC 24-05**) on Wednesday, which aims to save businesses and consumers in Florida a total of \$728.1 million over the next two fiscal years. The largest tax cut in the proposal targets the business rent tax, reducing it from 2% to 1.25% for a year, saving businesses about \$339.6 million. The proposal also includes four sales tax holidays that seek to save consumers around \$97.3 million, including a two-week back-to-school sales tax holiday, a 30-day "Freedom Month" sales tax holiday, a one-week "Tool Time" sales tax holiday and two separate Disaster Preparedness tax holidays. Other tax cuts include a break of up to \$10,000 per company for hiring disabled workers and expanding the Strong Families Tax Credit. Although the measure passed on a 16-6 vote with Republicans in favor, numerous committee members from both sides of the aisle took issue with a provision that would limit all new tourist development taxes, or TDTs, to six years and require existing TDTs to be approved by voters by July 1, 2029. Some public comment, mainly from local government advocates, also voiced concern over the same provision.

The Senate filed its annual tax package as well, which proposes saving families and small businesses a total of \$900 million. Unlike the current House tax package, the Senate measure (**SPB 7074**) includes a proposal by Gov. Ron DeSantis that would give homeowners a one-year lull on state taxes and assessments charged on flood insurance policies enacted or renewed after July 1. It would offer a 1.75% credit on insurance rates for homes under \$750,000 for one year, with the credit applied to their insurance premium tax bill, and eliminate assessments for the Florida Insurance Guaranty Association for a year. Although the governor wanted a slightly larger tax cut for residents, the plan is expected to save homeowners \$363.2 million over the next two years. Another key difference between the chambers' tax proposals involves the business rent tax, which is set to decrease to 2% in August. The House would reduce it to 1.25% for a year, saving businesses about \$339.6 million. However, the Senate would take a different route by boosting the amount a business can receive for electronically submitting sales taxes from \$30 to \$45, saving businesses a projected \$47.3 million next fiscal year. They both would also expand the Strong Families Tax Credit from \$20 million to \$40 million, which grants businesses that donate to charities supporting children's welfare a break on corporate income and other taxes. The Senate tax package is scheduled to be taken up by the Finance and Tax Committee during Week 7. Some changes are expected as a final tax package will be hammered out during budget conferencing between the House and Senate over the remaining days of session.

On the Floor This Week

House

The Florida House debated and passed a number of proposals this week including legislation regarding risk retention groups, health care practitioners, the release of balloons, and more. Of interest to Palm Beach County, **CS/CS/HB 273**, exempting from public records the personal information of individuals fostering or adopting an animal from a local government animal control agency, passed unanimously. The bill now awaits consideration by the Senate. Another public records exemption bill passed the floor as well. **CS/HB 103** exempts from public records requirements the personal identifying and location information of current city and county attorneys, as well as the information of their spouses and children. The bill must be approved by the Senate now before heading to the Governor's desk.

Additionally, the House advanced a proposal, **HB 377**, which allows vehicles for hire that are licensed in one municipality or county to operate in any other jurisdiction without paying additional fees or acquiring another permit or license to operate. This bill is now eligible to be heard by the Senate.

Senate

The Senate considered a number of bills this week relating to yacht brokers, dental services, spaceports, and the safe exchange of minor children. Among these, **CS/HB 303**, was passed and now heads to the Governor for his approval or veto. The bill allows agents of a local government animal control agency to administer rabies vaccines to dogs, cats, and ferrets in their care under the indirect supervision of a veterinarian. Senators also lent their approval to **SB 674**, which requires a local government using iron or steel for public works projects to only utilize iron or steel that was produced in the United States. Some exceptions to this requirement are provided in the bill, including instances when the products are not available or are unsatisfactory quality or when the use would increase the total cost of the project by more than 20 percent. SB 674 now awaits consideration by the full House.

Bills of Interest in Committee

Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government

CS/CS/SB 656, Continuing Contracts: Increases the maximum dollar amount for continuing contracts of local governments from \$4 million to \$7.5 million. Beginning July 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the Department of Management Services must adjust the maximum amount allowed on the preceding June 30 for each individual project in a continuing contract based on the June-to-June Consumer Price Index issued by the United States Department of Labor. The bill has one more committee of reference before the floor. The House companion bill has passed all committees and is ready to be considered by the full House.

Senate Appropriations Committee on Civil & Criminal Justice

CS/CS/SB 1690, Human Trafficking: Prohibits anyone under the age of 21 from being employed at an adult entertainment establishment and provides an owner, operator, or employee of an adult entertainment establishment who knowingly employs someone under the age of 21 and classifies a violation of this provision as a misdemeanor. Both this bill and its House companion have one more committee stop.

Senate Appropriations Committee on Health & Human Services

CS/CS/SB 1180, Substance Abuse Treatment: Defines certified recovery residences to distinguish levels of care provided at the facility, prohibits a recovery residence from denying an individual access solely based upon whether the individual has been prescribed a federally approved medication for substance use disorder treatment, and prohibits local governments from regulating the duration or frequency of a resident's stay. These residences are also exempted from transient rental taxes under the bill. This legislation is already on the agenda of its last committee of reference.

House State Affairs Committee

CS/HB 433, Employment Regulations: Prohibits local governments from preferring one contractor over another based on the wages or employment benefits provided by the contractor and removes the ability of local governments to require a minimum wage for certain employees under the terms of a contract. The bill also expressly preempts the regulation of the terms and conditions of employment to the state, preempts the regulation of workplace heat exposure requirements to the state, clarifies that the preemption of workplace heat requirements does not limit the authority of a local government to provide workplace heat exposure requirements for the employees of the local government, and clarifies that the provisions do not apply if compliance will prevent the local government from receiving federal funds. This bill has one more committee to pass through before the floor.

CS/CS/HB 609, Local Business Taxes: Provides a limitation on the amount of revenue a local government may receive from local business taxes based on the revenue the local government received in the local Fiscal Year (FY) ending September 30, 2023, or September 30, 2024, whichever is greater. If a local government receives more local business tax revenue than it did in the base year, the local government must proportionally reduce its tax rates and must issue refunds or credits to taxpayers. The bill provides guidance on how those refunds and credits must be calculated and when they must occur. This legislation has now passed all committee references and is eligible to be heard on the House Floor.

House Appropriations Committee

CS/HB 165, Sampling of Beach Waters & Public Bathing Spaces: Preempts the issuance of health advisories related to the results of bacteriological sampling of public bathing places. This legislation also requires counties and municipalities to notify the Department of Health within 24 hours or the next business day, whichever occurs first, of any incident that negatively impacts the quality of beach waters or public bathing places within their jurisdictions. Counties and cities are also required by the bill to post and maintain health advisory signs around the waters they own. There is one more committee stop left for the bill to pass through before it can be heard on the floor of the House.

House Ways & Means Committee

CS/CS/HB 927, Improvements to Real Property: Makes several changes to Florida law governing qualifying improvement programs, also known as PACE programs, to expand the scope of qualifying improvements, provide additional consumer protections, and clarify legislative intent regarding a local government's authority to require

certain consumer protections of PACE agreements. This bill is scheduled to be heard in its final committee of reference this week. The Senate companion measure has already passed the Senate and is waiting in House Messages.

House Commerce Committee

CS/CS/CS/HB 267, Building Regulations: Requires the Florida Building Commission to provide an exception regarding sealed drawings for replacement windows, doors, and garages for one- and two-family homes. It also drastically reduces the timeframes for local governments to determine if a building permit is complete, sufficient, and to approve or deny a complete and sufficient permit. The bill also reduces the amount of times a local government can request additional information. This legislation is now ready for consideration by the full House.

Bills of Interest Up Week 7

***CS/SB 7016, Health Care**: House Special Order Calendar, 2/21

***SB 7018, Health Care Innovation**: House Special Order Calendar, 2/21

***CS/CS/HB 981, Aviation**: House Special Order Calendar, 2/21

***CS/CS/CS/HB 275, Offenses Involving Critical Infrastructure**: House Special Order Calendar, 2/21

***HB 601, Complaints Against Law Enforcement & Correctional Officers**: House Special Order Calendar, 2/21

***HB 377, License or Permit to Operate a Vehicle for Hire**: Senate Special Order Calendar, 2/21

***CS/HB 1, Social Media Use for Minors**: Senate Special Order Calendar, 2/21

***CS/CS/HB 3, Online Access to Materials Harmful to Minors**: Senate Special Order Calendar, 2/21

***CS/CS/HB 273, Public Records/Animal Foster & Adoption**: Senate Special Order Calendar, 2/21

***CS/SB 1746, Public Employees**: Senate Special Order Calendar, 2/21

CS/HB 1239, Affordable Housing: House Appropriations Committee, 2/20 at 1 PM

CS/HB 1417, Funding for Environmental Resources Management: House Appropriations Committee, 2/20 at 1 PM

CS/SB 1380, Transportation Services for Persons with Disabilities and Transportation Disadvantaged: Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services, 2/20 at 1:30 PM

CS/SB 1226, Department of Transportation: Senate Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development, 2/20 at 1:30 PM

SPB 7076, Transportation Network Companies: Senate Committee on Finance & Tax, 2/20 at 1:30 PM

SPB 7074, Taxation: Senate Committee on Finance & Tax, 2/20 at 1:30 PM

CS/SB 438, Term Limits: Senate Committee on Rules, 2/21 at 9 AM

CS/SB 742, Public Works Projects: Senate Committee on Rules, 2/21 at 9 AM

CS/SB 774, Towing & Storage: Senate Committee on Rules, 2/21 at 9 AM

SB 1082, Housing for Agricultural Workers: Senate Committee on Rules, 2/21 at 9 AM