

LEGISLATIVE BILL SUMMARIES

Florida League of Cities



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SPOTLIGHT BILLS

Affordable Housing (Oppose)

SB 184 (Gaetz) and **HB 247** (Conerly) require local governments to allow accessory dwelling units by-right in any area zoned for single-family residential use, except for areas designated as planned unit developments or master planned communities. The bills do not change current law requirements that a building permit application for an accessory dwelling unit must include an attestation from the applicant that the unit will be rented at a rate that is affordable to low- or moderate-income person. The bills prohibit a local government from requiring any increase in parking requirements for accessory dwelling units. The bills also authorize local governments to provide density bonus incentives to any landowner who voluntarily donates real property to the local government for the purpose of providing housing that is affordable for military families receiving the basic allowance for housing. In addition, the bills require the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to establish a model program for use in counties selected by the Corporation. The model program shall use mezzanine financing to encourage local housing authorities to stimulate the supply of affordable housing for owner occupancy. (O'Hara)

Property Tax Exemptions (Oppose)

HJR 357 (Chamberlin) is a proposed constitutional amendment to establish a new \$100,000 property tax exemption applicable to all properties in Florida, including those currently not eligible for homestead exemptions. This new exemption would be in addition to the existing homestead property exemptions (\$50,000) on homestead properties. If HJR 357 is passed through the Legislature, it will be presented on the November 2026 ballot. To pass, the measure must be approved by 60% or more of the voters. (Chapman)

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Property Tax Exemptions (Oppose)

HB 359 (Chamberlin) is the implementing bill for **HJR 357**, establishing a new \$100,000 exemption on all property tax levies effective January 1, 2027. (Chapman)

Suits Against the Government (Oppose)

HB 301 (McFarland) increases the statutory limits on liability for tort claims against the state and its agencies and subdivisions (which include cities). The current statutory limits for claims are \$200,000 per person and \$300,000 per incident. The bill raises these limits to \$1 million per person and \$3 million per incident for claims accruing between October 1, 2025, and October 1, 2030. After October 1, 2030, these limits will increase to \$1.1 million and \$3.2 million, respectively. The bill prohibits an insurance policy from conditioning the payout of a claim on the passage of a claims bill. The legislation allows a subdivision of the state to settle a claim above the statutory limits without the need for a claims bill, even if the payout exceeds insurance policy limits. The bill narrows the statute of limitation on negligence claims against government entities from four years to two years and the required pre-suit notice from three years to 18 months. (Cruz)

BUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT

Building and Plumbing Permits for the Use of Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems (Monitor)

HB 287 (Conerly) revises current law relating to the issuance of local government building and plumbing permits for buildings that use onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems (OSTDS). Current law prohibits a city or county from issuing a building or plumbing permit for a building that requires an OSTDS unless the owner or builder “has received” a construction permit for the OSTDS from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The bill revises this statement to prohibit the local government from issuing such permits unless the owner or builder has “applied for” the OSTDS permit from DEP. (O’Hara)

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Issuance of Address and Individual Parcel Identification Numbers (Monitor)

HB 381 (Holcomb) requires the appropriate governing body, within two weeks after the recording of a plat, to issue the street and mailing address, along with individual parcel identification numbers, as contained in the plat offered for recording. If the appropriate governing body fails to issue the information within the 2-week period, the building permit fee shall be reduced by 10% for each day the body fails to issue the information. (O'Hara)

Preemption of the Regulation of Hoisting Equipment (Support)

HB 6009 (Cross) and **SB 346** (Rouson) remove provisions of current law that preempt the regulation of hoisting equipment to the state. (O'Hara)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 207 (Blanco) – Door Alarms for Multifamily Residential Properties

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Construction Disruption Assistance (Monitor)

HB 215 (Eskamani) and **SB 324** (Smith, C.) establish the "Construction Disruption Assistance Act" to support small businesses directly impacted by government construction projects. An eligible small business is defined as a business with 50 or fewer employees whose primary access points are obstructed by state or local government construction activities. Grants may be awarded up to \$25,000 per construction phase when there are verifiable reductions in revenue, operation costs, or property damage. The bill also provides access to a low-interest loan of up to \$100,000 for a 3% interest rate to cover operational costs. (Wagoner)

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ETHICS AND ELECTIONS

Elections (Monitor)

SB 394 (Garcia) revises requirements relating to security measures for electronic and electromechanical voting and other election systems. Among other things, the bill prohibits governing bodies from purchasing elections systems that are not certified by the Florida Department of State and provides criminal penalties for members of governing bodies who purchase or sell election systems in violation of state requirements. The bill broadly defines “election systems” and includes technology used for voter data, mail sorters, and election night reporting, as well as “future technologies integrated into the election process.” It directs the Department of State to adopt rules to establish minimum standards for voting and election system security measures, including a prohibition on system technology that uses wireless data communications. (O’Hara)

Employee Protections (Monitor)

SB 352 (Gaetz) prohibits public employers or independent contractors from taking retaliatory personnel action against an employee who reports to the Florida Commission on Ethics a violation of the state ethics code or violation of Article II, Section 8(f) of the Florida Constitution (prohibiting lobbying for compensation by current public officers and former public officers for six years following service in a public position). It further prohibits public employers and independent contractors from taking retaliatory personal action against any employee who discloses information to the Florida Commission on Ethics relating to an alleged breach of the public trust or alleged violation of Article II, Section 8(f). The bill defines and describes the prohibited adverse personnel actions and specifies the types of information disclosed by employees subject to the bill’s protections. It specifies procedures, timeframes, and available remedies for employees subject to prohibited adverse personnel actions. Local government employees may file a complaint with the appropriate local government authority if the authority has established, by

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ordinance, an administrative procedure for handling such complaints and if the local procedure provides for such complaints to be heard by a panel of impartial persons that makes a recommendation to the governing body for final action. If the local government does not have an administrative procedure that satisfies the minimum requirements of the bill, an employee may bring a civil action. The bill authorizes the filing of a civil action in circuit court following exhaustion of any administrative remedies and specifies that available remedies in such an action must include the following: reinstatement to position or its equivalent, or front pay; reinstatement of fringe benefits and seniority rights; compensation for lost wages, benefits, or other lost remuneration; payment of costs and attorney fees to a prevailing employee or prevailing employer (for frivolous actions); and injunctive relief. The bill allows employers to assert an affirmative defense that the personnel action would have been taken absent the employee's exercise of his or her rights under the bill. (O'Hara)

Ethics (Monitor)

SB 348 (Gaetz) and **HB 399** (Maney) prohibit a candidate, public officer, or public employee from knowingly misrepresenting, for material gain, that he or she is a service member or veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces or that he or she received an honor, title, or occupational qualification relating to military service. In addition, the bills authorize the Florida Attorney General to notify the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or appropriate governing body of a local government of any delinquent civil penalty or restitution imposed pursuant to the state ethics law owed by a public officer or employee. The bills require the CFO or appropriate governing body to withhold a specified percentage of an official's or employee's salary to repay delinquent civil penalties and restitution and recover the governing body's administrative costs associated with compliance. Finally, the bills authorize the Attorney General to refer unpaid civil penalties and restitution to the appropriate collection agency. (O'Hara)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 216 (Polsky) – Campaign Finance

SB 280 (Arrington) and **HB 201** (Tant) – Candidate Qualification

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SB 390 (Garcia) – Ballot Boxes

SB 396 (Garcia) – Elections

FINANCE AND TAXATION

Ad Valorem Property Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Quadriplegics (Monitor)

HJR 163 (Tant) proposes an amendment to Section 6, Article VII of the Florida Constitution to permit the homestead property tax exemption of a deceased quadriplegic to pass on to the quadriplegic's surviving spouse. The joint resolution specifies that the proposal will appear on the ballot at the next general election or an earlier special election. The tax exemption would apply only to those surviving spouses who owned the property in question as a homestead at the time of death of the quadriplegic spouse. (Chapman)

Ad Valorem Tax Exemption (Monitor)

SJR 318 (Truenow) is a proposed constitutional amendment to authorize tax exemptions for certain tangible personal property. If it passes with 60% voter approval, tangible personal property on agricultural land used in the production of agricultural products and/or owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the agricultural land will be exempt from ad valorem taxes. (Chapman)

Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Nonprofit Homes for the Aged (Monitor)

SB 298 (Wright) and **HB 321** (Smith) amend Florida's ad valorem tax exemption requirements for nonprofit homes for the aged. The bills clarify the qualifications for the tax exemption, requiring an organization to be a not-for-profit organization under Chapter 617, Florida Statutes or an entity not licensed under Chapter 429, Florida Statutes, and wholly owned by a corporation not-for-profit formed under Chapter 617, Florida Statutes. (Chapman)

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Ad Valorem Taxation (Monitor)

HB 227 (Caruso) and **SB 378** (Harrell) seek to allow a property owner who has applied for a homestead exemption to rescind their application between August 1 and September 15 of the same taxable year if they meet certain criteria. The bills authorize the Department of Revenue to adopt emergency rules to implement these changes. The bills also change the definition of an exempt organization to include the property used for charitable, religious, scientific, or literary activities. The bills provide further clarification as to what is meant by “religious activities”. (Chapman)

Community Redevelopment Plans (Monitor)

HB 363 (Aristide) authorizes community redevelopment agencies (CRAs) to allocate up to 20% of tax increment financing funds for various business support services. The bill specifies that CRA-eligible business support services include payment of short-term rent, professional training, workforce recruitment and retention, direct loans, program development, and emergency assistance for small businesses. (Cruz)

Homestead Property (Monitor)

SJR 326 (Rodriguez) is a proposed constitutional amendment to modify homestead exemptions for certain low-income seniors. The bill would freeze a home's assessed value at the amount recorded when the homeowner turns 65. (Chapman)

Legal Tender (Monitor)

SB 132 (Rodriguez) establishes legal tender status for specie and electronic currency. Specie is money in the form of coins rather than notes. The bill provides that specie may not be characterized as personal property for taxation or regulatory purposes and provides exemptions from tax liability. The bill authorizes the recognition of specie legal tender for the payment of private debts, taxes, and state or local government fees. (Chapman)

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Property Tax Exemptions (Oppose)

HB 359 (Chamberlin) is the implementing bill for **HJR 357**, establishing a new \$100,000 exemption on all property tax levies effective January 1, 2027. (Chapman)

Property Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Veterans (Monitor)

HB 217 (Mayfield) and **SB 290** (Wright) authorize the surviving spouses of veterans who die before the issuance of a disability letter from the U.S. Government or Department of Veterans Affairs to produce this letter to the property appraiser as evidence for entitlement to the tax exemption for surviving spouses of veterans. (Chapman)

Revenue Administration (Monitor)

SB 192 (Gruters) seeks to amend multiple Florida Statutes addressing specific tax terms and assessment procedures by repealing redundant sections and updating terminology. The bill replaces the term "tax assessor" with "property appraiser," grants revised powers to county legislative bodies regarding tax levies and municipal service assessments and includes a special assessment exemption for agriculture property. The bill also adjusts the definitions related to property valuation and classifications. (Chapman)

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Sales Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans (Monitor)

HB 111 (Daniels) would establish a sales tax exemption for disabled veterans with a 100% service-connected disability rating. The bill requires eligible veterans to apply and submit documentation required by the Department of Revenue. (Chapman)

Tax Exemption for Disabled Ex-servicemembers (Monitor)

HB 39 (Daley) and **SB 218** (Arrington) seek to increase the property tax exemption for certain disabled ex-servicemembers in Florida from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The dollar amount of the exemption is the only change proposed to this existing homestead property tax exemption. (Chapman)

Tax Exemption for Surviving Spouses of Quadriplegics (Monitor)

HB 165 (Tant) is the implementing bill of **HJR 163** (Tant), should it be approved by Florida voters with 60% approval. The bill allows for the surviving spouse of a deceased quadriplegic to inherit the tax exemption benefits, provided the surviving spouse is still residing in the same homestead property. The bill permits the transfer of a tax discount to a new homestead property unless the surviving spouse remarries, sells, or otherwise disposes of the original homestead property. HB 165 gives the Department of Revenue emergency rulemaking authority to administer the bill's provisions. (Chapman)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 134 (Rodriquez) – Sales Tax Exemption of Bullion

SB 266 (Harrell) and **HB 199** (Porras) – Tax Exemption of Vertical Takeoff and Landing Aircraft

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HOUSING

Adaptive Reuse of Land (Oppose)

HB 409 (Caruso) creates a statewide advisory body, the Adaptive Reuse Public-Private Partnership Council (Council), to review and approve adaptive reuse projects. The bill does not define “adaptive reuse,” but the term is generally understood to refer to the process of repurposing existing buildings or sites in commercial, industrial, or mixed-use areas to create new housing. Once a project is approved by the Council, a municipality or county is mandated to either: 1) authorize multifamily or mixed-use residential development in any area zoned for commercial, industrial, or mixed-use; or 2) authorize hotels or motels to operate unencumbered as a transitional housing use.

Preemptions and Mandates for Adaptive Reuse Projects

The bill prohibits a municipality or county from requiring an adaptive reuse project to have a land use change, a deviation from standard zoning, or a comprehensive plan amendment. The local government is required to streamline the building permit and development order processes for adaptive reuse projects. It *requires* a local government to reduce minimum parking requirements for adaptive reuse projects in the manner specified in the bill (the required reduction depends on the nature of the existing site). The bill *permits* a local government to exempt from ad valorem taxation any affordable housing components of such projects, requires a local government to reduce impact fees by 1/3 for affordable housing components of such projects, and requires a local government to exempt such projects from the levy of sales tax, tourism tax, or discretionary sales surtax. The bill specifies that an adaptive reuse project must comply with all applicable state and local laws and regulations.

Ordinances for Transitional Housing Projects

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The bill authorizes municipalities and counties to adopt ordinances for transitional housing to increase the supply of affordable housing. The bill does not define “transitional housing,” but the term appears to mean the conversion of hotel or motel rooms for use as rental housing. The bill specifies the eligibility requirements for transitional housing projects, including minimum size (50 rooms or more), physical characteristics, and required facilities and amenities for residents. The local government ordinance must: 1) designate the process for receiving and reviewing applications for transitional housing, including notices of determination of eligibility; 2) require the local government to verify eligibility and to notify applicants; 3) provide notice of deadlines to submit applications for transitional housing projects; and 4) require publication on the local government’s website a list of properties receiving the transitional housing designation.

Adaptive Reuse Public-Private Partnership Council

The bill creates the Council as a statewide advisory body to review, approve, and oversee the development of adaptive reuse projects. The 12-member Council shall be comprised of four members appointed by the state land planning agency, four members appointed from private sector industries, and four members appointed by “the local planning agency” (the bill does not specify which of Florida’s approximately 478 local planning agencies is designated to appoint the four members). The bill outlines procedures for the Council at least biannually to review and approve adaptive reuse project proposals. The Council must issue a report assessing the viability of a proposal and hold a public meeting in the community where the project is proposed. The Council is directed to monitor each project it has approved to ensure compliance with the project’s approved plans, the Florida Building Code, and the Florida Fire Prevention Code and to perform project evaluations on a regular basis. Service on the Council is uncompensated, although the bill authorizes Council members to be compensated for per diem and travel expenses by their respective appointing entities. (O’Hara)

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Affordable Housing (Oppose)

SB 184 (Gaetz) and **HB 247** (Conerly) require local governments to allow accessory dwelling units by-right in any area zoned for single-family residential use, except for areas designated as planned unit developments or master planned communities. The bills do not change current law requirements that a building permit application for an accessory dwelling unit must include an attestation from the applicant that the unit will be rented at a rate that is affordable to low- or moderate-income person. The bills prohibit a local government from requiring any increase in parking requirements for accessory dwelling units. The bills also authorize local governments to provide density bonus incentives to any landowner who voluntarily donates real property to the local government for the purpose of providing housing that is affordable for military families receiving the basic allowance for housing. In addition, the bills require the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to establish a model program for use in counties selected by the Corporation. The model program shall use mezzanine financing to encourage local housing authorities to stimulate the supply of affordable housing for owner occupancy. (O'Hara)

Housing for Legally Verified Agricultural Workers (Monitor)

SB 84 (Collins) prohibits governmental entities from adopting or enforcing any legislation that inhibits the construction of housing for legally verified agricultural workers on land operated as a bona fide farm. The bill defines the terms "housing site" and "legally verified agricultural worker." It provides that housing unit for legally verified agricultural workers must meet specified criteria, including separation, maximum square footage, setback, and screening requirements. The bill also specifies provisions for removal of housing that fails to satisfy minimum criteria and grandfathers housing sites constructed before July 2025 unless the housing site is modified. (O'Hara)

Residential Land Use Development Regulations (Monitor)

HB 401 (Jacques) authorizes municipalities and counties to zone or designate parcels for single-family residential use or "single-family hybrid housing use" (also

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known as “build-to-rent” subdivisions). It also authorizes municipalities and counties to allow the use of land for single-family residential use while prohibiting the use of land for single-family hybrid housing use. The bill exempts a builder or developer from any land development regulations governing single-family residential use if the builder or developer owns the unoccupied home under permitting and construction. (O’Hara)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 43 (Edmonds) and **SB 362** (Osgood) – Reusable Tenant Screening Reports
SB 382 (Bernard) and **HB 365** (Tendrich) – Rent of Affordable Housing Dwelling Units

INSURANCE

Other Bills of Interest

HB 4003 (Skidmore) – Federal Catastrophe Risk Pool

LAND USE AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Annexing State-owned Lands (Monitor)

HB 275 (Albert) and **SB 384** (Burton) require municipalities to notify the county’s legislative delegation when proposing to annex state-owned land. The notification must be sent when the municipality first publishes the advertisement for the annexation ordinance’s public hearing. (Cruz)

Food Insecure Areas (Support)

HB 89 (Rayner, McFarland) addresses food insecurity by allowing local governments to modify land use regulations to support small-footprint grocery stores in designated areas. The bill enables local governments to alter land development regulations to permit the establishment of small-footprint grocery stores in food-

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insecure areas. The legislation grants local governments the authority to require mandatory reporting from these stores on specified matters. (Cruz)

Historic Cemeteries Program (Monitor)

SB 310 (Sharief) requires that if a historic African-American cemetery with excess vacant land sells or contracts to sell such land, the local government where the cemetery is located must approve a rezoning for the land. The rezoning must align with the most permissive land use category and zoning district permitted for land adjacent to the cemetery. (Cruz)

Local Government Impact Fees (Oppose)

SB 482 (DiCeglie) prohibits local governments from requiring the installation of art or including art-related costs as a condition for processing or issuing development permits. Under current law, local governments cannot increase impact fees by more than 50% over a four-year period without conducting an "extraordinary circumstances" study to justify the higher rate. This bill defines "extraordinary circumstances" and limits its application to situations where a certain population growth threshold is met. This definition will prohibit local governments from relying on other extraordinary circumstances, such as the unexpected rises in construction costs due to inflation. The bill requires local governments exceeding phase-in limits for impact fee increases to conduct a demonstrated-need study outlining the benefiting projects and how they will benefit. (Cruz)

Restrictions on Redevelopment (Oppose)

SB 452 (Sharief) amends the Resiliency and Safe Structures Act, which was enacted last session to prevent local governments from restricting the demolition of certain historical or unsafe structures and to allow automatic approval for replacement structures. SB 452 further authorizes the redevelopment of replacement structures if the parcel is located on a barrier island where a building was demolished under the Act. This bill automatically rezones these parcels to the highest density previously allowed as of January 1, 2000, or any time thereafter, regardless of current land use

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policies, zoning designations, or conflicting comprehensive plan policies a city may have to the contrary. (Cruz)

Transportation Concurrency (Monitor)

HB 203 (Grow) modifies requirements for local government comprehensive plans in Florida, including transportation concurrency. Under current law, the capital improvements element of these plans must identify the facilities needed to achieve adopted levels of service within a five-year period. The bill adds the phrase “or to maintain current levels of service” to this requirement. As a result, comprehensive plans will now need to identify the facilities necessary to meet adopted levels of service within five years or maintain existing service levels. (Cruz)

NATURAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC LAND

Farm Products (Monitor)

HB 211 (Cobb) and **SB 374** (Truenow) redefine “farm product” in Florida’s agricultural lands and practices statute to include both edible and nonedible plants and plant products, as well as any animals useful to humans and their derived products. Of interest to municipalities, the bills expand the existing preemption on bona fide farm operations classified as agricultural land to include the collection, storage, processing, and distribution of farm products, which governmental entities cannot limit if such activity is regulated through certain best management practices or specific statewide or federal regulatory bodies. (Singer)

Nature-based Methods for Improving Coastal Resilience (Monitor)

HB 371 (Mooney) and SB 50 (Garcia) direct the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to adopt rules governing nature-based methods to improve coastal resilience. The bills require DEP to include provisions in the rules encouraging local governments to develop or participate in coastal resilience and ecosystem restoration projects. DEP will also be required to identify vulnerable properties along

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the coastline and encourage partnerships with local governments to create protection and restoration zone programs, including eligible opportunities through the Resilient Florida Grant Program. (Singer)

Recreational Customary Use of Beaches (Support)

SB 284 (Rouson) repeals Florida Statute 163.035, which limits the ability of local governments establishing "customary use" ordinances to allow public access to private beaches. Customary use is a legal doctrine that can be used by local governments to create a public right to access beaches above the mean high-water line, even if such beach area is privately owned. A 2018 law prohibits local governments from enacting ordinances or rules that grant public access to private beach property above the mean high-water line unless a court has made a judicial declaration affirming such use. This bill repeals this preemption, effectively eliminating the requirement for a judicial declaration before public access can be granted to private beach areas when local governments use the customary use doctrine. (Singer)

State Land Management (Support)

HB 209 (Snyder) and SB 80 (Harrell) establish the State Park Preservation Act, addressing concerns raised by the controversial and now withdrawn Great Outdoors Initiative, which had proposed adding golf courses, hotels and other recreational infrastructure to various state parks. The bills require the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to hold public hearings when developing or updating land management plans. The bills also require DEP to publish notice and electronic copies of proposed plans within a specific timeframe before public hearings. Relevant to local governments, the bills mandate that any large parcels or projects within more than one county must receive input at a public hearing from an advisory group formed of several individuals, including a local elected official. (Singer)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 492 (McClain) – Mitigation Banking

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SB 56 (Garcia) – Weather Modification Activities

OTHER

Display of Flags by Governmental Entities (Monitor)

HB 75 (Borrero) and **SB 100** (Fine) prohibit governmental entities from erecting or displaying flags representing political viewpoints or ideologies. The bills clarify that they do not limit the ability of private individuals to express private speech or exercise their First Amendment rights, nor the ability of governmental entities to display or erect flags that are authorized by general law. The bills further require that when a governmental entity is displaying the United States flag, the flag must be in a prominent position superior to other flags that are displayed. The bills permit active or retired members of the National Guard or armed forces to use reasonable force at any time to prevent the desecration, destruction, or removal of the United States flag or to replace the United States flag in a position of prominence unless ordered not to by law enforcement acting within the scope of their duties. (Wagoner)

Local Government Code Enforcement (Support)

HB 281 (Partington) proposes several changes to Chapter 162, Florida Statutes, the Local Government Code Enforcement Act. The bill authorizes cities and counties to designate a special magistrate to impose fines and penalties relating to state laws or local ordinances, land development regulations, or other technical codes adopted by a county or city. The bill defines “Special Magistrate” as a member of the Florida Bar in good standing with a minimum of five years of experience as an attorney, appointed by a local government to oversee quasi-judicial proceedings. The bill updates the enforcement procedures requiring a code inspector to schedule a hearing and issue a notice of violation which states the violation, provides correction instructions, and includes the date and time of the hearing. The bill updates the subpoena powers of an enforcement board to allow designated persons to serve subpoenas provided the subpoena is hand-delivered with an affidavit of service that

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includes the date and time of service and the name of the person served. Additionally, the bill creates a new statute allowing code inspectors to use body cameras and providing guidelines for their use and data storage. Lastly, the bill increases the criminal penalties for assault and battery on code inspectors. (Wagoner)

Municipal Job Engine Charter Schools (Monitor)

HB 123 (Andrade) and **SB 140** (Gaetz) are comprehensive bills aimed at making significant changes related to charter schools and school district property management. Of interest to municipalities, the bills will allow municipalities in school districts that have received below an "A" grade for five consecutive years to apply to establish a "job engine charter school." Municipal job engine charter schools will aim to attract job-producing businesses by offering specialized educational programs aligned with local economic needs. Municipalities granted a job engine charter must provide annual reports detailing investments to attract and maintain private-sector industries, ensuring the use of secure facilities, and accepting financial responsibility for the charter school's debts. The bills require school districts experiencing declining enrollment over a five-year period to dispose of surplus properties identified by the State Board of Education. This surplus property must be prioritized for affordable housing for teachers, first responders, and military personnel, for use as charter school facilities, which could include municipal-run charters, or for local government projects, such as recreational facilities. (Cruz)

Regulation of Presidential Libraries (Monitor)

HB 69 (Andrade) and **SB 118** (Brodeur) preempt all regulation, maintenance, operations, and activities of presidential libraries to the state. The bills define a "presidential library" as an institution designated under the Presidential Libraries Act. (Wagoner)

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School Buses (Monitor)

SB 52 (Garcia) expands the definition of “school bus” to include transportation of students to and from charter and private schools throughout statute. (Wagoner)

Smoking in Public Places (Support)

SB 226 (Gruters) creates a state prohibition on smoking or vaping in “public places”. “Public place” is defined as a place where the public has access, including but not limited to streets, sidewalks, public parks, beaches, and government buildings. The bill expands the definition of “smoking” to include marijuana products. However, the prohibition would not apply to smoking cigars in public places. (Wagoner)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 443 (Snyder) – Charter Schools

SB 108 (Grall) and **HB 305** (Esposito) – Administrative Procedures

SB 448 (Burgess) – Administrative Procedure

SB 354 (Gaetz) – Public Service Commission

HB 303 (Fabricio) – Property Damage Caused by Limestone Mining Operations

SB 486 (Ávila) – Limestone Mining Operations

PERSONNEL AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Firefighter Benefits (Monitor)

SB 66 (Garcia) and **HB 87** (Casello) seek to expand the Florida firefighters’ cancer treatment benefits by adding Acute Myeloid Leukemia to the list of “cancers” presumed to have been incurred in the line of duty. The adjustment to the definition is the only change being proposed to Section 112.1816, Florida Statutes, in this bill. Additionally, language is being added to the bill to state the Legislature determines and declares that this act fulfills an important state interest. (Chapman)

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Heat Illness Prevention (Monitor)

HB 35 (Gottlieb) implements mandatory outdoor heat exposure safety programs for employers defined in Section 121.021(10), Florida Statutes, which identifies municipalities as subject to this bill. The safety programs apply to employers with outdoor workers in industries like agriculture, construction, and landscaping, but exempt employees working outdoors for less than 15 minutes per hour through the workday. The bill also mandates the development and administration of training programs, drinking water and shade provisions. Further the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Department of Health are directed to adopt rules to implement the program, including training and certification compliance. (Chapman)

Identification Cards for Public Works Employees (Monitor)

HB 341 (Woodson) seeks to have the Office of Program Policy Analysis study the feasibility of implementing a state-issued identification card for public works employees that would identify them as first responders. (Chapman)

Local Government Official Salaries (Monitor)

SB 272 (Burgess) revises the base salary for certain county constitutional officers based on county population sizes for County Clerk of the Courts and Comptrollers, Supervisors of Elections, and Property Appraisers. (Chapman)

Peer Support for First Responders (Monitor)

SB 86 (Burgess) expands the definition of "first responder" for the purpose of qualifying for peer support benefits. Currently, Florida law provides a confidential peer support program offering emotional, physical, or moral support to first responders, including firefighters, police officers, emergency medical service workers and 911 telecommunicators. SB 86 would extend eligibility for this program to include all non-officer employees of law enforcement agencies. (Chapman)

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Protections for Public Employees Who Use Medical Marijuana as Qualified Patients (Monitor)

HB 83 (Rosenwald) and **SB 142** (Polsky) seek to establish protections for public employees who use medical marijuana (and are qualified patients) from adverse personnel action. This bill also requires accommodations be made unless it presents an undue hardship to the employer. An employee who tests positive for marijuana use must be notified in writing by the employer and may explain or contest the positive result within five business days of the notice being given. Adverse personnel action includes discriminatory employment actions such as refusal to hire, suspension of current position, or demotion due to the patient's status for medical marijuana use. This bill allows public employers to take adverse personnel action if an employee's job performance is impaired by medical marijuana and provides exceptions. (Chapman)

Other Bills of Interest

SB 76 (Berman) – Paid Parental Leave

HB 307 (Mayfield) – Bonuses for Employees of Property Appraisers

PUBLIC SAFETY

Victims of Domestic Violence and Dating Violence (Oppose)

HB 19 (Hinson) and **SB 240** (Berman) create the "Helping Abuse Victims Escape Now (HAVEN) Act," providing a coordinating council created under the Department of Law Enforcement, which will oversee the development of a dynamic website for domestic and dating violence victims. Of concern to cities, the bill includes a provision that preempts local governments from enacting or enforcing regulations that conflict with the creation and implementation of the HAVEN Act. The bill specifies that any local laws, rules, or regulations related to matters covered by the HAVEN Act, such as the operation of the dynamic website and related victim services, are superseded by this state law. (Wagoner)

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Other Bills of Interest

HB 65 (Hunschofsky) and **SB 252** (Polsky) – Sale, Transfer, and Storage of Firearms
SB 88 (Wright) and **HB 221** (Gentry) – Utility Terrain Vehicles
HB 113 (Chamberlin) – Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Law Enforcement Officer
HB 175 (Baker) and **SB 234** (Leek) – Criminal Offenses Against Law Enforcement Officers and Other Personnel
SB 210 (Harrell) – Animal Cremation
SB 214 (Polsky) and **HB 259** (Gerwig) – Special Observances
SB 245 (Baker) – Immigration Enforcement Assistance Agreements
SB 268 (Jones) – Public Records/Public Officers
HB 317 (Fabricio) – Complaints Against Law Enforcement and Correctional Officers

RESILIENCY

Other Bills of Interest

HB 143 (Barnaby) and **SB 62** (Rodriguez) – Resilient Buildings

REVENUES AND BUDGETING

Other Bills of Interest

HB 173 (Brackett) – Interest on Trust Accounts Program Interest Rates
SB 388 (Rodriguez) – Trust Funds for Wildlife Management

SOLID WASTE

Comprehensive Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan (Support)

HB 295 (Casello) and **SB 200** (Berman) mandate the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to develop a comprehensive waste reduction and recycling plan by July 1, 2026. Of interest to municipalities, the bills require the Department to include a

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three-year plan to implement strategies providing recycling assistance to local governments. (Singer)

Storage and Disposal of Prescription Drugs and Sharps (Monitor)

HB 283 (Grow) mandates that the Department of Health and Department of Environmental Protection partner to study the safe collection and proper disposal of sharps used for self-administering prescription drugs at home. Of interest to municipalities, the bill authorizes the departments to work or contract with local governments that wish to participate in the study. (Singer)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 189 (Hart) – Comprehensive Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan

TORT LIABILITY

Suits Against the Government (Oppose)

HB 301 (McFarland) increases the statutory limits on liability for tort claims against the state and its agencies and subdivisions (which include cities). The current statutory limits for claims are \$200,000 per person and \$300,000 per incident. The bill raises these limits to \$1 million per person and \$3 million per incident for claims accruing between October 1, 2025, and October 1, 2030. After October 1, 2030, these limits will increase to \$1.1 million and \$3.2 million, respectively. The bill prohibits an insurance policy from conditioning the payout of a claim on the passage of a claims bill. The legislation allows a subdivision of the state to settle a claim above the statutory limits without the need for a claims bill, even if the payout exceeds insurance policy limits. The bill narrows the statute of limitation on negligence claims against government entities from four years to two years and the required pre-suit notice from three years to 18 months. (Cruz)

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Other Bills of Interest

SB 48 (Garcia) – Judicial Sales Procedures

HB 213 (Gossett-Seidman) and **SB 322** (Rodriguez) – Unlawful Actions Concerning Real Property

TRANSPORTATION

Department of Transportation (Monitor)

SB 462 (DiCeglie) is a comprehensive legislative package for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Notably for municipalities, the bill establishes a new monthly distribution of six cents per kWh of electricity used at public electric vehicle charging stations to the State Transportation Trust Fund. This provision will begin in October 2025 and end in June 2030.

The bill also updates the process for utility facility relocation within a right-of-way. It mandates that underground utilities placed, replaced, or relocated must be electronically detectable using FDOT-approved techniques. Additionally, utility owners will be financially responsible for:

- Failing to remove or refusing to remove or relocate a utility in a timely manner
- Any damage caused to existing infrastructure
- Roadway failures resulting from their utility facilities

The bill requires permits for new placements to be conditioned on the payment of these costs.

The bill defines “as-built plans” to include all modifications made during construction and requires them to document an agreed-upon depth. Utility owners must submit as-built plans with specific details within 20 business days after project completion. Reimbursement for any costs will be contingent upon submission.

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The bill addresses facility relocation for federal interstate projects, requiring FDOT to determine whether reimbursement is in the public's best interest and necessary to expedite construction. The bill allows reimbursement of up to 50% of relocation costs for municipally-owned utility facilities and 100% for those in a Rural Area of Opportunity after deducting any increase in facility value and salvage value.

The bill also sets procedures for coordinating FDOT-funded projects that cannot be completed within 10 years. Utility owners must submit existing and proposed plans within 30 to 120 days upon receiving preliminary FDOT plans. Failure to comply may result in penalties, including withholding payments, permit denials, or exclusion from relocation work. However, extensions are available for emergencies or uncontrollable delays. If the utility owner fails to initiate work after a final 10-day notice, FDOT may seek injunctive relief. The bill also establishes mediation boards to resolve disputes and outlines repayment timelines for damages owed to FDOT. (Singer)

Operating Motor Vehicles at Slow Speeds (Support)

HB 241 (Cross) and **SB 350** (DiCeglie) create an exception to state law, allowing local ordinances to require drivers to reduce their speed on flooded or inundated streets to minimize wakes and waves that could further damage nearby homes. The exception also those operating a boat or any other conveyance. (Singer)

Personal Mobility Device Battery Safety Standards (Monitor)

HB 291 (Blanco) and **SB 410** (Rodriguez) establish mandatory battery safety standards for personal mobility devices. Of interest to municipalities, the bills instruct the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to coordinate with local governments to ensure compliance, including imposing fines and seizing non-compliant personal mobility devices. (Singer)

Other Bills of Interest

HB 339 (Abbott) and **SB 320** (Gaetz) – Licensure Requirements for Surveyors and Mappers

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UTILITIES

Municipal Water and Sewer Utility Rates (Monitor)

HB 11 (Robinson, F.) and **SB 202** (Jones) require a municipality that operates a water or sewer utility providing services to customers in another recipient municipality using a facility or plant located in the recipient municipality to charge customers in the recipient municipality the same rates, fees, and charges it imposes on customers within its own municipal boundaries. (O'Hara)

Residential Utility Disconnections (Oppose)

SB 330 (Berman) and **HB 419** (Tendrich) prohibit an electric utility, a public utility, or a water utility from disconnecting service to residential customers for nonpayment of bills or fees if the forecasted heat index is at or above 90 degrees or at or below 32 degrees within 48 hours after the scheduled disconnection, or a state of emergency is declared for an extreme weather event or public health emergency 24 hours before or after the scheduled disconnection, until 24 hours after the state of emergency is lifted. The bills require such utilities to waive reconnection fees and late fees for customers attempting to reestablish service if disconnected for nonpayment if the heat index is at or above 90 degrees or at or below 32 degrees on the day of disconnection. The bills prohibit a utility from disconnecting service to any residential customer for nonpayment of bills or fees on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, state holiday, or any day immediately preceding a state holiday. In addition, the bills prohibit utilities from recovering from customers any fee or expense incurred in complying with the bills' requirements. The bills require utilities to provide residential customers with a copy of the utility's disconnection policy when a new account is established or when any disconnection for nonpayment is scheduled and to publish a copy of the policy on the utility's website. Utilities are required to publish alerts informing residential customers of the suspension of disconnection services due to a forecasted heat index above 90 degrees, below 32 degrees, or an extreme weather event. The bills specify that notices must be in English and Spanish and any other language spoken by more than 2% of the utility's customers and require the notices

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to contain information about payment plans and government energy assistance programs. It requires utilities to deliver notice of nonpayment of bills or fees to residential customers after each missed payment and 10 days. It specifies the contents of the notice of nonpayment and prohibits disconnection until an account is at least 60 days past due. The bills impose liability for actual and consequential damages, attorney fees, and court costs on a utility for violations of its requirements. (O'Hara)

WATER QUALITY/WASTEWATER

Safe Waterways Act (Monitor)

HB 73 (Gossett-Seidman) and **SB 156** (Rodriguez) establish the Safe Waterways Act, requiring municipalities and counties to "immediately notify" the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) of any incidents affecting the quality of beach waters or public bathing places. Public boat docks, marinas, and piers will also be required to immediately notify the jurisdictional municipality or county of any such incidents that may affect the quality of beach waters. The bills also require DEP to "immediately notify" the municipality or county where the affected beach waters or public bathing places are located upon issuing a health advisory. The bills specify that municipalities and counties will be responsible for posting and maintaining signage around the beaches and public bathing places they own, in accordance with DEP specifications, which must be placed at access points during health advisories until water quality standards are restored. The bill further expands a current preemption, giving the state exclusive authority over health advisories related to bacteriological sampling of beach waters and public bathing places. The bill also transfers responsibilities for bacteriological sampling of beach waters and public bathing places from the Department of Health to the DEP. DEP must adopt and enforce rules and issue health advisories for beach waters and public bathing places when bacteriological water sampling results fail to meet health standards. (Singer)

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WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Disability Presumptions for First Responders (Oppose)

SB 366 (Rodriguez) and **HB 269** (Black) seek to expand workers' compensation benefits for first responders. Under current law, law enforcement officers, correctional officers, correctional probation officers, and firefighters who become disabled due to tuberculosis, heart disease, or hypertension are presumed to have contracted the condition in the line of duty, making them eligible for workers' compensation. A recent ruling by the First District Court of Appeal determined that a thoracic aortic aneurysm does not qualify as "heart disease" under this presumption. In response, these bills expand the definition of "heart disease" to include most heart abnormalities, explicitly covering aneurysms. Additionally, the bills broaden the definition of "law enforcement officer" to include part-time and auxiliary officers, extending these presumption benefits to a larger group of first responders. (Cruz)