

THE BERMAN BRIEFING

The Official Publication of Senate District 26



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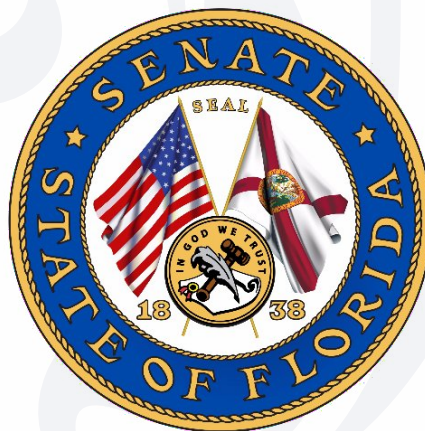
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**SENATOR
BERMAN'S 2023
LEGISLATIVE
SESSION RECAP**



SENATOR BERMAN'S LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS – SPONSORED BILLS

For a complete list of Senator Berman's bills that were filed but not passed, visit <https://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S26>



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 130, Domestic Violence (Greyson's Law)

Greyson's Law amends two statutes relating to the descriptions of what constitutes evidence or risks of domestic violence for use in child custody determinations and in domestic violence injunction proceedings. This includes whether a parent believes that their child is or has been in imminent danger of becoming a victim of domestic violence, sexual violence, neglect, or abandonment by the other parent. Further protecting both the parent and child, this legislation ensures the courts consider any pattern of abuse, whether threatening, intimidating or controlling behavior, however short, when determining detriment to the child.



PASSED: SB 144, Lactation Spaces

This legislation requires each county courthouse to provide one dedicated lactation space, available to women for pumping or breastfeeding by January 1, 2024. The bill authorizes, but does not require, the district courts of appeal to use either state appropriated funds or private funds to provide a lactation space. SB 144 is a win for mothers who have for too long breastfed and pumped in unsanitary bathrooms and closets. This bill ensures women will be able to do so in sanitary, private, and dignified locations.





PASSED: SB 1052, Exemptions for Totally and Permanently Disabled Veterans

Under this bill, totally and permanently disabled veterans or their surviving spouses may receive a pro-rated refund of property tax for the portion of the year that they own a new homestead property, even if they had not received this exemption on another homestead property in that same year.



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 226, Support for Dependent Adult Children

SB 226 codifies case law/common law provisions setting forth guidelines for courts as to how to provide for parental support of dependent adult children who were rendered disabled through a physical or mental incapacity that occurred before the age of majority.



PASSED: CS/SB 996, Driver License, Identification Card, and Motor Vehicle Registration Applications

This bill creates a \$1 voluntary contribution on motor vehicle registration applications and driver license and identification card applications for Best Buddies International. Best Buddies International, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is the world's largest organization dedicated to ending the social, physical, and economic isolation of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

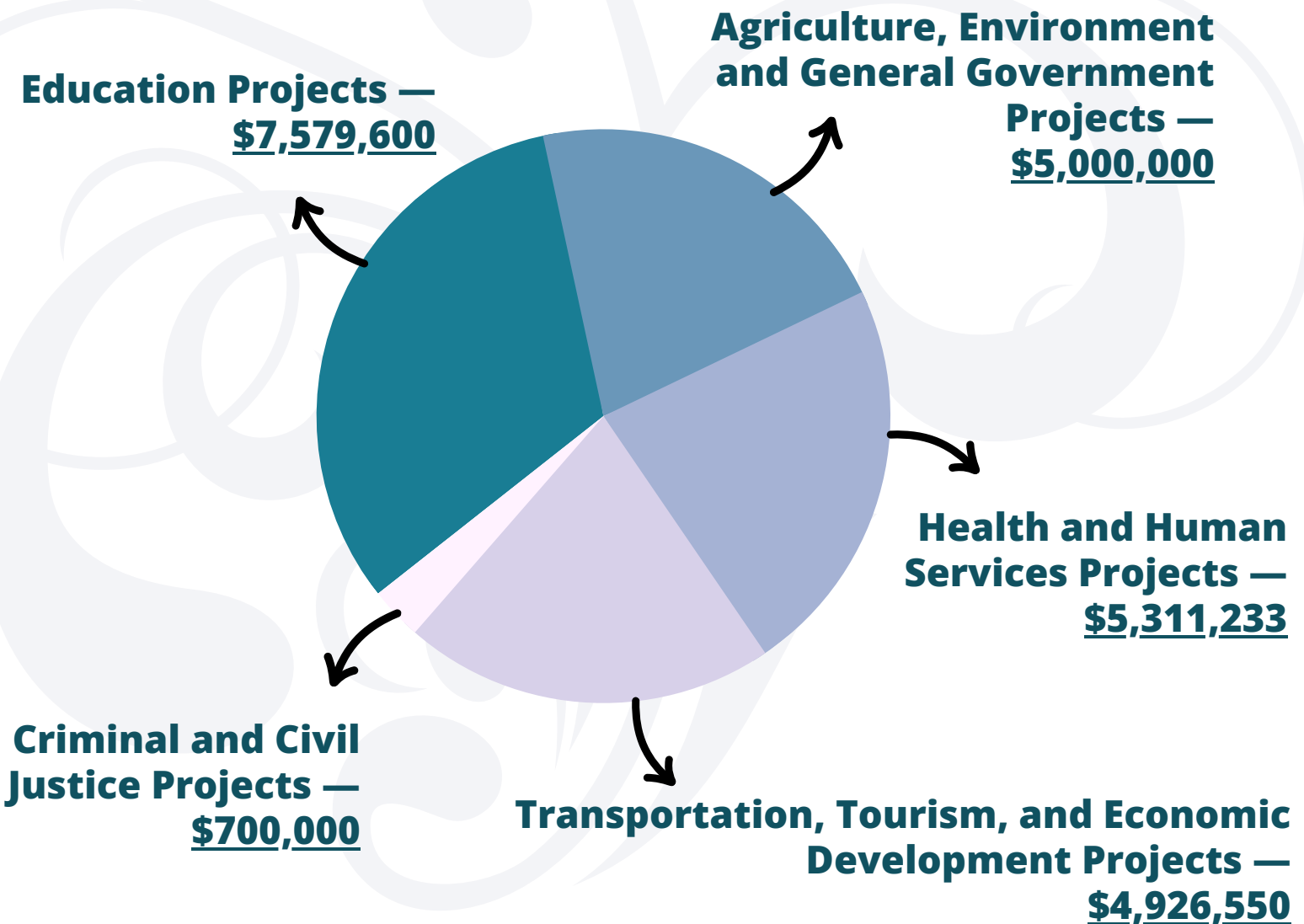
APPROPRIATIONS PROJECTS



For fiscal year 2023-24, Senator Berman secured...

\$23,517,383

...in the state budget for special projects in our community. These projects will go far in improving water quality, building lasting infrastructure, expanding critical social services offered by non-profits, and preparing students for success. **However, some of these items may be subject to the Governor's line-item veto.**



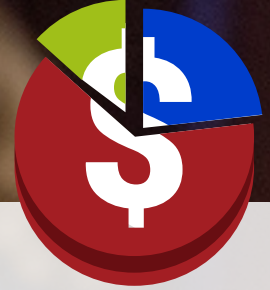
APPROPRIATIONS PROJECTS



Project Title	Requester	Amount Secured in State Budget
Enhancing and Expanding Florida's Nursing Workforce at All Levels	FAU	\$4,261,000
Palm Beach State College Emergency Response Training Center	PBSC	\$3,000,000
Florida Caregiving Youth - At Risk Student Services	AACY	\$318,600
Palm Beach County Glades Region Infrastructure Improvements	Palm Beach County Water Utilities	\$1,500,000
Delray Beach Public Seawall Improvement	City of Delray Beach	\$1,000,000
South Bay Stormwater Flood Control and Waterway Management Phase 3	City of South Bay	\$150,000
City of Boca Raton NW 35th St. Drainage Improvement Project	City of Boca Raton	\$300,000
Palm Beach County Food Bank Produce Processing Facility	Palm Beach Count Food Bank	\$400,000
Climate Vulnerability/Clean Water Project – Lift Stations Rehabilitation	Town of Highland Beach	\$250,000
Delray Beach Historic Campus Drainage and Parking	City of Delray Beach	\$100,000
Lakeview Park Playground Improvements	City of Delray Beach	\$100,000
Boynton Beach Fire Rescue Fire Alerting System Upgrades	City of Boynton Beach	\$800,000
Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive	Florida State Association of Letter Carriers	\$400,000
Alpert Jewish Family Service Mental Health First Aid	Alpert Jewish Family Services	\$1,911,233
EJS Project Teen Center	EJS Project	\$250,000
Parent Engagement Program	ChildNet	\$250,000
Promise Fund of Florida	Promise Fund	\$250,000
Alpert Jewish Family Service Community Access Life Line (CALL) Service	Alpert Jewish Family Services	\$250,000
Affordable Supportive Housing Expansion for People with Mental Health Disabilities	Henderson Behavioral Health	\$2,400,000
Palm Beach County Transportation Disadvantaged Discounted Bus Passes	Palm Beach County	\$1,000,000
South Bay - SW 11th Avenue Street Improvements	City of South Bay	\$250,000
West Technical Education Center – Adult Education & Workforce Development Training Program	West Technical Education Center	\$239,045
City of Boca Raton NW/SW 4th Avenue Widening	City of Boca Raton	\$1,000,000
City of Belle Glade Pedestrian Bridge Replacement	City of Belle Glade	\$252,505
Bell Glade Roadway Project	City of Belle Glade	\$1,185,000
Central Palm Beach County Infrastructure	Palm Beach County	\$1,000,000
RESTORE Reentry Program	Palm Beach County	\$500,000
Wandering Mitigation and Rescue Project	Alzheimer's Community Care	\$200,000

Fiscal Year 2023-24

BUDGET OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA



Total Budget: \$117 billion [\$46.5 billion General Revenue; \$70.5 billion Trust Funds]

NOTABLE FIGURES

Increased Reserves & Debt Reduction

- \$10.9 billion Total Reserves
 - \$5.3 billion General Revenue Unallocated
 - \$4.1 billion Budget Stabilization Fund
 - \$1.4 billion added to the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund
 - \$200 million to retire outstanding state debt

Compensation & Benefits

- 5% Pay Increase for all State Employees
- Retiree Health Insurance Subsidy increase of up to \$75 per month

Hurricane Relief and Recovery

- Hurricane Ian and Nicole Recovery Grant Program - \$350 million
- Beach Recovery and Renourishment - \$106 million

Education

- Education Capital Outlay - \$1.3 billion
- School Readiness Program - \$1.1 billion
- Voluntary Prekindergarten Program - \$427 million

Health and Human Services

- Expand KidCare Access - \$20.6 million
- Opioid Treatment, Prevention, and Recovery from Opioid Settlement Funds - \$173.5 million
- Community-Based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grants - \$156.3 million

Criminal and Civil Justice

- DOC Education Expansion - \$39.3 million
- State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication (S.A.F.E.) In Florida Program - \$20 million

Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development

- Small Business Credit Initiatives - \$170.9 million
- Florida Hometown Heroes Program - \$100 million GR
- State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) - \$252 million TF
- State Apartment Incentive Loan Program (SAIL) - \$259 million TF
- Inflation Loan Program for SAIL - \$100 million GR

Agriculture, Environment, and General Government

- Rural and Family Lands Protection Program - \$100 million
- Citrus Protection and Research - \$49.5 million
- Everglades Restoration - \$574.6 million
- Water Quality Improvements - \$1 billion
- Flood and Sea-Level Rise Program - \$300 million
- Springs Restoration - \$50 million

Spending Allocation by Section

Silo	Section	Amount
Education	1 & 2	\$ 30,304,475,261
Human Services	3	\$ 47,260,202,276
Criminal Justice & Corrections	4	\$ 6,007,616,760
Natural Resources, Environment, Growth Managements, Transportation	5	\$ 22,669,753,979
General Government	6	\$ 10,071,975,277
Judicial Branch	7	\$ 712,723,994
TOTAL		\$117,026,747,547

Fiscal Year 2023-24

BUDGET OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

PASSED: HB 7063, Taxation

This year, the Legislature passed HB 7063, a robust tax package that provides over \$1 billion in tax cuts for Floridians. The bill permanently exempts the following products from sales and use

tax:

- Machinery and equipment used to produce renewable natural gas.
- Baby and toddler products.
- Diapers and incontinence products.
- Oral hygiene products.
- Firearm safety devices.

Creates several sales tax holidays:

- 28-day “back-to-school” sales tax holiday over two separate time periods, from 7/24/23 through 8/6/23, and 1/1/24 through 1/14/24, for school supplies
- 14-day “disaster preparedness” sales tax holiday from 5/27/23 through 6/9/23, for specified disaster preparedness items
- 3-month “Freedom Summer” sales tax holiday from 5/29/23 to 9/4/23, for specified admissions, boating and water activity supplies, camping supplies, fishing supplies, general outdoor supplies, residential pool supplies, children’s toys, and children’s athletic equipment.
- 7-day “Tool Time” sales tax holiday from 9/2/23 through 9/8/23, for specified tools

Additionally, the bill:

- Increases the Strong Families Tax Credit limit from \$10 million to \$20 million.
- Provides an additional \$150 million in tax credits for brownfield rehabilitation for use in Fiscal Years 2023-2024 through 2027-2028.
- Distributes \$27.5 million for 2 fiscal years to the Florida Agricultural Promotion Campaign Trust Fund, from which it will be further distributed to the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders’ Association and two thoroughbred racing tracks within Florida.
- Prohibits special assessments on agricultural lands.
- Requires several local taxes, when renewed or increased by referendum, to be placed on the ballot in a general election held within 48 months before the effective date of the renewed or increased tax, and prohibits them from being placed on the ballot more than once during that time period.
- Expands the ad valorem refund for disabled veterans who purchase a new homestead in Florida after receiving the exemption on an existing homestead to no longer require the veteran to have been receiving the exemption on an existing homestead. *See Page 3
- Expands the homestead exemption for surviving spouses of first responders killed in the line of duty to include surviving spouses of federal law enforcement officers.
- Freezes local communications services tax rates in place on 1/1/23 until 1/1/26.
- Delays the imposition of the natural gas fuel tax from 1/1/24 until 1/1/26.
- Clarifies that when calculating the penalty for underpayment with regard to corporate income tax, a taxpayer’s donation to a tax donation program is included as a payment of tax.

THE GOOD



PASSED: CS/SB 102, "Live Local Act"

CS/SB 102 is a signature legislative priority of Senate President Passidomo which makes numerous changes and additions to affordable housing related programs and policies at both the state and local level.

Provisions include:

- Appropriations for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program and the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program equal to \$150 million and \$252 million, respectively.
- Local governments preemptions of rent control and certain zoning, density, and height requirements.
- Ad valorem tax exemptions intended to incentivize affordable housing production (e.g., for community land trusts, recently built mixed-use developments, and permissible local government exemptions)
- Sales tax refunds for building materials purchased for affordable housing
- A new tax donation program which allows corporations to direct up to \$100 million annually to fund the SAIL
- Florida Housing Finance Corporation appropriations of:
 - Nonrecurring of \$100 million for the Florida Hometown Hero Program and \$100 million for inflation-related cost increases of pipeline FHFC projects
 - A recurring sum of \$150 million for SAIL via a redirection of a GR doc stamp service charge
- Keys Workforce Housing Initiative requirements related to evacuation time requirements and comprehensive plan and land use amendments.
- Other state resources, including Job Growth Grant Fund and Community Contribution Tax Credit Program for affordable housing.



PASSED: CS/SB 106, Florida Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail Network

This legislation expands access to Florida's Wildlife Corridor by connecting the corridor to Florida's Greenways and Trails System and the Florida Shared-Use Non Motorized (SUN) Trail Network. The bill establishes priorities for funding, including projects that are recommended priorities by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council, projects that have national, statewide or regional importance; projects that complete gaps between existing trails; and projects that support the transportation needs of bicyclists and pedestrians.



PASSED: CS/CS/HB 1379, Environmental Protection

This is the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) legislative package. It creates the Indian River Lagoon Protection Program, expands the Wastewater Grant Program, and makes changes to the regulation of wastewater treatment, onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems, sanitary sewer services, basin management action plans, and land acquisition.

THE GOOD



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 154, Condominium and Cooperative Associations

CS/SB 154 revises the milestone inspection requirements for condominium and cooperative buildings that are three or more stories; requires the Florida Building Commission to establish by rule a building safety program to implement the milestone inspection requirements within the Florida Building Code; revises the requirement that all personal lines residential policies issued by the Citizens Property Insurance Corporation must include flood coverage to exempt condominium or cooperative units that are in certain flood-risk areas and above specified floors in a building; clarifies that both the condominium or cooperative unit owner and any person authorized by any owner as his or her representative may inspect the official records of the association; revises the reserve funding requirements relating to condominium and cooperative associations; provides additional presale notice requirements in contracts for sales of a unit by a developer or nondeveloper; and effective July 1, 2027, the bill permits condominium and cooperative unit owners may use the mediation process in this section for specified disputes related to compliance with the milestone inspection.



PASSED: CS/HB 379, Technology in K-12 Public Schools

This legislation requires the Department of Education to implement social media safety into their public school curriculum. It also bans the usage of certain social media websites while using the school's internet. Social media safety instructional material is required to be available online and to parents. The material must be presented in an age-appropriate way for kids in grades 6-12.



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 766, Enforcement of School Bus Passing Infractions

Under Florida law, the authorization for the use of cameras to enforce traffic laws is preempted to the state. The only such traffic cameras currently authorized in statute are commonly known as red light cameras. CS/CS/SB 766 authorizes, but does not require, a school district to install and operate a school bus infraction detection system. The system records violations when drivers fail to stop for a school bus displaying a stop signal as students are loading or unloading.



PASSED: CS/SB 164, Controlled Substance Testing

The bill provides an exclusion to the definition of drug paraphernalia for fentanyl test strips. Both the CDC and United Nations promote the use of fentanyl test strips as a low-cost harm reduction tool that allows those using substances to test for the presence of the lethal drug fentanyl.

THE GOOD



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 1550, Prescription Drugs

This bill works to regulate Pharmacy Benefit Managers and make drugs more affordable for the general public and those who need them most. This bill will require drug manufacturers and distributors to report drug pricing and regulate cost appeals to better benefit the public and ensure that all citizens are able to obtain the drugs they need and deserve without any loopholes within the system. This will lower the cost and ensure patients now have access to the exact pricing of these drugs.



PASSED: CS/CS/HB 269, Public Nuisances

The bill creates enhanced penalties for certain offenses evidencing religious animus and specifically lays out conduct that is considered a hate crime by virtue of being of a religious or ethnic nature. The crimes addressed are: littering, stalking, criminal mischief, trespass, and disturbing a school or place of worship. This legislation is a step in the right direction in fighting the rise of antisemitism in our communities.

THE BAD



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 170: Local Ordinances

SB 170 allows a business to file a suit against a local government if they perceive a local ordinance to be “arbitrary and unreasonable.” The legislation forces local governments to stop enforcing a challenged ordinance while a lawsuit plays out. Counties and cities have to produce a “business impact estimate” prior to passing an ordinance (certain exceptions are in place). The estimate must be published on the local government’s website and include certain information, such as the proposed ordinance’s purpose, estimated economic impact on businesses, and compliance costs. Plaintiffs who win their cases in court could receive up to \$50,000 for attorney fees and costs. This legislation increases the likelihood of litigation of cities and counties, hurting taxpayers.



PASSED: CS/SB 214, Sales of Firearms and Ammunition

214 revises Florida gun registry laws to prohibit certain entities from using an identifying code for purchases from firearm or ammunition retailers. The information gathered from the use of such codes could be construed as a firearm registry maintained by private entities, which current law prohibits.



PASSED: SB 1438, Protection of Children

Despite already having laws on the books, this bill prohibits people from knowingly admitting children into adult live performances (Drag Shows). If any person that admits a child into a live performance and possesses a license to operate a public lodging establishment, public food service, or beverage license they will be subjected to having that license suspended, revoked, or fined.



PASSED: CS/SB 1616, Public Records/Transportation and Protective Services

The bill creates a public records exemption for records related to transportation and security services provided for the Governor, the Governor’s immediate family, visiting governors and their families, and other persons as requested by certain state officials. The bill will prohibit the disclosure of the travel of Governor DeSantis as he prepares for a presidential run. It’s also retroactive so that all prior trips are exempt from public record.



PASSED: CS/CS/CS HB 1, Education

The bill would create universal vouchers or “education savings accounts” (ESAs), which would offer education spending accounts in the amount of whatever the Florida Education Finance Program Unweighted Full-Time Equivalent amount is in a given year (it is \$8,248 in school year (SY) 2022-23) to all K-12 eligible students in Florida, regardless of family income. No one knows how this bill will impact our schools and our communities as a whole. The cost of the bill has been estimated by some to be anywhere from \$2-\$4 billion. With the flood gates opening, parents will flock to private schools that have little to no accountability. Additionally, millionaires and billionaires who already send their children to private school will be eligible for the ESA's. Irrespective of your feelings on school choice as a concept, this bill as currently structured lacks the transparency and accountability needed for parents to make an informed choice. The next several years will be destabilized and chaotic as school districts adapt to the new rate of student mobility and how to plan for and use their resources.



PASSED: CS/CS/CS/SB 266, Higher Education

SB 266 prohibits general education core courses from content that is based on theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States, usurps faculty hiring decisions to the Governors’ appointees and allows tenure to be reviewed at any time, prohibits spending on activities that promote diversity, equity and inclusion, and creates new general education requirements prioritizing neoclassical education focused on Western European civilization. The bill substantially limits academic freedom and threatens our system's preeminence.



PASSED: CS/SB 7050, Elections

Another sweeping elections bill passed the Legislature this year. While the bill has 47 difference sections within it, it is mostly aimed at making it harder for community-based organizations, or third-party voter registration organizations, to register Floridians to vote. The bill creates barriers for these organizations that conduct voter registration drives by dramatically increasing fines for noncompliance, implementing shorter deadlines on voter registration forms, and restricting who can assist with voter registration drives. The bill also requires volunteer organizations to conduct full background checks on every single volunteer or risk fines of \$50,000 per person. Harming organizations that play a vital role in registering voters from across the political spectrum, but particularly Black and brown Floridians, is anti-democratic and follows a pattern of voter suppression legislation passing around the country.



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 236, Civil Remedies

This law is wide sweeping tort reform that overhauls Florida’s litigation landscape. It has a slew of negative effects on the judicial system and is of particular relevance to lawsuits against insurers and personal injury cases. It reduces the statute of limitations claims time in half. No longer will insurance companies be required to pay the attorney's fees of the prevailing party. Knowing this, companies will be less likely to settle claims. Floridians will recover zero dollars in damages if they are deemed 51% negligent in an accident, they will not be able to hold property owners negligent for improper security, and they will not have medical expenses fully compensated.



PASSED: CS/HB 1521, Facility Requirements Based on Sex

The bill states the legislative purpose and intent is to provide restrooms and changing facilities for exclusive use by females or males, in order to maintain public safety, decency, and decorum. This is an anti-transgender bathroom bill that would make it a crime to use a bathroom designated as the opposite sex of your birth.

THE UGLY



PASSED: SB 300, 6-Week Abortion Ban

This bill bans abortion after 6 weeks gestation, defined as the first day of the pregnant person's last menstrual period, or just 4 weeks post-fertilization. It criminalizes healthcare providers who provide such care and makes it a felony of the third degree, punishable by up to five years in prison and \$5,000 in fines. It makes it more difficult for victims of rape, incest and human trafficking to access abortion. Survivors now would need to provide proof of their trauma in order to access the care prior to fifteen weeks. Finally, the law prohibits telehealth medication abortions and requires that abortion medication be dispensed in person by a provider. This legislation is an extreme measure that destroys the principle of separation of church and state. It is not guided by medicine and science, endangers women of all ages, and strips them of their autonomy over their own bodies.



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 450, Death Penalty

This bill reduces the threshold for a death sentence to be awarded by a jury from a unanimous decision by the jury to 8 jurors supporting the death penalty. If fewer than 8 jurors favor recommending the death penalty, then a life sentence without the possibility of parole would be recommended. It makes Florida one of only two states with such a low threshold.



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 256, Union-Busting

This legislation prohibits public employee unions from collecting dues through paycheck deduction, which is the preferred method. This bill creates a 60% threshold for public sector unions other than police, firefighters, and correction or parole officers. Unions representing public sector workers other than law enforcement officers, correctional officers or correctional probation officers, or firefighters, are now required to submit a membership form with prescribed language and note the salaries of the highest paid officers and employees.



PASSED: CS/SB 254: Treatments for Sex Reassignment

This discriminatory legislation prohibits gender affirming care for minors (including prescription medications), unless they are currently receiving such care. It allows a non-supportive parent to invoke emergency proceedings and obtain a warrant to take immediate physical custody of a child if the other parent is supporting the child by allowing access to prescription medications. It bans state or local governments from funding gender-affirming care (including for adults) in employee health plans and Medicaid. Finally, it makes it a third-degree felony, punishable by up to five years in prison, for any healthcare practitioner to provide gender-affirming care to a minor.



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 1718, Immigration

The bill prohibits counties and municipalities from providing funds to any person, entity, or organization to issue identification documents to an individual who does not provide proof of lawful presence in the United States; specifies that certain driver licenses and permits issued by other states exclusively to unauthorized immigrants are not valid in this state; requires hospitals to collect patient immigration status data information on admission or registration forms; and increases the maximum fine that may be imposed for a first violation of specified provisions relating to employing, hiring, recruiting, or referring aliens for private or public employment.



PASSED: CS/HB 543, Permitless Carry

Under the bill, persons who wish to carry a concealed firearm without obtaining and maintaining a concealed firearm license from the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services may lawfully do so. It eliminates from the requirements to carry a concealed firearm the “demonstration of competency” with a firearm; meaning people can carry a concealed firearm in public with no safety training whatsoever. States that have passed this law have seen an increase in violent crime from 10 to 13%.



PASSED: CS/CS/HB 1069, Education (Don't Say Gay Expansion)

This bill is another piece of legislation addressing the LGBTQ community. This bill expands 2022 legislation prohibiting classroom instruction on gender identity and sexual orientation to include prekindergarten through grades 9-12. The bill also prohibits a school employees, contractor, or student from being required to refer to a person with a pronoun that differs from that person’s sex. School employees are also prevented from telling students their preferred pronouns. This bill also tightens the hold on school districts relating to the approval of instructional materials that are approved for students, and could lead to more book banning.



PREEMPTION ISSUES



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 346, Public Construction

This legislation would require contracts between local governments and contractors to include all cost estimates and restrict municipalities from withholding payments, except those subject to good-faith disputes or claims against public surety bonds. It would also require municipalities to deem an application approved if it is still under review after 180 days. CS/CS/SB 346 was amended to remove the preemption of a municipality to enact a local preference ordinance when awarding a public works project above \$350,000.



PASSED: CS/CS/HB 1281, Preemption Over Utility Service Restrictions

This legislation prohibits local governments from restricting the use of private and commercial gas stoves and other major appliances, including water heaters, fireplaces, generators and clothes dryers. Although a small percentage of Floridians have gas stoves, this year's annual tax package (HB 7063) includes a permanent tax exemption on these purchases.



PASSED: CS/CS/HB 3, Government and Corporate Activism

The bill creates a sweeping prohibition on consideration of ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) principles in state and local financial matters. It prohibits consideration of anything other than "pecuniary factors" in the investment of funds and exercise of shareholder rights by state and local governments. Under the Governor's influence, Florida has divested \$2 billion of funds from BlackRock due to their stance on ESG. Considering factors such as climate change are prohibited as an investment strategy. Reducing options for banks to hold deposits and issue government bonds, thereby reducing competition, could be costly to taxpayers.



PASSED: CS/HB 1417, Residential Tenancies

Florida is known to have some of the weakest laws regulating tenant-landlord relations. As such, many cities have passed ordinances ensuring basic protections, such as limits on rent increases without proper notice, arbitrary fees and protection from discrimination. Lake Worth Beach and Boynton Beach were two cities to do this locally, among others throughout Florida. HB 1417 now strips these cities from these ordinances and makes them null and void, leaving such decisions solely to the state.

PREEMPTION ISSUES



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 774, Ethics Requirements for Public Officials

Currently, municipal mayors, city commissioners, elected members of a special district and members of the state Commission on Ethics are only required to file a Limited Disclosure of Financial Interests (Form 1). Under this bill, this class of individuals will have to now file a Full Disclosure of Financial Interests (Form 6). Arguments in favor of this legislation suggested there should be parity among legislators and higher level officials, such as the Governor and the Cabinet, however, there are many cities and smaller special districts where there is little to no compensation. The requirement to disclose a deeper dive on one's personal financial status is likely to have a "chilling effect" and discourage future candidates in more rural places.



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 250, Natural Emergencies

Filed in response to the most recent rash of hurricanes (Ian and Nicole) in 2022, this bill makes robust changes regarding preparation and response activities of local governments following a natural emergency. Included are provisions related to loan funds, debris removal, extension and expedition of permitting processes and details surrounding inspection and building teams following a natural disaster. One of the components to note is that counties and municipalities cannot prohibit a resident from placing a temporary residential structure on their property for up to 36 months following a natural emergency under certain circumstances. In other words, a resident may live in the temporary structure (typically, an RV or trailer-style living arrangement) and be making a good faith effort to rebuild/renovate their damaged permanent structure.



PASSED: CS/CS/HB 89, Building Construction

Under this bill, a local government cannot make substantive changes to building plans after a permit has been issued. If substantive changes are made after a permit is issued, the local government must identify the specific plan features that do not comply with the Florida Building Code, the Florida Fire Prevention Code, or the Life Safety Code or any local amendments thereto. The specific code chapters and sections upon which the changes requested are based must be provided to the permit holder. A local fire inspector, plans reviewer or building official who fails to comply will be subject to disciplinary action.



PASSED: CS/CS/SB 752, Temporary Commercial Kitchens

SB 752 made changes as it relates to food service operators who run commissary services to temporary kitchens. The regulation is preempted to the state but does not affect the authority of a local government or local enforcement district to conduct inspections for compliance with the Florida Building Code and the Florida Fire Prevention Code. The regulation of a mobile food delivery vehicle (MFDV), aka a "food truck", is also preempted to the state. A municipality, county, or other local government entity may not require a separate license, registration, or permit beyond those established by the DBPR as a condition for the MFDV's operation within the jurisdiction, may not impose a separate fee beyond those established by the DBPR as a condition for the MFDV's operation within the jurisdiction or prohibit MFDVs from operating within the entirety of the entity's jurisdiction.