

WEEKLY TALLAHASSEE UPDATE



With the completion of the seventh week of the 2024 Florida Legislative Session, only a few weeks remain until sine die. These next few weeks will be the most pivotal for the 2024 - 2025 budget and to see what additional bills may cross the finish line with such little time remaining.

One of Senate President Passidomo's top priorities [SB 7016 Health Care](#) companion bill [CS/CS/HB 1549](#) passed off the House floor 117 to 1. The legislation aims to "improve access to medical care by reducing barriers for providers, such as increasing reimbursement rates that incentivize providers to serve Medicaid patients." This legislation also addresses "Florida's health care workforce shortages with new opportunities for training, education, and retention. This legislation is proposing to invest \$716 million into our health care and education systems to fund the bill."

Both the Florida Senate and Florida House of Representatives passed [SB 7052 Economic Self-Sufficiency](#) by Senator Garcia and [HB 1267 Economic Self-Sufficiency](#) by Representative Anderson this week. These bills create the "School Readiness Plus (SRP) program to supplement the existing School Readiness (SR) program and help reduce the benefit cliff experienced by families as they become ineligible for the SR program funding due to earning more income."

[HB 635 Child Care and Early Learning Providers](#) sponsored by Representative McFarland passed favorably through the House Appropriations Committee and is now headed to the House floor. This bill "incentivizes businesses to assist employees with the cost and availability of childcare while also reducing regulations on providers that drive up costs without improving safety or quality."

[HB 433 Employment Regulations](#) sponsored by Representative Esposito passed favorably through the House Commerce Committee 14 to 4. This bill "preempts labor regulations to the state of Florida, with limited exceptions, to avoid a patchwork of different employment standards businesses must comply with." The bill "prohibits the ability of local jurisdictions to mandate wages or benefits on private employers through their purchasing or procurement processes that are above what state or federal law requires, commonly referred to as prevailing wages." Last, this bill "prohibits local governments from setting heat safety regulations in the workplace."

[HB 619 Sovereign Immunity for Professional Firms](#) sponsored by Representative Tuck passed nearly unanimously 113 to 1 off the House floor. This bill "clarifies that subcontractors are also agents of the state and should be captured under sovereign immunity, while also extending sovereign immunity protections to professional firms for local transportation projects, to prevent unnecessary litigation."

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[SB 480 Energy Infrastructure Investment](#) sponsored by Senator DiCeglie passed off the Senate floor 35 to 2. This bill "encourages further investment in fuel diversification and increased fuel capacity in Florida by allowing regulated utilities to request recovery for strategic infrastructure investments from the Public Service Commission for the production of renewable natural gas. The bill creates a mechanism to fund RNG projects, including capital investment in facilities, and operation and maintenance expenses related to these projects."

Here are some bills I have previously mentioned in the Tallahassee weekly update that have passed through one or both chambers:

[HB 275 Offenses Involving Critical Infrastructure](#) sponsored by Representative Canady passed off the House floor with a 110 to 5 vote. This bill "discourages the tampering of infrastructure such as electricity, natural gas, wireless communications, water systems, ports, and airports."

[HB 347 Exemptions from Products Liability Actions](#) sponsored by Representative Truenow off the House floor 81 to 33. This bill "protects Florida agribusinesses from increased litigation due to the use of regulated fertilizer products."

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Public Policy Chair

Sources:

www.flchamber.com

www.flsenate.gov

www.myfloridahouse.gov