

## WEEKLY TALLAHASSEE UPDATE



As of last Friday, we have officially passed the halfway point of the 2023 Florida Legislative Session. Being that Florida's annual legislative session is only 60 days, lawmakers in Tallahassee are sprinting towards the finish line while it is becoming clear which bills and appropriations might not make it out of the committee hearing process. The Florida Constitution requires that the Florida Legislature must pass an annual budget each year. Some years, the dramatics of the budget process end up extending the legislative session while legislators hold out on important items and use the budget as a negotiating tactic. Since the House and Senate have already used time on the floor of their chambers to discuss each of their proposed budgets, the remaining time this legislative session will be used in conference committees to negotiate the agreement between the \$113 billion (House) and \$113.7 billion (Senate) annual budgets.

Examples of budget differences are, the Florida House of Representatives has proposed legislation to eliminate funding for VISIT Florida and Enterprise Florida, and the Florida Senate has proposed \$12 million in funding for Enterprise Florida and \$80 million in funding for VISIT Florida. Relating to the Job Growth Grant Fund, the House is recommending \$25 million in funding, while the Senate is proposing \$75 million in funding. The Job Growth Grand Fund is a program that funds transportation and workforce development projects in the State of Florida. Another difference is that both legislative bodies are in agreement to fund Space Florida with \$12.5 million, but the House is recommending to add an additional \$6 million in funding for the Space Florida Infrastructure Fund.

The largest difference needing to be worked out between the two budgets relates to the 5-year Department of Transportation Work Program, which you might remember relates to our #5 on our 2023 Venice Area Chamber of Commerce Legislative Priorities which you can [read here](#). Earlier this year, Governor DeSantis proposed to accelerate 20 congestion relief projects, but the House and Senate are currently \$3 billion apart in funding the 5-year program plan.

**HB 7055 Duty of Care Regarding Commercial Motor Vehicles**, was filed by Representative Maggard, with the intention of continuing efforts to reduce lawsuit abuse in the auto insurance market. "The bill aims to limit the liability of Florida businesses who own, operate, lease, or rent a commercial vehicle that was involved in an accident with another person and the vehicle was in compliance with state and federal law at the time the vehicle was purchased" according to the Florida Chamber. The reasonable liability protections aim to protect against "nuclear verdicts", or verdicts over \$10 million, which will benefit the trucking industry from these types of lawsuits which have increased over the past decade, driving up freight and consumer costs for our goods that are trucked throughout the State of Florida. You can learn more about this bill by [clicking here](#).

**SB 780 Computer Science Instruction in K-12 Public Schools** unanimously passed the Senate Education PreK-12 Committee last week. The intent of this bill is to require all public high school students to be "given the opportunity to take computer science courses that lead to technology-related industry certifications" according to the Florida Chamber. The bill also aims to provide opportunities for elementary and middle schools to establish digital classrooms where students can earn Career and Professional Education (CAPE) certifications. You can learn more about this bill [here](#).

Please make sure to check out last week's (week four) legislative update to learn more about what is happening in Tallahassee during this year's legislative session as it relates to our Venice Area Chamber of Commerce legislative priorities. Thank you for reading!

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