



Friends,

It was another busy committee week as we prepare for the 2017 Regular Session to begin. The week was full of meetings with constituents, appropriations and budget meetings, and filing bills. Specifically, this week I attended committee meetings with the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee, and the Appropriations Subcommittees on Health and Human Services and Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development. I also had the opportunity to be interviewed by Comcast Newsmakers about my bills regarding tax exemptions on feminine hygiene products and bicycle safety. Information on where and when you can check out the interview will be provided soon!

Sponsored Bills:

Filed this week:

[SB 952 – Resign-to-Run Law](#)

The Resign-to-Run bill has been filed, but not yet assigned to committee.

[SB 954 – Canvassing of Vote-by-mail Ballot](#)

The Canvassing of Vote-by-mail Ballots bill has been filed but not yet assigned to committee.

[SB 990 – Municipal Election Date](#)

The Municipal Election Dates bill has been filed but not yet assigned to committee.

Up In Committee:

[SB 252- Tax Exemption on Personal Hygiene Products](#)

On Committee Agenda - Commerce and Tourism for 2/21/17 – 9:00 am, 110 Senate Office Building.

SB 176 – Sales and Use Tax Exemption for Feminine Hygiene Products

On Committee Agenda - Appropriations Subcommittee on Finance and Tax for 2/22/17 – 10:00 am, 401 Senate Office Building.

- This bill has already passed favorably with an 8-0 vote in the Senate Commerce and Tourism committee.

SB 210 – Public Records/Public Guardians

On Committee Agenda - Children, Families, and Elder Affairs for 2/21/17 – 9:00 am, 401 Senate Office Building.

SB 398 – Estoppel Certificates

On Committee Agenda - Regulate Industries for 2/22/17 – 12:30 pm, 301 Senate Office Building.

My Committees:

Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development

On Wednesday the committee met to cover three main topics. The first was the Governor's Recommended Budget for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Governor Scott presented six priorities for Florida's Future: Tax cuts for Florida families and businesses, jobs for Florida families, education for Florida's students, protecting Florida's environment, keeping Florida's residents and tourists safe, and ensuring a healthy future. Second, the committee heard from Chris Hart IV, the President and CEO of Enterprise Florida, Inc. who presented Enterprise Florida's vision moving forward. Mr. Hart explained that Enterprise Florida's three core functions are international trade and development, business development, and marketing. After Mr. Hart's presentation, the committee reviewed the base budget for Transportation, Tourism and Economic Development.

On Thursday when the committee met again, Lindsay Stevens and Dr. Tim Chapin from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University presented 'The Future of Cities with Automated Vehicles.' Their presentation explained how automated vehicles will cause the next transformation in our transportation systems and the building environment. With automated vehicles, we could see increases in mobility and safety, changes in vehicle ownership patterns

and changes in roadway designs, urban forms, site designs and parking.

Ms. Stevens and Dr. Chapin also presented the concept of autonomous vehicles, connected vehicles, and shared vehicles. They argued for the importance of shared automated vehicles for numerous reasons, including the fact that the typical American vehicle is parked 95% of the time, fewer millennials want to own cars, on demand care and ride-sharing programs such as Zipcar, Uber and Lyft are growing in popularity, and auto manufacturers are investing in AV and car-sharing companies. They advised the committee that shared automated vehicles provide safety and efficiency, which will go a long way to lessen the over 5.5 million automobile crashes every year, 30,000 + fatalities, and upwards of \$1 trillion dollars in total costs related to damages and lost productivity per year due to crashes. They also added that the average American sits in traffic for 42 hours every year. Finally, they indicated that with automated vehicles these issues could all be a thing of the past, and that without human error we could potentially see 93% less car accidents; one shared vehicle could replace traditional 911 vehicles thereby reducing traffic significantly. The presentation used Tallahassee as a model of what could be when it comes to automated vehicles. It was a fascinating presentation looking forward over the next 60 or so years, and I imagine there is much more to come in the future regarding these innovative ideas.

To close out the committee for the week, the committee reviewed local initiative evaluations and discussed the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority.

Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services

The committee met both Wednesday and Thursday this week. At the beginning of the HHS Appropriations subcommittee meeting, the Governor's budget was presented. The committee then reviewed local funding initiatives for the rest of Wednesday's meeting and all throughout Thursday's meeting.

Other Legislative News:

Education

After receiving complaints about Florida's education system and the over-testing of students from students, parents, and teachers, Florida legislators are committed to pass legislation to make a change. On Wednesday, Senate President Pro Tempore Anitere Flores and House Education Appropriations Chair Manny Diaz unveiled legislation that will reduce the amount of time Florida public school students spend on standardized tests each school year. The goal of this legislation is to introduce new education standards that allow for less testing and more learning.

Specific changes include administering the state mathematics and language arts

exams in the last three weeks of the school year, as well as requiring state exam scores to be delivered to teachers within a week. The legislation will also call for a study into whether college entrance exams can also be used as state graduation tests. Finally, the bill creates a one-week window for administering local testing, which the legislators hope will prompt districts to get rid of any tests that do not meet that standard.

On Thursday February 16, Senator Bill Mumford released legislation that goes beyond HB 773/SB 926. He compiled recommendations from Florida's school superintendents and school districts. Key points in his bill include fewer and better assessments, authorizes the selection of a nationally recognized high school assessment in lieu of administering the tenth grade FSA, pencil/paper options for test administration, the elimination of VAM and returning teacher/principle evaluation system back to school districts, and modifying the school grading system to incorporate the elimination of assessment and some of the flexibility provided under ESSA. The current VAM system - which stands for Value Added Models - measures the contribution of a teacher or school by the students' year to year scores on standardized tests, and has been met with controversy since its induction. The bills introduced by President Flores, Chair Diaz, and Senator Mumford have been met with optimism throughout the legislature.

Death Penalty

After it was stalled for over a year, a bill requiring jurors to reach a unanimous decision before recommending the death penalty was passed through the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee. The death penalty has been on hold since January 2016 when a Supreme Court decision ruled the state's capital sentencing system was unconstitutional because it gave too much power to judges instead of juries. Last Session the legislature attempted to fix this issue with a new law that did away with simple majority recommendations and required at least 10 jurors to agree on death sentences. This was again struck down by the Supreme Court and they ruled that unanimous decisions were required. Due to the back up of cases to be heard, lawmakers are hoping to make the passage of both the Senate and House measures a quick process.

State Government Update:

This summer, Florida will see the third meeting of the Florida Constitutional Revision Commission (CRC). The CRC is an institution unique to the State of Florida, and provides a direct link between the public and the Florida Constitution. It meets once every 20 years and is one of the five ways Floridians can amend our state constitution. The commission consists of 37 people appointed to review and recommend changes to the constitution. Those 37 members are appointed by the state government; the Governor selects 15 members, the House Speaker and Senate President each appoint 9 members, three members are selected by the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme court, and the Florida Attorney General is the automatic 37th

member. Citizens have a role in suggesting appointees for the commission, and making suggestions for constitutional changes. The commission will meet for one year and travel the state identifying issues, performing research, and gathering public input. I encourage you as a citizen of Florida and District 28 to attend and participate in the statewide public hearings to make sure that issues you care about are considered by the CRC. The proposals made by the commission will appear on the 2018 ballot, so please make a plan to follow news from the commission and go out and vote next November! Additionally, President of the Senate Joe Negrón announced his appointees for the CRC this week, which you can check out on the flsenate.gov webpage.