

SHUMAKER

ADVISORS

2022

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Week of January 10th - January 14th

HIGHLIGHTS

Tuesday kicked off the 2022 Florida Legislative Session with opening remarks from House Speaker Chris Sprowls and Senate President Wilton Simpson, along with a State of the State address from Governor Ron DeSantis. A majority of their priorities are aligned, with education, environment, and public safety once again being at the top of the legislature's agenda.

Governor DeSantis dubbed Florida "America's liberty outpost" in his State of the State address, boasting Florida's thriving economy and undying commitment to staying open for the benefit of students, businesses, and tourists. The legislative priorities outlined in the Governor's remarks and supported by his Freedom First budget proposal, released in early December, once again center on education, workforce development, environmental protection, public safety, and child welfare.

President Simpson's opening remarks for the most part hit on the same issues, stating that "it always helps when we honor freedoms and focus on the core mission of solid infrastructure, public safety and education opportunities enjoyed by everyone." Speaker Sprowls took a different approach to open the Session, beginning his remarks with a poetic, "what are you willing to risk?" and going on to ask legislators to approach the Session critically, to "appreciate the complexities and balance the perspectives."

Florida's Legislative Session will continue over the next 60 days, concluding with a ceremonial Sine Die on March 11th, by which point hundreds of new laws will be headed to the Governor's desk alongside a budget for Fiscal Year 22-23 and newly drawn state and federal district maps.



Florida Governor Ron DeSantis delivers his State of the State address on Tuesday morning. Photo via FreshTake Florida.

IN THE BUDGET

The Governor's Freedom First budget proposal for Fiscal Year 22-23 centers on many of the same priorities outlined in the State of the State, including education, workforce development programs, public safety, and environmental protection. Each budget silo was presented before its respective committees this week, and will set the tone for the appropriations process to come. The proposed budget totals \$99.7 billion, drawing \$37 billion from general revenue funds and nearly the same amount from federal funds, and places a substantial \$15.3 billion into state reserves. Full details on the Governor's recommendations can be viewed [here](#).

Lawmakers sitting on appropriations committees throughout the budget silos questioned some aspects of the Governor's spending proposal, including the sustainability of large increases and the accountability measures in place for recipients of state dollars. Regardless, members will work over the course of the next 60 days to craft a state budget.

REDISTRICTING

The Senate Reapportionment Committee unanimously approved its first draft of redrawn congressional and state Senate districts on Thursday following minimal debate. The proposals notably preserve the number of effective-minority districts, containing 16 historically Republican and 12 historically Democrat districts. Concerns were raised about the division of Tampa, placing a number of Pinellas voters into what has long been a Tampa district. The maps, filed as [SB 102](#), now await their first hearing on the Senate floor as the House works to ready their proposals for committee votes.

ADVISORS NEWS

Former Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn has joined Shumaker Advisors. Buckhorn will focus on economic development opportunities and urban development strategies in Tampa Bay and across the state. He served as Tampa's 58th Mayor from 2011-2019. Before his two mayoral terms,

he served two terms on City Council from 1995-2003. He then worked as a lobbyist at Dewey Square Group until starting his firm, Buckhorn Partners, in 2007. Read the Florida Politics article [here](#), or view Bob's bio [here](#).



Senate President Wilton Simpson opens the 2022 Legislative Session in the first full Senate meeting of the year. Photo via Florida Politics.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

HEALTH CARE: Identified as a priority by Speaker Sprowls, [SB 1950](#) was introduced on Monday evening, seeking to consolidate Florida's 11 mandatory Medicaid managed care regions to eight and requiring the care plans to contract with Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center and Moffitt Cancer Center. The goal of the legislation is to prevent managed care systems from providing services until all administrative challenges are resolved.

On Thursday, the Senate Rules Committee forwarded [SB 7014](#), thus moving it through to the Senate floor. The bill is an extension of liability protections from COVID-19-related claims against health care providers initially established during the 2021 Legislative Session, which are set to expire in March 2022. This year's bill would extend the expiration date to June 2023.

A substantial child welfare bill moved through the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee this week. If passed, [SB 948](#) would establish the Office of Child Representation providing minors who have encountered abuse or neglect, going through delinquency proceedings, or are subject to parental termination of rights with attorney representation. The bill has two more committee stops before reaching the Senate floor, and aligns with leadership's child welfare improvement agenda.

As expected following the passage of similar measures in Texas and Mississippi in recent years, a measure seeking to tighten the State's abortion restrictions was filed on Monday. [HB 5](#) and its companion [SB 146](#) aim to end the practice of abortions after 15 weeks and expand pro-life measures to babies after birth with the goal of improving Florida's infant mortality rate. The bill is consistent with Mississippi's 2018 Gestational Age Act, which is currently under question by the U.S. Supreme Court. It awaits its first committee hearing, but was filed as a priority of House leadership.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES, CONT.

EDUCATION: The Senate Education Committee began their 2022 Legislative Session with votes on three significant bills. [SB 1048](#) seeks to establish a web-based progress monitoring tool in place of Florida's current standardized testing system to better address the individual educational needs of students. The change was highlighted as a priority in the Governor's State of the State address. [SB 520](#) attempts to remove public records search requirements for University and Florida College System institutions' Presidential searches, and was met with opposition from stakeholders and committee members. The measure has been proposed seven times in the past with no success. Lastly, the committee heard emotional testimony on [SB 802](#), which implements recommendations initiated by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas School Safety Task Force to remodel the oversight of state-level school safety requirements and district-level emergency response procedures. All three bills have two or more stops before reaching the Senate floor, and with the exception of SB 520 received unanimous support from the committee.

ENVIRONMENT: On Monday, the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee unanimously approved [SB 832](#). The bill seeks to implement the remaining recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, created in 2019 by Governor DeSantis. A number of these recommendations were implemented during the 2020 Legislative Session via the Clean Waterways Act, and the remaining recommendations are implemented under this bill. SB 832 aims to reduce nutrient pollution which contributes to algal blooms by requiring septic tanks to be inspected every five years and held to maintenance standards developed by the Department of Environmental Protection. In addition, the bill amends statutes regarding basin management action plans (BMAP) to require a new or revised plan document to include a list of projects that are identified as being located in spatially-focused areas that will most substantially reduce pollutant production, and to include progress monitoring on projects costing more than \$1 million.

MISCELLANEOUS: Last year, a major overhaul of Florida's auto insurance coverage requirements made it across the finish line, only to be vetoed by Governor DeSantis. Filed hours before the commencement of session, the same sponsors have introduced identical measures for reconsideration this year ([SB 150/ HB 1525](#)). The proposals seek to repeal Florida's No-Fault Law, and replace personal injury protection coverage requirements with bodily injury minimums instead. The effects of the change on insurance rates are unclear, with proponents and opponents of the legislation offering conflicting arguments about the outcomes for insureds. Governor DeSantis marked concerns about these potential "unintended consequences" as a reason for vetoing the bill. In light of the Governor's concerns about "deficient" bad-faith protections in the state, the Senate Bill includes modifications to Florida's bad-faith litigation requirements.

A bill dubbed the "preemption to end all preemption" by its sponsor, [SB 280](#) attempts to give businesses the ability to sue their local governments for ordinances that negatively affect their operations, and requires county commissions to review the economic impacts of proposed ordinances on local businesses, in addition to other provisions. The proposal was met with strong opposition, however, was favored by committee members along party lines. Senator Hutson overhauled the bill with a strike-all on Wednesday, and expects further changes to come as more feedback is received from stakeholders.

The Florida Chamber of Commerce released their 2022 legislative agenda this week, detailing workforce development, early childhood education, infrastructure, and of course, economic development and tourism, as their top priorities. [Link](#)



Zephyrhills Senator Danny Burgess presents his COVID-19 Healthcare Provider Liability Protections extension in Senate Rules. Photo via Florida Politics.

QUESTIONS?

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