

## **City of Fort Lauderdale 2016 Regular Legislative Session**

This document reflects the official position of the City of Fort Lauderdale regarding State of Florida issues and pending legislation that would impact the operation of local government. It also provides priorities for the pursuit of funding for various City initiatives.

**The City of Fort Lauderdale will ENDORSE and SUPPORT legislation that will:**

**1. Support the transfer of spending authority for the Tourism Development Tax to cities based on tourism activity**

This item was not addressed during the 2016 Session, however the Legislature passed a controversial bill that allows three panhandle counties to locally decide to use a portion of the Tourist Development Tax to enhance public safety and emergency response services. The intent of the legislation is to address negative impacts of high tourism. An attempt to expand the proposal to all coastal counties failed and was opposed by the hospitality industry.

**2. Permit municipal government to make changes to local law pension plans**

There was no municipal pension legislation package pursued this year, however there were a couple of initiatives that were introduced that would affect municipal plans.

**Disability Presumption**

SB 456 would have created a presumption for firefighters that cancer resulting in death or disability was suffered "in the line of duty," entitling the firefighter to line-of-duty death and disability benefits and increasing employer contributions to FRS in order to fund them. The bill went through two Senate committees but never moved in the House. The original bill contained a requirement that local governments maintain records of any exposure of a firefighter employee to known carcinogens and inform firefighters of exposure within 48 hours, however that provision was removed. The bill limited the number of cancers to four: multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkins lymphoma, testicular and prostate cancer. Firefighters must pass a pre-employment physical examination and, for at least five years before death or disability, be employed as a firefighter, hold no other employment associated with high levels of cancer, and be tobacco free. A special actuarial study concluded FRS contribution rates will need to be increased by 0.01% and would result in a \$300,000 annual impact to counties, not including worker's compensation

claims. The League of Cities opposed the bill, calling it an unfunded mandate that should be kept at the local bargaining level. The sponsor argued against local governments unwilling to care for those protecting their communities. The University of Miami is currently working on a study due next year that links firefighting with cancer. The bill is likely to return.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0456/BillText/c1/PDF>

### **Pension Surtax**

The House voted 86-23 and Senate voted 35-1 to pass a bill that would allow counties to utilize a local discretionary surtax for pension liability, if pension liability funded at less than 80%. The bill was written to help address pension issues in Jacksonville. Opponents objected to giving the County a “bailout” and expressed concerns over the consequential tax increases. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1297/BillText/er/PDF>

### **3. Support expansion of passenger rail options**

The Legislature fully funded the DOT Work Program, which includes funding for the WAVE Downtown streetcar, and provided \$113 million above last year’s budget for rail development grants. Unfortunately, a \$10 million appropriation to assist local governments in establishing Quiet Zones was vetoed by the Governor.

The omnibus transportation packages passed by the Legislature also established the Florida Department of Transportation Financing Corporation, which can issue debt to finance transportation projects, which could potentially help funding passenger rail. An attempt to include in the package liability language for All Aboard Florida’s use of railways failed to pass in the final product. Passage of the language will be pursued again next year.

### **4. Promote improved water quality and quantity**

The Legislature passed Speaker Crisafulli’s keystone water policy bill in the first week of the Session. The bill is intended to establish a framework for longterm planning and funding of water projects more similar to FDOT’s Work Program. An environmental control bill that prohibits WMDs from changing consumptive use permits based upon lower consumption also passed. While the budget passed by the Legislature originally included \$1 million for two City of Fort Lauderdale projects, the Governor unfortunately vetoed the funding. His stated reasoning for the veto is that they “did not provide a clear [statewide] return on investment.”

**5. Provide for local regulation of short term rental properties and sober homes and remove the State's preemption of local regulations on vacation rentals**

Legislation was filed to create a state licensure for vacation rentals in the House (by Representative Moraitis) and Senate. The licensure program under the legislation would have required compliance with all local licensure and evidence of local compliance. Unfortunately, neither the House nor Senate bill received a hearing.

**6. Preserve and/or enhance municipal home rule**

The 2016 Legislative Session was no different than past Sessions in that numerous bills contained language that would affect local home rule authority. Examples of these bills are contained throughout the report.

**7. Support municipal government initiatives to curb homelessness**

The Legislature voted unanimously to pass a bill (SB 1534) that would address homelessness including challenge grants, Rapid Rehousing models, local continuums of care, SHIP, local housing distribution funding and data collection and information systems.

Additionally, SHIP was funded at \$132.2 million, which equals a \$1.1 million disbursement to the City of Fort Lauderdale. The Legislature also appropriated \$500,000 to Rapid Rehousing in the City of Fort Lauderdale. The funding was included in the budget signed by the Governor.

**8. Enhance municipal participation in state environmental permitting processes**

No language addressed this issue in the 2016 Legislative Session.

**9. Encourage energy development and conservation and the development and implementation of alternative energy sources**

The Legislature passed multiple bills to encourage alternative energy. One unanimously passed bill allows the State to award excess funds in the natural gas fuel fleet rebate program to applicants who have already received the maximum fiscal year funding of \$250,000. The excess funds are available to both private and public sector applicants but priority is given to government owned fleet.

Another bill exempts renewable energy device installations, such as solar panels, from the tangible personal property tax. It is one of three constitutional

amendments the Legislature is putting before the voters in 2016. This amendment will be placed on the August primary ballot.

Additionally, an omnibus transportation package authorized FDOT to give loans for construction of natural gas facilities.

**10. Clarify existing laws regarding community redevelopment agencies (CRA's) in order to further redevelopment within established community redevelopment areas**

While CRA clarification was touched upon in the House Finance & Tax committee, no proposals addressed the issue. Two bills passed that affected CRAs. One would require CRAs in Miami-Dade to financially support youth programs that serve a certain percentage of population within the CRA and reach a low-income threshold. The other exempts hospitals established after 2016 from having to pay into CRAs.

**11. Change the allocation of Florida Department of Emergency Management and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funding to cities to be based on each city's risk profile assessment**

This issue was not addressed in the 2016 Legislative Session.

**12. Enact Complete Street Design Initiatives and legislation that will provide cities with the ability to regulate traffic flow within their city limits (i.e. setting speed limits and use of stop signs for traffic calming)**

The Legislature did not address municipal regulation of traffic flow. However, there was an initiative to increase safety of "vulnerable road users" by requiring vehicles to provide a buffer space of three feet when passing a vulnerable road user and twenty feet when making a turn while a cyclist or pedestrian is approaching. The bill also required vehicles to allow cyclists to proceed through stop signs in certain conditions, among other provisions. The bill died towards the end of Session as members debated whether or not to include motorcycles in the definition of a "vulnerable road user." Additionally, a bill that would have required the State to install solar-powered lights along bicycle ways on state roads constructed after July 1, 2016 or within a 1-mile radius of an urban area never received a hearing.

**13. Strengthen and expand environmental education, physical activity, and healthy lifestyles for Fort Lauderdale youth while ensuring that they are as protected as possible while participating in parks and recreation programs**

An issue that garnered significant media attention this Session was mandatory daily recess. The House passed an education package that contained a mandate of 20 minutes of daily recess for school children. However, the language was unsuccessful in the Senate. Also, the Legislature successfully passed a bill to address access to healthy food in low-income, underserved communities by authorizing DACS to contract with non-profit third party financing organizations to help expand supermarkets in targeted communities. The Legislature appropriated \$500,000 and limited the contracts to three non-profits.

#### **14. Regulate anchoring of vessels in waterways adjacent to residential properties**

The House voted 105-12 and the Senate voted 36-2 to target areas experiencing problems due to the local government preemption on anchoring and mooring. The bill would make it a non-criminal infraction to anchor an hour before sunset to an hour before sunrise in designated areas throughout Miami-Dade and the Middle River in Fort Lauderdale. Under the bill, the law will be revisited upon conclusion of the FWC pilot study on anchoring. The bill includes exemptions for commercial vessels and safe harboring. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1051/BillText/er/PDF>

Representative Moriatis filed a local bill, which successfully passed the local bill process through the Broward Delegation, that would have prohibited anchoring in the Middle River. The bill successfully passed through one committee of reference, however Chairman Caldwell of House State Affairs believed that regulations of certain designated areas should be uniform throughout the state and not be piecemealed into statutes using the local bill process. Chair Caldwell filed HB 1051 building upon the concept of the local bill, however, and incorporated the same designated area within Fort Lauderdale.

#### **15. Address repeat offenders and other juvenile justice issues**

Numerous legislative initiatives addressed Juvenile Justice issues. The Legislature passed a bill to allow for easier expungement of criminal records for minors if the minor is not a repeat offender or dangerous. Also passed was a bill to exempt from public records criminal history for up to three misdemeanors committed by a minor with exceptions.

A bill that permitted use of civil citation and similar diversion programs failed after being voted down in its final House committee as did a bill that would eliminate “direct file” or automatically charging minors as adults for certain crimes. The direct file bill would have given more discretion to prosecutors and the courts instead.

A bipartisan, bicameral initiative led to the successful passage of an omnibus Mental Health and Substance Abuse package (HB 7097) that reformed the system in regards to managing entities. It requires managing entities to work with local juvenile justice systems. Addressing juvenile mental health and substance abuse disorders has a direct effect on repeat offenders.

#### **16. Create smoke-free zones on Fort Lauderdale beaches**

Unfortunately, no legislation was filed to address smoke-free zones. A bill that would have repealed the local government preemption was filed in the House (by Representative Moraitis) and Senate, but did not receive a committee hearing in either Chamber.

#### **17. Provide for the uniform regulation of police body cameras throughout the State to include privacy and other protection for law enforcement officers**

The Senate and House voted unanimously to pass a bill that requires law enforcement agencies that choose to use body cameras to adopt policies and procedures regarding their use, maintenance and storage. The bill would also allow for officers to record individuals without having to inform them they are being recorded. Meanwhile, budget negotiations agreed on a \$1 million appropriation to assist local Sheriff offices with body camera purchases.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0093/BillText/er/PDF>

**The City of Fort Lauderdale will OPPOSE any legislation that will:**

##### **1. Restrict Home rule**

As noted above, the 2016 Legislative Session was no different than past Sessions in that numerous bills contained language that would affect local home rule authority. Examples of these bills are contained throughout the report.

##### **2. Create unfunded mandates**

Similar to home rule, the 2016 Legislative Session was no different than past Sessions in that numerous bills contained language that would impose unfunded mandates. Examples of these bills are contained throughout the report.

##### **3. Restrict or decrease any revenue allocations to local governments**

As detailed below, local governments were spared in both the tax package and in the defeat of numerous attacks on revenue sources. SHIP was funded at \$132.2

million. Unfortunately, Governor Scott vetoed many local projects included in the Legislature's budget.

#### **4. Decrease the City's tax base through manipulation of tax exemptions on properties**

The Legislature is sending three property tax constitutional amendments before the voters in 2016: an amendment to exempt renewable energy devices from the tangible personal property tax (HR 193) will be on the August ballot, an amendment to provide an ad valorem tax exemption to First Responders permanently disabled in the line of duty (HJR 1009) will be on the November ballot and an amendment that will lock in place the value assessment of a home for low-income senior citizens who qualify for homestead (HJR 275) will also be on the November ballot.

#### **5. Modify, restrict or eliminate the City's ability to levy, collect or spend franchise fees, communications service taxes or local business taxes**

While the Legislature passed a tax relief package which totaled just under a half billion dollar fiscal impact, largely made up of a local property tax buy-back to counteract a rise in home values, the package did not contain language related to the CST, local business tax or commercial real estate tax. The details of the package are contained later in this report under "Passed Legislation." Numerous negative proposals were unsuccessful due to an active coalition representing local interests. Language mandating in which elections local governments can levy taxes, restricting millage rate calculations to the previous year revenues, prohibiting value assessments from increasing if property value decreases (or the recapture rule) and other proposals were defeated. The bills are also detailed later in this report under "Failed Legislation."

#### **6. Restrict or decrease allocation of red light camera revenues to local governments**

The House voted 83-33 to repeal red light camera programs. Opponents argued that the cameras are for public safety and result in reduced crashes at intersections. Supporters argued that the programs are only for profit and do not result in increased safety. The Senate did not take up the bill, however the Senate companion did pass one committee.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/4027/BillText/Filed/PDF>

#### **7. Restrict or standardize municipal election dates**

The House voted 70-47 to pass a bill that would preempt the schedule of municipal elections to the state, however the bill did not have a Senate

companion and was never heard in a Senate committee. The bill would have forced local governments to either hold their elections during the general elections in November on odd number years unless all municipalities in one county could agree to the same alternative date. The intent of the bill was to increase voter participation in municipal elections. Local government representatives successfully opposed the bill highlighting concerns, including the bill's impact on charter home rule authority, voter ballot fatigue, partisan influence into non-partisan elections, canvassing boards, staggered terms and campaign costs.

**The City of Fort Lauderdale will SEEK FINANCIAL SUPPORT for the following initiatives:**

(Both local initiative funding, specific to Fort Lauderdale, and broader appropriations that impact the initiative in general is addressed below.)

1. **Crime reduction** – The budget included \$4.9 billion in public safety projects, including an increase of \$4 million in what the Governor termed “evidence-based prevention services” for a total of \$77 million and \$12.5 million in reentry and vocational programs. Notably, a \$400,000 appropriation to the Broward Sheriffs Office to fund its V.I.P.E.R. program, which targets known violent felons in Broward County, was vetoed by the Governor because “funding for local law enforcement is the responsibility of local law enforcement” according to his veto letter.
2. **WAVE development** – The Legislature fully funded the FDOT five-year Work Program, which included over \$4 million for WAVE development.
3. **Transportation enhancements specifically focused on greenways, complete street initiatives and pedestrian safety** - No initiative to enhance greenways, complete streets initiatives or pedestrian safety was specifically funded in the budget. While some local projects did address greenways and complete streets, all were vetoed by the Governor.
4. **Flood prevention and hazard mitigation** - Unfortunately, a bill that would have had the State administer a \$50 million matching grant program for technical or financial assistance to local governments to enact flood risk reduction policies and projects died due to time constraints in its final committee. The bill additionally would have given the Florida Communities Trust authority to work on flood mitigation projects.
5. **Riverwalk enhancement and activation**
6. **Comprehensive homelessness strategy** -- As noted above, the Legislature appropriated \$500,000 to Rapid Rehousing in the City of Fort Lauderdale. The funding was included in the budget signed by the Governor. SHIP was funded at \$132.2 million, which equals a \$1.1 million disbursement to the City of Fort Lauderdale.
7. **Climate change and sea level rise mitigation**
8. **Promotion of Fort Lauderdale's marine industry** – No major marine industry initiatives, such as the sales cap passed in the 2015 Session,



were pursued this year. The tax package included a revenue neutral simplification of taxes on beverages and tobacco sold on cruise ships, which may relieve regulatory burdens of the cruise industry that could potentially impact the local marine industry. Additionally, a provision in the failed DBPR package would have eliminated a requirement that yacht and ship brokers maintain a separate license for each branch office established in addition to a principal office. The bill would have still required individual licenses that contain a principle location. This package failed due to too many interests filing last minute amendments in the final hours of Session.

- 9. Water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure improvements** – As noted above, the budget passed by the Legislature originally included \$1 million for two City of Fort Lauderdale projects, the Governor unfortunately vetoed the funding. His stated reasoning for the veto is that they “did not provide a clear [statewide] return on investment.” While the budget also includes local public wastewater facility cleaning and drinking water system construction grants, unfortunately it focuses on and gives priority to rural areas with low population.
- 10. Fort Lauderdale Beach re-nourishment, revitalization, and enhancement** – The budget included \$492,500 to fund the Port Everglades Inlet Management Plan Implementation project.
- 11. Additional parks and recreational programs and facilities, including athletic fields**
- 12. Juvenile Justice programs** – The budget included \$1.9 million to increase staff-to-youth ratios at the Department of Juvenile Justice.
- 13. Drug prevention and educational programs for Flakka and other synthetic drugs**
- 14. Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport capital projects** \$1,200,000 in Aviation Development Grants was appropriated to Ft. Lauderdale Executive Airport Construct Western Perimeter Road
- 15. Enhance the disaster resiliency of our water and wastewater utilities**
- 16. Police body cameras** – The Legislature did not provide funding for municipal police department body cameras, however the budget did include \$250,000 in grant funding for county sheriff departments, with a preference for larger counties. The initial Senate budget appropriated \$1 million, however the amount was reduced during the budget conference process as the House did not appropriate any funding for such a program.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

### **PUBLIC RECORDS BILL- PASSED**

The House voted 110-7 and the Senate voted 34-1 to pass legislation that will allow contracting agencies to retain public records upon completion of a contract. The bill will also require public records requests be made to the contracting agency. Under the bill, contractors who do not produce the requested documents would be guilty of a non-criminal infraction or a misdemeanor depending upon the knowledge and

willfulness behind the act. Contractors and custodians must be given 8 days notice to correct the circumstance in order for requestors to be entitled to attorneys fees and are relieved from costs of enforcement if meeting the requirement within the 8 day period. The Governor has signed the bill into law.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0273/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **PUBLIC CORRUPTION- PASSED**

The House and Senate unanimously passed a bill that would allow public contractors to be prosecuted for public corruption and expands persons that could be guilty of public corruption (bribery, bid tampering, etc.) to include employees or officers of a public entity. The bill is based upon a 2010 Grand Jury report on public corruption. In order to be convicted, the person must have committed the act “knowingly and intentionally.” The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7071/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES- PASSED**

The Senate and House voted unanimously to pass a bill that would require a radius of 1,200 ft between a residential unit of 6 or fewer residents that meets the definition of a community residential home built after July, 2016 and an existing community residential home.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1174/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **BUILDING CODES- PASSED**

The House and Senate voted unanimously to pass a building code reform package that includes provisions ranging from water heaters, swimming pools, and fire prevention code and building code administrative issues. Among the bill’s many provisions, it would prohibit local government enforcement fees or charges for recording contracting licenses or workers compensation documents as well as preempt alarm system registrations. The Governor signed the bill into law.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0535/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **RELOCATION OF UTILITIES- PASSED**

The Senate voted 109-4 and the House voted 34-4 to pass the relocation of utilities bill that would require local governments to bear the cost of relocating utility lines unreasonably interfering with a project only if the lines are located within a public easement granted by a recorded plat. The bill is intended to address a court ruling that ruled in favor of the City of Cape Coral against a utility company. Originally much wider in scope, local government advocates significantly narrowed the bill. Opponents still felt the bill went too far in favor of utility companies, asking instead for language that allowed for compromise and local negotiation. Proponents contended that the bill was about private property rights. The bill has been signed

by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0416/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES- PASSED**

The Legislature voted nearly unanimously to pass a bill that would allow counties and municipalities to have up to three temporary permits per year to sell alcohol at events, which DBPR has been issuing for decades without the realization it was not authorized in statute. Under the bill, more than three permits may be issued if voted on by a majority of the governing board at a noticed meeting and all revenue from the local government alcoholic permits must go to charity within a certain timeframe. The bill also allows for alcohol to be sold at railway transit stations. The bill now awaits the Governor's signature.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0698/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **CONTRABAND FORFEITURE- PASSED**

The Legislature unanimously passed a bill that would require individuals be arrested for a crime before law enforcement is authorized to keep seized property. The sponsors worked out a compromise with law enforcement that added exemptions requested by the Florida Sheriffs Association and the Florida Police Chiefs. Law enforcement also agreed to changes that would make the seizing authority liable for property damage. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1044/BillText/e2/PDF>

#### **HOUSING ASSISTANCE - PASSED**

The Legislature voted unanimously to pass a bill that would address homelessness including challenge grants, Rapid Rehousing models, local continuums of care, SHIP, local housing distribution funding and data collection and information systems. The bill is now ready to go before the full Senate. Its House companion is before the full House. The bill now awaits the Governor's signature.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1534/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS- PASSED**

The Legislature unanimously voted to pass bills that would implement recommendations by a P3 Guidelines Task Force created by the Legislature two years ago, including clarifying that local government authority is not preempted by the P3 process and can deviate from the statutory timeframes, clarifying that the state university system can participate in P3s and requiring unsolicited proposals be submitted with an application fee set forth by the local government. A second bill would exempt unsolicited proposals from public record for a period of time. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0124/BillText/er/PDF>  
<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0126/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY- FAILED**

A sweeping anti-corruption bill passed the House but stalled in the Senate. The bill would, among other things, require more detailed financial disclosures for municipal officials; require local governments and special districts to post their proposed and adopted budgets online for 45 days and two years, respectively; require lobbyist disclosure for local governments; and require local governments address the findings of a recent Grand Jury report on local government auditing. An amendment was filed to the Senate bill that would have addressed local government concern, however the bill was not heard in its final committee due to time constraints.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0686/BillText/c2/PDF>

#### **MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS- FAILED**

The House voted 70-47 to pass a bill that would preempt the schedule of municipal elections to the state, however the bill did not have a Senate companion and was never heard in a Senate committee. The bill would have forced local governments to either hold their elections during the general elections in November on odd number years unless all municipalities in one county could agree to the same alternative date. The intent of the bill was to increase voter participation in municipal elections. Local government representatives successfully opposed the bill highlighting concerns, including the bill's impact on charter home rule authority, voter ballot fatigue, partisan influence into non-partisan elections, canvassing boards, staggered terms and campaign costs.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7059/BillText/Filed/PDF>

#### **IMMIGRATION- FAILED**

The House voted 80-38 to approve a bill that prohibits local governments from being "sanctuaries" for illegal immigrants, however the bill was never heard in any committee in the Senate.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0675/BillText/c1/PDF>

#### **TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES- FAILED**

Despite last minute maneuvering, the Legislature failed to pass a bill that would impose insurance requirements on Transportation Network Companies. The Legislation would have required different levels of insurance during times when the driver is providing a ride or logged in to the app but not providing a ride and all other periods of time. The legislation would have also required notice be given to drivers that it is illegal to accept a ride not arranged through the TNC application and such rides will not be covered by insurance. Uber supporters were concerned

the Senate insurance requirements that deal with when the driver is not logged in to the system are too excessive. Additionally, the House passed a complete preemption on local ordinances regulating TNCs, which the Senate did not take up. Uber targeted the Senate President over the failure to hear the preemption, however the President did not bow to the pressure stating that he would not pass a bill that was never heard in a Senate committee.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1118/BillText/c2/PDF>

#### **FLOOD INSURANCE- FAILED**

Unfortunately, a bill that would have the State administer a \$50 million matching grant program for technical or financial assistance to local governments to enact flood risk reduction policies and projects died after running out of time in Senate Appropriations. It was successor legislation from the flood insurance package passed last Session. The bill additionally would have given the Florida Communities Trust authority to work on flood mitigation projects.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0929/BillText/Filed/PDF>

#### **PUBLIC WORKS CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS PREEMPTION- FAILED**

A preemption on local regulations imposed on construction contracts for public works projects was voted down in a Senate committee, despite passing House committees. The bill would have removed local government ability to place any wage, training, affiliation or other employee stipulations on the contracts. The preemption would have been triggered by even 1% state funding for the project. Local governments and union organizations opposed the bill. The bill is a top priority for the Associated Builders and Contractors.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0181/BillText/c2/PDF>

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPITAL RECOVERY- FAILED**

HB 7009 would have required local governments to bid for a third party vendor to collect debt owed to the local government should it reach a certain threshold of delinquent claims for various revenue sources. The bill failed in its second House committee and did not have a Senate companion.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7009/BillText/Filed/PDF>

#### **ALARM SYSTEM REGISTRATION- FAILED**

A bill that would preempt local alarm system registration in order to establish a statewide uniform system completed all of its Senate committees, but stalled in its second House committee. The bill capped fees for registration to a one-time payment of \$25.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0779/BillText/c1/PDF>

**ATTORNEYS FEES FOR PUBLIC RECORDS VIOLATIONS- FAILED**

SB 1220 died in messages to the House. The Senate voted unanimously to pass legislation that would give judges discretion in awarding attorneys fees in public records violations, however the House did not take up the bill. The House companion measure stalled in its final committee of reference. The bill would also allow for a five-day period for the public records custodian to comply with the request and avoid legal action, the committee adopted an amendment that corrected the five-day language to avoid unintended consequences. The bill is meant to protect taxpayer dollars from a cottage industry of attorneys who profit from lawsuits over public records violations.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1220/BillText/c3/PDF>

**FINANCE & TAX****SPECIAL DISTRICTS- PASSED**

The House and Senate voted unanimously to pass a bill that would reorganize and cleanup statutes relating to special districts. The sponsors termed the bill a “glitch” bill that improved upon the special district package that passed the Legislature two years ago. The Governor has signed the bill into law.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0479/BillText/er/PDF>

**REDEVELOPMENT TRUST FUNDS- PASSED**

The Senate and House unanimously passed a bill that would exempt hospitals from paying into any CRA created on or after July 1, 2016.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0194/BillText/er/PDF>

**AD VALOREM EXEMPTION FOR DEPLOYED MILITARY- PASSED**

The Legislature unanimously passed a bill to add 11 operations to the list of military operations service members may be deployed to that would qualify him or her for an ad valorem tax exemption for deployed service members. The Governor signed the bill into law.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7023/BillText/er/PDF>

**AD VALOREM EXEMPTION FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS- PASSED**

The Legislature unanimously passed a bill that would place a constitutional amendment on the ballot to stipulate that a low-income senior qualify for homestead exemption if their property had a value equal to or less than \$250,000 at the time of the initial homestead application. The senior must have lived in their home for a period of time to qualify. The bill is intended to keep low-income seniors

in their homes and protect them from owing a large tax bill due to rising property values. Counties and Municipalities may grant the exemption through ordinance. The Property Appraisers support the legislation. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0277/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **VALUE ADJUSTMENT BOARDS FIX- PASSED**

The Legislature unanimously passed a bill intended to address a backlog of VAB petitions in Miami-Dade and bring certainty to the budgets of local governments, special districts and school districts. The Florida League of Cities, Florida Association of Counties, Miami-Dade School Board and Miami-Dade County support the bill. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0499/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **TAX PACKAGE- PASSED**

The Legislature passed a tax cut package, one of the Governor's top priorities, although at a significantly reduced amount. The House passed a package with a \$1 billion fiscal impact, while the Senate package would have had a significantly less impact of \$102.9 million. The Legislature decided to take the Senate version and to count \$428 million worth of buying back local property taxes that have risen as home values have risen as part of an almost half a billion fiscal impact in taxes. The local property taxes, known as Required Local Effort (RLE), notably made up a large portion of Governor Scott's education budget. The package permanently extended the Sales & Use Tax exemption on manufacturing equipment. It also included language that affected aviation fuel taxes, beverage taxes on cruise lines, CRAs (limited to Miami-Dade County), veterans and more. Missing from the package is a provision that would have phased out the rent tax on commercial leases beginning with a one percent reduction, which was included in the House tax cut package, the Governor's proposal and the subject of a Senate bill that moved through multiple committees. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7099/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **FRS DEATH BENEFITS- PASSED**

The Legislature unanimously passed a bill that would increase death benefits to family members of Special Risk Class killed in the line of duty to 100 percent of the deceased's salary. The House included the language of the bill within its package that would make the 401k plan the default FRS plan for new employees in an attempt to get the Senate to vote for reform. However, the House ultimately decided to pass a companion bill that only contained the death benefit language. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7012/BillText/er/PDF>



**FRS- PASSED**

As part of the budget package, the Senate and House passed a bill that would increase employer contributions to the FRS system from .04% to .06% for administrative and educational purposes. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/5005/BillText/er/PDF>

**PENSION SURTAX- PASSED**

The House voted 86-23 and Senate voted 35-1 to pass a bill that would allow counties to utilize a local discretionary surtax for pension liability, if pension liability funded at less than 80%. The bill was written to help address pension issues in Jacksonville. Opponents objected to giving the County a “bailout” and expressed concerns over the consequential tax increases. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1297/BillText/er/PDF>

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT TAX REFERENDA- FAILED**

The House voted 94-19 to pass a bill that would require that a referendum for a discretionary sales surtax may only be held at a general election, a presidential preference primary election, or a primary election. The Senate never took up the bill, however. The bill would require a 60% threshold for passage only if the election is during a Presidential primary election and allow for a majority vote threshold if the election is during a general election. An amendment adopted on the floor eliminated language that specified a majority vote for surtaxes for charter counties. The bill would not have gone into effect until after the 2016 elections.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0791/BillText/e1/PDF>

**MILLAGE RATES- FAILED**

The original bill would have changed how local governments are allowed to calculate millage rates. The original bill would have required local governments to adopt millage rates based upon actual millage levied the prior fiscal year as adjusted for change in income unless the income change is negative. We worked alongside both the Association of Counties and the Florida League of Cities to strike a compromise with the Sponsor to bring more transparency to the process, while maintaining current law. The bill now would require the taxing authority must post the vote record of the final millage levy on their website within 15 days. Absent a website, the authority must submit the information to their county within a reasonable timeframe that is established for the county to post on the appropriate website. The bill stopped moving after the compromise was adopted in its final committee of reference.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1015/BillText/c2/PDF>



**RECAPTURE RULE - FAILED**

The House voted 88-25 to pass a bill that would place on the ballot a constitutional amendment to eliminate the recapture provision for local governments in Save Our Homes. However, the Senate did not take the bill. The bill would prevent local governments from collecting the same level of property taxes despite property values decreasing for both homestead and non-homestead properties. Opponents argued local governments having to pick winners and losers and shift the tax burden, the effect would result in identical homeowners paying drastically different tax rates and have a negative impact on businesses. Supporters included Florida Chamber of Commerce and Florida Realtors.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7015/BillText/Filed/PDF>

**SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES- FAILED**

Senate Community Affairs approved a bill that would allow municipalities to levy a special assessment to fund law enforcement services. The committee adopted an amendment to require a local referenda. The bill is supported by the City of North Lauderdale and the Police Benevolent Association. The bill has one more committee of reference in the House and two more committees of reference in the Senate.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0789/BillText/Filed/PDF>

**DISABILITY PRESUMPTION- FAILED**

SB 456 would have created a presumption for firefighters that cancer resulting in death or disability was suffered "in the line of duty," entitling the firefighter to line-of-duty death and disability benefits and increasing employer contributions to FRS in order to fund them went through two Senate committees but never moved in the House. The original bill contained a requirement that local governments maintain records of any exposure of a firefighter employee to known carcinogens and inform firefighters of exposure within 48 hours, however that provision was removed. The bill limited the number of cancers to four: multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkins lymphoma, testicular and prostate cancer. Firefighters must pass a pre-employment physical examination and, for at least five years before death or disability, be employed as a firefighter, hold no other employment associated with high levels of cancer, and be tobacco free. A special actuarial study concluded FRS contribution rates will need to be increased by 0.01% and would result in a \$300,000 annual impact to counties, not including worker's compensation claims. The League of Cities opposed the bill, calling it an unfunded mandate that should be kept at the local bargaining level. The sponsor argued against local governments unwilling to care for those protecting their communities. The University of Miami is currently working on a study due next year that links firefighting with cancer.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0456/BillText/c1/PDF>

**FRS REFORM- FAILED**

The House voted 72-38, mostly along party lines, to pass an FRS reform bill that is a priority of the Speaker, however the bill was not heard by the Senate. The bill would make the 401k investment plan the default plan for new employees rather than the defined benefits plan. The bill also includes two provisions to appeal to the Senate: a provision that would increase death benefits to families of Special Risk Class members that die in the line of duty and a provision to correct a double-dipping glitch that discourages retired employees from seeking positions which would return them to the FRS system. The bill has a \$5.1 million appropriation from general revenue and trust funds and an estimated \$3.6 million fiscal impact on counties and municipalities for FY 2016-17.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7107/BillText/e1/PDF>

#### **SPECIAL DISTRICTS TRANSPARENCY- FAILED**

A House and Senate bill that would require special districts to post a budget online with specific visual features, such as year-over-year trends in various downloadable graphs and more moved through multiple committees but stalled within the first week of Session. Supporters of the bill claimed the requirements would make special districts more transparent and therefore encourage good government practices. The Association of Special Districts argued the data for the special districts was already readily available and subject to public records laws. The Association also argued that the specific description of website requirements as laid out in the bill matched a private vendor's product whose lobbyist had testified in favor of the bill at its last hearing. The bill sponsors argued that several companies offer the same service and that transparency was the goal of the legislation.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0516/BillText/c1/PDF>  
<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0479/BillText/c1/PDF>

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE- FAILED**

A key priority of Governor Scott failed to pass this Session. The Governor wanted to reform the State's Quick Action Closing Fund (QAC) into the Florida Enterprise Fund and allocate \$250 million to enable the Governor to attract businesses to the State with tax incentives. The House voted 79-39 to pass its Chamber's version of the Economic Development package. The Fund faced opposition by a unique coalition of Democrats and conservative Republicans who are suspicious of the impact of incentive funds beyond benefitting specific corporations. The House bill did not officially allocate a number, the Senate package granted the \$250 million contingent upon the State receiving settlement funds from the BP oil spill. The House and Senate plans differed further with return-on-investment metrics, residency requirements, and authority of the Governor to approve projects among other things. The House bill contained provisions to exempt small businesses with 12 or less employees from concurrency/impact fees for three years unless overturned in a majority vote by the local government board. It also granted more authority to the Florida Development Finance Corporation. These provisions are not in the Senate

package. The House package did not address film and tv incentives, which is favored by the Senate.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1325/BillText/e1/PDF>

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **EVERGLADES RESTORATION- PASSED**

The final bill passed in the 2016 Regular Session will create a dedicated funding source for Everglades Restoration projects. The bill requires the lesser of 25% or \$200 million be allocated annually from Amendment 1 dollars towards the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) as well as Lake Okeechobee projects and water quality projects. The Senate bill, at one point, diverted some of the funding to Springs Restoration, however a compromise was met to instead add a separate dedicated amount of \$50 million annually. The funding will be matched from the Federal Government. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0989/BillText/er/PDF>

### **DREDGING AND FILL ACTIVITIES- PASSED**

The Senate and House voted nearly unanimously to pass a bill that increases the acreage threshold that is authorized to implement a voluntary state programmatic general permit for dredge and fill activities from 3 to 10 acres. The permits are pursuant to an agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers and projects must comply with Federal and State environmental standards. The Florida Association of Community Developers supports the bill. The Nature Conservancy of Southwest Florida has expressed concerns it could damage wetlands. The bill now awaits the Governor's signature.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1176/BillText/er/PDF>

### **WATER PACKAGE- PASSED**

The Legislature passed a comprehensive water package, the Speaker's priority, as its first bill of the Legislative Session. The package tackles springs protection and restoration, updates statutes with information from Basin Management Action Plans for critical areas such as Lake Okeechobee and its estuaries, revises permit requirements, provides an assessment of water bodies and examines the feasibility of creating an interactive map of the water bodies online among other things. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0552/BillText/er/PDF>

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL- PASSED**

The Legislature passed an environmental control package (HB 589) that after amending out a provision that local governments must own and actively use a

resource recovery center in order to set minimum flow controls and that necessity of the controls must be proven first. The bill would exempt landfill gas-to-energy from the resource recovery center definition. The bill would also expand the water quality credit program to include voluntary land set asides and allows for variances in discharge into state waters so long as nothing violates EPA standards. The bill also sets up an account in order to fund closing and longterm care of waste management facilities.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0589/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **NATURAL GAS REBATE PROGRAM- PASSED**

The Legislature unanimously passed a bill that would allow the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to award excess funds in the State's natural gas fuel fleet rebate program to applicants who have already received the \$250,000 in fiscal year maximum funding. The bill gives priority to government owned fleets. The bill is supported by Associated Industries of Florida, Florida Natural Gas and other energy industry representatives. The bill is awaiting the Governor's signature.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0285/BillText/c2/PDF>

#### **ENERGY DEVICES- PASSED**

The Legislature passed a resolution to place on the August ballot a constitutional amendment that would exempt renewable energy devices from property value assessments for ad valorem taxing purposes in order to encourage the sale and installation of renewable energy devices.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0195/BillText/Filed/PDF>

#### **FRACKING- FAILED**

Fracking legislation passed the House, but stalled in the Senate when Senate Appropriations voted against the measure. The bill would have created a permitting system for high-pressured well stimulation or "fracking." The final bill required DEP to conduct a study on how to control and mitigate chemical impacts on the environment and develop rules for permitting process. Those rules must have then been ratified by the Legislature prior to implementation. It would have imposed a moratorium on fracking until the rules are adopted. Proponents for the measure argued that without the bill, fracking would not be regulated and would be harder to stop if pursued by company. Proponents also contended that local government preemption was already implied by the statutes and, therefore, zoning language placed in compromise with local governments would have given the local governments more authority than they currently enjoy. Opponents were dissatisfied with not allowing local governments to impose moratoriums, with DEP oversight and with the prevention of disclosure of chemicals labeled trade secrets. A motion was made to reconsider the bill, however the sponsor decided to not have the bill go up for a second vote.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0318/BillText/c1/PDF>

#### **CONTAMINATED SITES- FAILED**

A bill that would have reformed RBCA standards for cleanup of contaminated sites died after the Senate made changes and passed the bill back to the House. The bill contained provisions to reform brownfield cleanup by requiring chemical interactions be taken into account as well as allow for alternative cleanup targets if certain conditions are met.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0351/BillText/c1/PDF>

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

##### **ANCHORING- PASSED**

The House voted 105-12 and the Senate voted 36-2 to target areas experiencing problems due to the local government preemption on anchoring and mooring. The bill would make it a non-criminal infraction to anchor an hour before sunset to an hour before sunrise in designated areas throughout Miami-Dade and the Middle River in Broward County. Under the bill, the law will be revisited upon conclusion of the FWC pilot study on anchoring. The bill includes exemptions for commercial vessels and safe harboring. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1051/BillText/er/PDF>

##### **OMNIBUS TRANSPORTATION BILLS- PASSED**

On the final day of the Legislative Session, the Legislature passed two omnibus transportation packages, including the Department's priority package. The Department package, HB 7027, and the non-Department package, HB 7061, were amended to include many of the same provisions, especially as it related to autonomous vehicles. The language directs the Department to coordinate with federal, regional, and local parties, as well as industry representatives to consider infrastructure and technological improvements necessary to accommodate advances in vehicle technology and other developments.

Among other provisions, HB 7027 creates the Florida Department of Transportation Finance Corporation, whose purpose is to finance or refinance projects for the Department. It also requires any new programs above \$3 million added to the work program be subject to approval by the Legislative Budget Commission.

Among other provisions, HB 7061 creates the Seaport Security Advisory Committee to allow for a forum to discuss current and future seaport security issues on both a national and statewide level. The grant program established for this will allow for funds for cyber security, infrastructure etc. under the direction of FSTED. It contains language that affects local government zoning of airports by reflecting the change from a variance to a permitting system and airport lease agreements by extending

the maximum lease agreement time to 50 years. It places conditions on the operation of commercial megacycles. In order for a commercial megacycle to operate, the local government must determine that it's safe and identify roadways where operation is allowed. The bill prevents anyone under the age of 18 or not an owner or employee from operating a megacycle and requires insurance. Local governments are allowed to impose stricter ordinances. It clarifies FDOT's authority to require traffic signal compliance in municipal school zones. It allows a chartered municipality's parking enforcement authority to extend beyond municipal boundaries. It authorizes FDOT to accept applications for loans from the state infrastructure bank to improve or construct natural gas facilities primarily to support the transportation activities at seaports or intermodal facilities. It requires the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to conduct a Return on Investment analysis of the five-year FDOT Work Program, specifically focusing on highways, public transit, rail, aviation and seaport projects. There are also provisions to curb suspension of drivers licenses and language that gives drivers until midnight of the last day of the month for citations to be given to them for an expired registration.

HB 7027:

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7027/BillText/er/PDF>

HB 7061:

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7061/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **GROWTH MANAGEMENT- PASSED**

The Legislature passed a growth management package that makes several changes to local government land planning. The bill would reduce the acreage to qualify for sector plans from 15,000 acres to 5,000 acres and increase the size of enclaves that can be locally annexed from 10 to 110 acres. It would allow adjacent counties and municipalities to hold public meetings on mutual concerns so long as the meeting is publicly noticed and no votes are taken. It would bring more flexibility to the DRI process by allowing certain changes to approved DRIs. For example, among other things, DRIs are authorized under the bill to reduce height, density, or intensity without losing vested rights. It allows DEO, developers and local governments to amend an agreement that a development is "essentially built out" without having to go through further processes and allows for substitutions for land uses. The Governor has signed the bill into law.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1361/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **AT-RISK VESSELS - PASSED**

The Legislature voted unanimously to pass a bill that would provide individuals who anchor or moor vessels at-risk of becoming derelict would be guilty of a noncriminal violation. The bill is intended to prevent boats from becoming derelict in the first place by allowing the violation to occur one step before vessel conditions completely deteriorate. The bill has been signed by the Governor.



<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7025/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **BOATING SAFETY- PASSED**

The Legislature unanimously passed a bill that would make boat owners who install certain personal location devices registered with NOAA to reduce their vehicle registration fees owed to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. The Senate conceded to the House in offering a smaller reduction to the fees. The bill is a key priority of the Senate President Designate. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0427/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **DISCOUNTS TO PARK ENTRANCES AND TRANSIT- PASSED**

The Senate and House voted unanimously to require counties and municipalities to provide a partial or a full discount on park entrance fees to military members, veterans, and the spouse and parents of deceased military members and first responders. It would also require regional transportation authorities to provide a partial or a full discount on fares for certain disabled veterans. The bill is supported by the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority. The bill now awaits the Governor's signature.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1202/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

##### **HUMAN TRAFFICKING- PASSED**

House and Senate unanimously passed a bill that would ensure minors cannot be charged for prostitution and would also enhance penalties for anyone who knowingly leases a property under the auspices of offering massage therapy for the purposes of prostitution.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0545/BillText/er/PDF>

##### **SALE OF DEXTROMETHORPHAN- PASSED**

The Legislature passed a bill that would preempt local regulation of dextromethorphan, a drug found in cough syrup that is abused by youth. The bill also prohibits sale of dextromethorphan to minors.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0938/BillText/er/PDF>

##### **LAW ENFORCEMENT BODY CAMERAS- PASSED**

The Senate and House voted unanimously to pass a bill that requires law enforcement agencies that choose to use body cameras to adopt policies and procedures regarding their use, maintenance and storage. The bill would also allow for officers to record individuals without having to inform them they are being

recorded. Meanwhile, budget negotiations agreed on a \$1 million appropriation to assist local Sheriff offices with body camera purchases.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0093/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **SENATE PASSES PUBLIC RECORDS EXEMPTION- SECURITY SYSTEM PLANS- PASSED**

The House and Senate voted near unanimously to pass a bill that would provide exceptions to a public records exemption that prohibits access to security system information. The bill would allow access to the property owner or lease holder in furtherance of the duties of the agency holding the information; to another public agency in furtherance of that agency's duties; and if good cause is shown in court. The bill is supported by the Florida Sheriffs Association and the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1004/BillText/er/PDF>

#### **RED LIGHT CAMERAS- FAILED**

The House voted 83-33 to repeal red light cameras. Opponents argued that the cameras are for public safety and result in reduced crashes at intersections. Supporters argued that the programs are only for profit and do not result in increased safety. The Senate did not take up the bill, however the Senate companion did pass one committee.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/4027/BillText/Filed/PDF>

#### **OPEN CARRY- FAILED**

The House voted 80-38 to allow individuals with a concealed weapons license to openly carry their handguns so long as it is in a holster or handbag. However, the Senate Judiciary committee refused to hear the bill in its first Senate committee of reference. The Florida Sheriffs Association officially opposed the bill, however its membership was split on the issue with certain sheriffs testifying in favor.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/0163/BillText/c3/PDF>

#### **KRATOM- FAILED**

A bill to add kratom to the list of controlled substances died after not being heard in its second Senate committee and third House committee.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/1182/BillText/c1/PDF>

### **GAMING**

#### **COMPACT AGREEMENT- FAILED**

The House gaming package stalled after not being taken up by the full House and Senate Gaming bills stalled after not getting a hearing in Senate Appropriations. The



packages were expanded well beyond the ratification of the Governor's \$3 billion agreement with the Seminole and the parameters it entailed. The packages expanded slots into more counties than Palm Beach County – the only county outside of Broward and Dade that the Seminole Tribe agreed would not impact its revenue sharing. The packages also decoupled pari-mutuels from racing both dogs and horses and reduced pari-mutuel taxes. Ultimately, too many interests were involved to find a solution a majority of members would vote favorably for. While the Senate President Designate has named the Compact a top priority for next Session, a current Federal court case over exclusivity violations by the State of Florida and a current Florida Supreme Court case over slots expansion outside Miami and Broward could significantly affect any agreements.

## **EDUCATION**

### **OMNIBUS EDUCATION PACKAGE- PASSED**

One of the final bills to pass during the Session, the House and Senate passed an omnibus education package back and forth before agreeing on a final product that effects charter school accountability and funding, capital outlay, parental choice, school boards and rehiring retired personnel among other provisions. Specifically for charter schools, the bill shuts down charter schools with two failing grades in a row and requires more information on applications. It grants access to greater amounts of Charter School Capital Outlay funds above the standard base per FTE for schools with 75% students on free or reduced lunch (25% funding above base), 25% ESE students (25% funding above base), or both (75% funding above base). The bill also brings greater accountability to public school capital construction costs, allows for open enrollment to any school that has not reached capacity and allows parents to request transfers to other teachers.

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2016/7029/BillText/er/PDF>

### **BEST & BRIGHTEST- PASSED**

The Legislature included funding for the Best & Brightest program in the budget, averting votes on a standalone policy bill that was likely going to die in the Senate. The funding ensures a continuation of the program and was given \$14 million in supplemental funding in addition to the roughly \$44 million re-allocated this year.