

2024

June 17, 2024

## General Session Highlights

- ▶ The 2024 Florida Legislature adjourned sine die on Friday afternoon, March 8, 2024. The legislature approved the General Appropriations Act and an overall budget of \$117.46 billion. A total of 1,957 bills were filed this Session, with only 325 bills being passed by both chambers (after 43 floor sessions) and sent to the Governor. Notably, the Governor officially signed the State Budget on June 12th, 2024.
- ▶ Notably, Florida College System (FCS) institutions have been authorized by the Governor to participate in the State of Florida's Group Health Insurance Program, beginning in the 2025 Plan Year. More details will follow as the implementation procedures are clarified and communicated to the Colleges. Also, the Legislature has authorized FCS institutions to offer specialized transfer Associate in Arts degrees, which will promote affordability and reduce barriers that exist for our students in their pursuit of baccalaureate degrees, especially in STEM fields.
- ▶ A challenge in funding results this year for the FCS was the fact that no new money was appropriated to the FCS Program Fund to be distributed to the colleges through the improved funding formula as adopted and implemented last year, despite \$50 million being included in the State Board of Education's Legislative Budget Request and in the Governor's Proposed Budget. Supporting this recommended increase in operating funds was one of the key priorities of the Florida College System Council of Presidents. The legislature did, however, appropriate \$80 million towards the inclusion of the colleges in the State Group Insurance Program, at the request of the Florida College System Council of Presidents. Unfortunately, the \$80 million was vetoed by the Governor.

## General Appropriations Act (GAA) 2024-25

### Background

- ▶ The Legislature has three methods to reflect funding decisions made in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) process.
  - ◆ "Proviso" is language in the General Appropriations Act attached to a specific appropriation that directs or authorizes how the funds can be expended.
  - ◆ An "implementing bill" is a substantive bill that provides instructions to enact specific provisions for a GAA appropriation or proviso by changing the law (Florida Statutes) temporarily for one year. This is necessary because the courts have ruled the GAA cannot contradict current law; however, there may be a need to suspend some provision of law.
  - ◆ A "conforming bill" is also a substantive bill that may "travel" with the GAA. It differs from the implementing bill in that it makes permanent changes to Florida Statutes.
- ▶ In summary, proviso language and implementing bills are law for only one year and then they expire, while a conforming bill makes a permanent change in Florida law.

- ▶ While the Governor may veto the entire appropriations act or exercise his veto by “line item,” he does not have “line item” veto in a conforming, implementing, or general bill but must act on the entire bill. Bills that are passed by the Legislature are sent to the Governor for further action. The Governor may sign, veto, or allow a bill to become law without his signature. Because the Legislature has now adjourned the 2024 Session, the Governor has fifteen consecutive days from the date he receives a bill to act on that bill. Leadership of the Legislature usually staggers sending bills to the Governor in order to provide time to review the bills.
- ▶ When a bill is passed and sent to the Governor while the Legislature is still in session, the timeline is different; the Governor must act within seven days from the time his office receives the bill.
- ▶ The following are the 2024-2025 appropriations bills:
  - ◆ [Conference Report on HB 5001 - 2024-2025 General Appropriations Act](#)
  - ◆ [Conference Report on HB 5003 - Implementing the 2024-2025 General Appropriations Act](#)

### FSW Funding 2024-2025

Funding Category	Selected System Funding Matters	FSW Funding 24-25
Program Fund-General Revenue & Lottery (Combined)	Funding Formula Model No Additional Dollars	\$49,896,992
2+2 Program Incentive	\$17 million allocated to the FCS	\$487,850
Workforce Incentive	\$13 million allocated to the FCS	\$344,077
Nursing PIPELINE Program	\$40 million allocated to the FCS	\$1,383,615
Charlotte Campus – Building E Health Professions Remodel (PECO Funding)		\$2,400,000
Lee Campus – Building V, Campus Police HQ Remodel (PECO Funding)		\$5,942,642
Institute of Innovation and Emerging Technologies		\$1,500,000
Radiologic Tech. Program Enhancement		\$2,248,487
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$64,203,663</b>
<b>Additional Funding Opportunities</b>	<b>Available to State Universities, Tech Colleges, and FCS Institutions</b>	

### How to Find the Final Version of a Bill

The simplest way to see the final version of a bill is to go to [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov) and enter the bill number in the space provided on the top of the homepage or go to [www.flhouse.gov](http://www.flhouse.gov) and click on the top tab “Bills.” Senate bills are always even numbers (SB 00), and House bills are always odd numbers (HB 11). On the House site, note that you may choose either chamber or choose “both.” When you enter the bill number, the history of the bill will appear. For bills that have passed, go to the section on “Bill Text” and choose the entry followed by “ER,” which is the most recent, enrolled version of the bill. An enrolled bill is the one being sent to the Governor. For bills that have not passed, go to the section on “Bill Text” and choose the entry with the latest date, which is the final version of the bill before it failed. Staff analyses for bills are also found on the bill sites.

## General Bills of Note that Passed

(All bills noted below are pending approval of the Governor unless stated otherwise)

### ▶ CS/SB 62 (Osgood) Resident Status for Tuition Purposes (Vetoed)

- ◆ Ensures individuals do not lose their resident status for tuition purposes due to incarceration in a state or federal facility in Florida.
- ◆ Effective Date: 7/1/2024

### ▶ CS/CS/CS/HB 149 (Alvarez) Continuing Contracts (Approved by Governor; Chapter No. 2024-204)

- ◆ The bill increases the maximum cost for each individual project procured pursuant to the Consultant's Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA) from \$4 million to \$7.5 million, plus an annual increase based on the consumer price index (CPI). This limitation applies to projects procured under the CCNA by the state, counties, municipalities, school districts, special districts, and other political subdivisions.
- ◆ Requires the Department of Management Services to annually adjust and publish the annual change to the individual project maximum cost limit based on the June-to-June CPI.
- ◆ Effective Date: 7/1/2024

### ▶ CS/HB 151 (Busatta Cabrera) Retirement (Approved by Governor; Chapter No. 2024-92)

- ◆ The Conference Committee Amendment for CS/HB 151, relating to the Florida Retirement System, establishes the contribution rates paid by employers that participate in the Florida Retirement System (FRS) beginning July 1, 2024. FSW will pay new rates that are intended to fund the full normal cost and the amortization of the unfunded actuarial liability (UAL) of the FRS and the changes in policies.
- ◆ The bill authorizes an FRS retiree to be reemployed with an employer participating in the FRS and receive both compensation and retirement benefits, after meeting the definition of termination. This effectively eliminates the "suspension of benefits" period typically applied during months 7 through 12 after the date of retirement.
- ◆ The bill also closes the FRS Preservation of Benefits Plan to new members effective July 1, 2026. The Preservation of Benefits Plan currently provides for FRS members to be eligible to receive a benefit that is in excess of the annual benefit under a defined benefit plan is \$275,000.
- ◆ Effective Date: 7/1/2024

### ▶ CS/CS/HB 473 (Giallombardo) Cybersecurity Incident Liability (Vetoed)

- ◆ The bill provides that a county or municipality, or political subdivision like FSW that has substantially complied with cybersecurity protocols established by the Department of Management Services and that has timely notified the state and the local sheriff of a serious incident related to cybersecurity is not liable for civil damages related to the incident.
- ◆ Establishes that the protection afforded by the bill is an affirmative defense where the defendant entity has the burden of proof on applicability.
- ◆ Effective Date: Upon Becoming Law

### ▶ SB 674 (Boyd) United States-produced Iron and Steel in Public Works Projects (Chapter 2024-267)

- ◆ The bill requires a governmental entity that contracts for a public works project or for the purchase of materials for a public works project to ensure that any iron or steel product that will be permanently incorporated into the project be produced in the United States.

- ◆ The bill waives this contract requirement if the governmental entity determines that any of the following apply:
  - ◆ The iron or steel products required for the project are not produced in the United States in sufficient quantities, are not reasonably available, or are of an unsatisfactory quality;
  - ◆ The use of US-produced iron or steel products will increase the total cost of the project by more than 20 percent;
  - ◆ Compliance with the requirement is inconsistent with the public interest.
- ◆ The bill requires the Department of Management Services to develop guidelines and procedures by rule to implement the bill.
- ◆ Effective Date: 7/1/2024

▶ **HB 781** (Clemons) Unsolicited Proposals for Public-private Partnerships (*Approved by Governor; Chapter No. 2024-96*)

- ◆ The bill allows a local government or political subdivision to proceed with an unsolicited proposal for a public-private partnership (P3) without engaging in a public bidding process, as currently required. The governmental entity may instead enter into the P3 by holding a public meeting at which the unsolicited proposal is presented for public comment and then holding a subsequent public meeting at which the governmental entity must announce its intent to proceed with the P3 and the basis for its determination. The governmental entity must publish its determination in the Florida Administrative Register for at least 7 days thereafter.
- ◆ Effective Date: 7/1/2024

▶ **SB 818** (Avila) Military Leave; (*Approved by Governor; Chapter No. 2024-19*)

- ◆ Currently, a public employer like FSW must provide an employee or official who is a service member a full paid leave of absence for the first 30 days of active federal military service. The bill limits application of the paid leave of absence to a service member who is activated under the federal military service that is equal to or greater than 90 consecutive days.
- ◆ Effective Date: 7/1/2024

▶ **CS/CS/HB 917** (Snyder) Career and Technical Education (*Approved by Governor; Chapter No. 2024-125*)

- ◆ As to the FCS, the bill repeals 1004.01 ("Florida Talent Development Council") and expands the duties of the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help to include coordinating with the DOE, the Department of Commerce, and CareerSource Florida, Inc. to publish and disseminate a statewide CTE education asset map by March 1, 2025, informing workforce and industry partners of opportunities to partner and expand CTE in the state.
- ◆ Effective Date: 7/1/2024

▶ **CS/CS/HB 1285** (Canady) Education (*Approved by Governor; Chapter No. 2024-101*)

- ◆ Allows documentation of the homestead exemption as a single piece of evidence proving residency for tuition purposes.
- ◆ Repeals the FCS employment equity and accountability program.
- ◆ Requires that the development of dual enrollment articulation agreements include consideration of online courses.
- ◆ Prohibits public postsecondary institutions from restricting student employment, with exceptions for students employed by an organization/agency affiliated or associated with foreign countries of concern.
- ◆ Authorizes associate in specialized transfer degrees, detailing the approval process and degree requirements. This new degree authority will remove a significant obstacle that confronts Florida College System students who aspire to pursue a baccalaureate degree at a state university.

- ◆ Note: Currently, many FCS students pursuing a degree in a STEM field have no way of completing the lower-division programs before exhausting their financial aid eligibility at their FCS institution. The creation of Associate in Arts Specialized Transfer Degrees will allow FCS institutions to build SUS program prerequisites into the graduation requirements for these specialized Associate in Arts degrees and place FCS students on equal footing with native SUS students who are in STEM pathways with respect to federal financial aid eligibility.

- ◆ Clarifies that while serving, College and State University board members are subject to the ethics requirements of s. 112.313, F.S. with regard to business dealings with their respective institutions and other entities (e.g. direct support organizations) under their purview.

- ◆ Effective Date: 7/1/2024

▶ **CS/HB 1291** (Snyder, Jacques) Educator Preparation Programs (*Approved by Governor; Chapter No. 2024-141*)

- ◆ The bill prohibits educator and school leader preparation programs from including curriculum that distorts historical events or teaches identity politics and mandates these programs to offer opportunities for critical thinking and competence demonstration.

- ◆ Prohibits teacher preparation courses from distorting significant historical events and from teaching curriculum based on theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in U.S. institutions.

- ◆ Requires teacher preparation courses to provide opportunities for candidates to think critically, achieve mastery of academic content, learn instructional strategies, and demonstrate competence.

- ◆ Extends these prohibitions and requirements to postsecondary education preparation institutes, professional learning certification programs, and school leader preparation programs.

- ◆ Effective Date: 7/1/2024

▶ **CS/SB 1746** (Ingoglia) Public Employees; (*Approved by Governor; Chapter 2024-23*)

- ◆ Requires public employees desiring to be in an employee organization to submit a signed form to the bargaining agent, including specific information about dues and the rights of employees regarding union membership. Under current law, these forms must be maintained by the employee organization and are subject to inspection by the PERC.

- ◆ Empowers the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) to investigate employee organization applications for registration renewal and mandates denial under specific inaccuracies.

- ◆ Modifies the information an employee organization must submit to the PERC during the renewal of registration process to include the frequency of membership dues collection and data on expenditures. The annual financial statement will no longer be required to be “audited” by a certified public accountant. Instead, the statement must be “prepared” by a certified public accountant.

- ◆ Requires an employee organization that has not had 60% of its unit employees pay dues during its last registration period and submit membership authorization forms to the employee organizations to petition the PERC for recertification as the bargaining agent within 30 days after the date the employee organization applied for renewal of registration. If the employee organization fails to petition timely, the certification as the bargaining agent is revoked.

- ◆ Effective Date: Upon Becoming Law

▶ **HB 7007** OGSR/Campus Emergency Response; (*Approved by Governor; Chapter 2024-41*)

- ◆ The bill saves from repeal the public records exemption from public inspection and copying requirements any portion of a campus emergency response held by a public postsecondary institution.

*HB 7007 Continued from above*

- ◆ Likewise, the bill saves from repeal the exemption to public meetings requirements for that portion of a public meeting which would reveal information related to the campus emergency response.
- ◆ Effective Date: 10/1/2024

▶ **SB 7018** (Health Policy) Healthcare; (Approved by Governor; Chapter 2024-16)

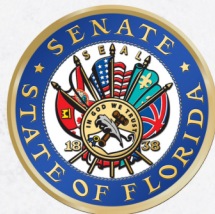
- ◆ The bill amends the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) Fund in order to include independent schools, colleges, or universities.
- ◆ The bill also increases the passage rate for the Nursing License Examination from 70 percent to 75 percent, that is required for LPN, associate of science in nursing, and bachelor of science in nursing programs to participate in the LINE Fund.
- ◆ Effective Date: Upon Becoming Law

▶ **CS/SB 7032** (Education Postsecondary) Education (Approved by Governor; Chapter No. 2024-161)

- ◆ Establishes the Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program to provide alternative pathways for students who have withdrawn from high school before graduation.
- ◆ Requires institutions who participate in the GATE Program to waive 100% of registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees for GATE Program students.
- ◆ Limits eligibility to students aged 16 to 21 who have not earned a high school diploma or equivalency and are state residents.
- ◆ Establishes the GATE Scholarship, Startup Grant, and Program Performance Fund to support institutions who participate in the program and reward successful student outcomes.
- ◆ Effective Date: Upon Becoming Law

▶ **HB 5101** (PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee) Education (Approved by Governor; Chapter No. 2024-230)

- ◆ **Section 1** of this conforming bill amends s. 110.123, F.S., to revise definitions to include Florida College System (FCS) institutions in the State Group Health Insurance (SGHI) Program. The initial enrollment period is required to begin as soon as practicable with coverage beginning in the 2025 plan year by July 31, 2025. FCS institutions are required to participate for at least 3 plan years.
- ◆ **Section 21** revises s. 1009.896, F.S., to expand the Florida Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program to include emergency medical technicians, paramedics, and firefighters, and specify eligibility criteria and authorized uses of funds. Accordingly, the amendment changes the name to the Florida First Responder Scholarship Program.



*If you have questions or need additional information, please contact  
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