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## Florida Legislative Session Week 2 Update



As the Legislature continues to shape state policy, The Southern Group team is at the forefront working hard and advocating for clients every step

of the way. [Click here](#) to learn more about what makes The Southern Group different.

If you would like to receive industry specific weekly newsletters, please click the header of the industry below. Some highlights from this past week are outlined below.

Governor Ron DeSantis is well on his way to a bolder, brighter future for the state, with the unemployment rate dropping to a record 3 percent in December 2019 and 220,000 Floridians entering the workforce last year. Education and health services top the list of private-sector industries gaining the most jobs, closely followed by leisure and hospitality. The Governor continues to make the reshaping of the Florida Supreme Court a priority as he chooses from among nine nominees to replace former Justices Barbara Lagoa and Robert Luck.

### [Cannabis](#)

Senator Rob Bradley is the second high profile Senator to express a willingness to consider the House supported 10% cap on THC in flower. The first was President Bill Galvano several weeks ago. The measure appears to be a priority of Speaker Oliva and Health Policy Chair Representative Ray Rodrigues. It has instantly become the biggest 2020 session issue in the cannabis space.

## Education

Education was a hot topic this week in Tallahassee for week 2 of the Florida Legislative Session. On the advocacy front, School Board Members and Superintendents from across the state were in town to advocate for education. The Capitol grounds also saw hundreds of parents and student advocates fighting for the expansion of the Gardiner Scholarship during a rally organized by Step Up for Students. On the legislative front, the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee discussed their proposed committee bill (PCB) on the naming of college and university facilities. Also, this week, Governor DeSantis announced a new State Board of Education member, Ryan Petty from Parkland. Petty previously was appointed to the Marjory Stoneman Douglass Public Safety Commission and has been advocating for school safety since the death of his daughter Alaina.

## Financial Services

The House is set to vote on HB 1189, Genetic Information for Insurance Purposes, which has unanimously sailed through two committees. Sponsored by Speaker-Designate Chris Sprowls, this bill will prohibit life insurers from using the results of a genetic test when underwriting an insurance policy. The Senate companion is set to be heard in its first committee next week. Property and Casualty insurers will want to watch a couple bills that were heard in committee last week. SB 914 changes the way attorney's fees are calculated in lawsuits involving property insurance.

It passed out of the committee on Banking and Insurance on a party line 5-3 vote. HB 269, relating to loss run statements, has passed all its committees in the House. Sponsored by Rep. Danny Perez, the Bill requires insurers to provide a loss run statement when one is requested by a consumer. Its Senate companion has one committee remaining before it goes before the whole Chamber for approval. Next week Vulnerable Investors is up in its first committee in the Senate (SB 1672). It's House companion has already been heard and passed unanimously out of its first committee.

### Health Care

Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), physician assistants (PAs) and pharmacists all descended on Tallahassee during Week 2 of Session as the various health care committees continued to move legislation, some of it controversial, towards the House and Senate floors. "Floridians Unite for Health Care", a coalition of APRNs and PAs that has the backing of the business community and, as of this week, Speaker Jose Oliva, rallied Wednesday in support of the House's efforts to give these professionals independent practice. Meanwhile, pharmacists and pharmacy students, donning their white jackets, filled House and Senate committee rooms to advocate for changes to how pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) operate. The House legislation was received with mixed reviews from the pharmacy community, while the more-favored Senate bill was not heard due to the Banking and Insurance Committee running out of time. The House bill also

requires drug companies to report when they plan to increase drug prices. Additionally, news came down this week that the WellCare-Centene merger is nearing completion, which impacts hundreds of thousands of Florida's Medicaid recipients.

### Local Government

The appropriations Chairman and staff prepared the state budget with plans to release their initial proposals next week. In addition to the budget preparation, it was an active week for bills going through the committee process that affect local governments. On Wednesday, the full Senate took up SB 172, which preempts local governments from imposing bans on certain sunscreens. HB 441 passed its final committee this week. It increases the maximum limit for continuing contracts under CCNA, saving money for both small businesses and local governments. Finally, SB 712, the Governor's priority water quality bill, cleared its second committee and is a step closer to the full Senate. The bill contains recommendations and includes the creation of a wastewater treatment grant program to assist local governments in converting septic to sewer and improving their wastewater treatment facilities. Detailed committee reports are below and our entire bill tracking list will follow

### Technology

Few technology issues saw movement in the second week of the 60-day

Legislative Session save for several bills tied to strengthening the state's Broadband Internet infrastructure and capacity. However, we expect much more discussion in the weeks to come on various tech bills outlined in our technology bill tracking report. In addition, new details emerged this week related to the state's reorganization of the Agency for State Technology into the Department of Management Services. In their update to members of the House Government Operations and Technology appropriations subcommittee, agency leadership shared that their long ongoing search for a state CIO will have to continue, as the right candidate is yet to emerge. Leadership also volunteered the pool of candidates for the State Chief Data Officer is faring better and a selection could be made soon.

### Transportation

This week the Florida Trucking Association hosted Trucking Day at the Capitol. Secretary Kevin Thibault was on hand for the event and drove the trucking simulator through icy roads. Few transportation issues saw movement in the second week of the 60-day Legislative Session save for several bills tied to strengthening the state's Broadband Internet infrastructure and capacity, and the Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles department package. However, next week is a big week with several transportation industry bills up in committee, including HB 395, which sets the minimum salary of the FDOT Secretary, clarifies qualifications for contractors bidding on jobs more than \$50 million and extends public records exemptions during the bid process. Bills regarding electric vehicles

and electric bicycles will be heard in their first committees of reference next week, along with a bill banning express lanes on the Palmetto Expressway (SR 826), and others than increase the state's broadband network.

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