

FPF Legislative Session Report

January 29-February 2, 2018



As the fourth week comes to a close, the budget process consumed much of the legislators' time. The proposals by the House and Senate are similar, with both proposing over two billion more than current spending. There are five more weeks in the regular session that is set to end Friday, March 9th.

This week seemed to be a little more hectic than normal; if there is such a thing mid-point in the session. Some of the substantive committees have completed their normal meeting schedule, which means bills that were referred but not heard by them are dead, or on life support at the very least.

One of our priority issues is still moving and got a key hearing in the House this week. The Post Traumatic Stress bill by Representative Willhite, was heard and passed out of the Oversight, Transparency & Administration Subcommittee Tuesday with 12 yea votes and 0 nay votes. HB 227 has two more stops prior to the House floor. A lot of work went into some key amendments to get this bill moving. The Senate companion, by Senator Book, passed out of two committees with both stops recording unanimous votes. SB 376 has two more stops prior to the Senate floor.

Some local governments are openly opposed to these bills making first responders eligible for workers' compensation benefits while they're dealing with mental trauma. Our friend, Megan Vila, the sister of one of our recently deceased Tampa brothers, is doing an outstanding job of speaking on this issue. Her brother, Stephen Scott LaDue, took his own life after suffering from PTSD.

Megan has inspired some of the media that now have made bringing this issue to the forefront their mission. As local governments try to push back on this issue, their message seems hollow and is not being received well. Their position - first responders' mental health should focus on treatment and education, and not revolve around additional workers' compensation benefits, which are already significantly more robust for first responders. This did not set well with at least one Representative.

In Tuesday's committee meeting, Representative Katie Edwards-Walpole voted in favor of the bill and called out city governments for not backing it. She said, "I find it distasteful, I find it lacking in humanity, and I find it just downright shameful the position to say that this bill isn't necessary."

Another bill we have devoted a lot of effort to, our Cancer Bill, SB 900 by Senator Flores, passed out of the Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee Tuesday with a unanimous vote. SB 900 has not been placed on the agenda for next week's meeting of the Community Affairs Committee; however, it has one more scheduled meeting February 13th. The companion bill, HB 695 by Representative Latvala, was not scheduled for a hearing in the Oversight, Transparency &

Administration Subcommittee, but did receive a workshop to allow us to explain this new concept and field questions. Due to the time constraints of Tuesday's committee meeting and a lengthy testimony on the PTSD bill, ten minutes was allocated. Ten minutes was also allocated for HB 665 by Representative Clemons to explain the FRS COLA floor concept.

HB 309 by Representative Antone adds specific training to our minimum standards certification process to address the cancer and mental health risks within the fire service. The bill passed the Oversight, Transparency & Administration Subcommittee Tuesday with a unanimous vote. HB 309 is on Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee next Tuesday. SB 394 by Senator Bracy is on the agenda for the Health Policy Committee next Tuesday.

The condominium sprinkler system retrofit bill, HB 1061 by Representative Moraitis, narrowly passed out of its first committee with an 8 yeas to 7 nays vote. The companion bill, SB 1432 by Senator Farmer, has not been heard in any committee yet.

Two local bills, Firefighters' Relief and Pension Fund of the City of Pensacola and The Firefighters and Police Pension Fund for the City of Tampa, passed out of their last committee reference and are now headed to the House Floor.

We previously reported the FRS assumed rate of return has been reduced, which increases the contribution as a percent of payroll to maintain proper funding. These bills are must pass bills within the appropriation process. We watch these closely early in the process for proper funding levels. The real issue here is to ensure adequate funding long-term by fully funding the annual required contribution (ARC).

Due to a decrease in the assumed rate of return, the State's contribution will increase in the 2018-2019 budget. The same increase will be passed on to counties, school boards, state agencies, universities, state colleges, and some cities and/or special districts that participate in the FRS. These increased payments total \$178.5 million, based on SB 7014 and HB 5004. Both bills are on the special order calendar in their respective chambers.

We look forward to seeing many of you in Tallahassee next week for the 2018 Robert K. "Bob" Carver Legislative Conference, King of the Hill Softball Game, and Florida Fire Service Caucus Reception. Travel safe.

In addition to Vice President Rocco Salvatori and Secretary/Treasurer Gilbert Marsh, we had 5th DVP Watler, 6th DVP Perez, 9th DVP Vroman, Omar Blanco, President Metropolitan Dade County Local 1403, and Brothers Wil Fleites, John O' Brien, Robert Ortega, Jorge Chavez, and Andre Cruzeta that traveled to Tallahassee; their assistance is greatly appreciated.

Retirement

HB 665 Retirement (Clemons)

Companion Bill: SB 722 (Garcia)

FPF Position: Support

1/30/2018 HOUSE Workshopped by Oversight, Transparency & Administration Subcommittee.

HB 977 Retirement of Instructional Personnel & Administrative Personnel (Fine)

Companion Bill: SB 1240 (Mayfield)

FPF Position: Watch

2/2/2018 HOUSE On Committee agenda - Appropriations Committee, 02/06/18, 3:00 pm, 212 K.

[HB 5007 State-Administered Retirement Systems \(Appropriations Committee\)](#)
[Companion Bills: SB 2500 \(Appropriations\), HB 5001 \(Appropriations Committee\), SB 7014 \(Governmental Oversight and Accountability\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

State-Administered Retirement Systems: Revises required employer retirement contribution rates for members of certain membership classes & subclasses of FRS; provides finding of important state interest. Effective Date: July 1, 2018. 2/1/2018 HOUSE Filed (Formerly PCB APC4). 2/1/2018 HOUSE Referred to Calendar. 2/1/2018 HOUSE Placed on Special Order Calendar, 02/07/18.

[SB 7014 State-Administered Retirement Systems \(Governmental Oversight and Accountability\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

1/31/2018 SENATE Favorable by Appropriations; 19 Yeas, 0 Nays. 2/1/2018 SENATE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading. 2/1/2018 SENATE Placed on Special Order Calendar, 02/07/18.

[Safety and Health](#)

[HB 309 Fire Safety \(Antone\)](#)

[Companion Bill: SB 394 \(Bracy\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

1/30/2018 HOUSE Committee Substitute Text (C1) Filed. 1/31/2018 HOUSE Now in Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee. 2/2/2018 HOUSE On Committee agenda - Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee, 02/06/18, 10:00 am, 17 H.

[SB 394 Fire Safety \(Bracy\)](#)

[Companion Bill: HB 309 \(Antone\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

2/1/2018 SENATE On Committee agenda - Health Policy, 02/06/18, 11:00 am, 412 K.

[HB 695 Firefighters \(C. Latvala\)](#)

[Companion Bill: SB 900 \(Flores\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

1/30/2018 HOUSE Workshopped by Oversight, Transparency & Administration Subcommittee.

[SB 820 Firesafety Inspectors \(Powell\)](#)

[Companion Bill: HB 637 \(Jacquet\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

2/1/2018 SENATE On Committee agenda - Criminal Justice, 02/06/18, 9:00 am, 37 S.

[SB 900 Firefighters \(Flores\)](#)

[Companion Bill: HB 695 \(C. Latvala\)](#)

[FPF Position: Support](#)

1/30/2018 SENATE Favorable with CS by Governmental Oversight and Accountability; 6 Yeas, 0 Nays. 1/30/2018 SENATE Committee Substitute Text (C1) Filed. 2/1/2018 SENATE Now in Community Affairs.

[HB 1061 Community Association Fire and Life Safety Systems \(Moraitis\)](#)

[Companion Bill: SB 1432 \(Farmer\)](#)

[FPF Position: Oppose](#)

1/30/2018 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Careers & Competition Subcommittee; 8 Yeas, 7 Nays. 1/31/2018 HOUSE Committee Substitute Text (C1) Filed.

Collective Bargaining Representation

HB 25 Labor Organizations (Plakon)

Companion Bill: SB 1036 Labor Organizations (Steube)

FPF Position: Oppose

1/31/2018 SENATE In Messages. 2/1/2018 SENATE Received; Referred to Commerce and Tourism; Appropriations; Rules.

Local Bills

HB 1139 City Pension Fund for Firefighters and Police Officers in the City of Tampa, Hillsborough Co (Cruz)

FPF Position: Support

1/30/2018 HOUSE On Committee agenda - Government Accountability Committee, 02/01/18, 12:00 pm, 17 H. 2/1/2018 HOUSE Favorable by Government Accountability Committee; 19 Yeas, 0 Nays. 2/1/2018 HOUSE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading.

HB 1141 Firefighters' Relief and Pension Fund of the City of Pensacola, Escambia Co (White)

FPF Position: Support

1/30/2018 HOUSE On Committee agenda - Government Accountability Committee, 02/01/18, 12:00 pm, 17 H. 2/1/2018 HOUSE Favorable by Government Accountability Committee; 19 Yeas, 0 Nays. 2/1/2018 HOUSE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading.

State Employees

SB 2504 State Employees (Appropriations)

Companion Bills: SB 2500 (Appropriations), HB 5001 (Appropriations Committee), HB 5005 (Appropriations Committee)

FPF Position: Watch

2/1/2018 SENATE Committee Bill Text Filed. 2/1/2018 SENATE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading. 2/1/2018 SENATE Placed on Special Order Calendar, 02/07/18.

HB 5005 Collective Bargaining (Appropriations Committee)

Companion Bills: SB 2500 (Appropriations), HB 5001 (Appropriations Committee), SB 2504 (Appropriations)

FPF Position: Watch

Collective Bargaining: Provides for resolution of collective bargaining issues at impasse between State of Florida & certified bargaining units for state employees pursuant to specified instructions. Effective Date: July 1, 2018. 2/1/2018 HOUSE Filed (Formerly PCB APC3), 2/1/2018 HOUSE Referred to Calendar, 2/1/2018 HOUSE Placed on Special Order Calendar, 02/07/18.

Workers Compensation

HB 227 Workers' Compensation Benefits for First Responders (Willhite)

Companion Bills: SB 126 (Torres, Jr.), HB 629 (Asencio), SB 376 (Book)

FPF Position: Support

1/30/2018 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Oversight, Transparency & Administration Subcommittee; 12 Yeas, 0 Nays. 1/31/2018 HOUSE Committee Substitute Text (C1) Filed.

Watch Bills

HB 317 Local Tax Referenda (Ingoglia)

Companion Bill: SB 272 (Brandes)

1/31/2018 HOUSE Read Second Time; Read Third Time; Passed (Vote: 84 Yeas / 27 Nays).

HB 529 Florida Fire Prevention Code (Diaz)

Companion Bill: SB 746 (Bean)

1/31/2018 HOUSE Read Second Time; Read Third Time; Passed (Vote: 113 Yeas / 0 Nays).

SB 1006 Disaster Response and Preparedness (Montford)

2/2/2018 SENATE On Committee agenda - Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security, 02/07/18, 4:00 pm, 37 S.

HB 1109 State Emergency Communications and Warning System (Stark)

Companion Bill: SB 1466 (Farmer)

1/30/2018 HOUSE Favorable by Oversight, Transparency & Administration Subcommittee; 10 Yeas, 0 Nays.
1/30/2018 HOUSE Now in Appropriations Committee.

SB 1466 State Emergency Communications and Warning System (Farmer)

HB 1109 (Stark)

1/29/2018 SENATE Now in Rules.