



# Understanding Florida's Legislative Process

# Who's Who in Florida's Cabinet?

- Ron DeSantis, Governor – [www.flgov.com](http://www.flgov.com)
- Ashley Moody, Attorney General – [www.myfloridalegal.com](http://www.myfloridalegal.com)
- Jimmy Patronis, Chief Financial Officer – [www.myfloridacfo.com](http://www.myfloridacfo.com)
- Nikki Fried, Commissioner of Agriculture – [www.doacs.state.fl.us](http://www.doacs.state.fl.us)

# Key information about the Florida Senate

## Composition

- 40 members
- Serve 4 year staggered terms
- For the 2022 Session, the composition is 24 Republicans and 16 Democrats
- Consists of 9 Committees and 7 Subcommittees
- Includes 4 Joint Committees/Commissions

## Leadership

- President - (R) Wilton Simpson
- President Pro Tem - (R) Aaron P. Bean
- Majority Leader - (R) Debbie Mayfield
- Minority Leader - (D) Lauren Book
- Website: [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)

# Key information about the House of Representatives

## Composition

- 120 members who serve 2 year terms
- For the 2022 Session, the composition is 78 Republicans and 42 Democrats
- Consists of 10 Committees and 21 Subcommittees
- Includes 5 Joint Committees/Commissions

## Leadership

- Speaker of the House - (R) Chris Sprowls
- Speaker Pro Tem - (R) Bryan Avila
- Majority Leader - (R) Michael Grant
- Minority Leader - (D) Bobby DuBose
- Website: [www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov)

# Florida's Health Care Agencies

- **House and Senate Health Committees:** Sets the agenda for First Reading and its members responsible for the initial vote on health-related bills in each chamber
- **Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA):** Responsible for governing the Florida Medicaid program, as well as regulating the licensing of health facilities and providing quality of care information to Floridians.
- **Agency for Persons with Disability (APD):** Identifies the service needs of Floridians with developmental disabilities and delegates social, medical, behavioral or therapeutic services.
- **Department of Children and Families:** Determines eligibility requirements for childcare, providing eligible youth with medical and food assistance.
- **Florida Health Insurance Advisory Board (FHIAB):** Offers recommendations surrounding health insurance laws to the Legislature

# Senate Health Care Committees

Appropriations Subcommittee on human and health services:

- Chair: (R Senator) Aaron Bean, 4th District of Nassau county and part of Duval county
- Vice Chair: (R Senator) Ana Maria Rodriguez, 39th District of Monroe county and parts of Miami-Dade county

Committee on Health Policy:

- Chair: (R Sen) Manny Diaz, 36th District containing parts of Miami-Dade county
- Vice Chair: (R Sen) Jason Brodeur, 9th District containing Seminole county and parts of Volusia county

Committee on Children, Families and Elder Affairs:

- Chair: (R Senator) Ileana Garcia, 37th District containing parts of Miami-Dade county
- Vice Chair: (D Senator) Lauren Book, 32nd District containing parts of Broward county

# House Health Care Committees

## Health & Human Services Committee:

- Chair: (R Rep) Colleen Burton, 40th District containing parts of Polk county
- Vice Chair: (R Rep) Michael Grant, 75th District containing Charlotte county

## Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee:

- Chair: (R Rep) Bryan Avila, 111th District containing parts of Miami-Dade county
- Vice Chair: (R Rep) Dana Trubulsky, 84th District containing parts of St. Lucie county

## Children, Family and Seniors Subcommittee:

- Chair: (R Rep) Thad Altman, 52nd District containing part of Brevard county
- Vice Chair: (R Rep) Rick Roth, 84th District containing part of Palm Beach county

## Professions and Public Health Subcommittee:

- Chair: (R Rep) Will Robinson, JR; 71st District containing parts of Manatee and Sarasota county
- Vice Chair: (R Rep) John Snyder, 82nd District containing parts of Martin and Palm Beach county

# FL Legislative Process 101

Basic rules before getting into the specific process:

- Each bill must receive 3 readings in each legislative chamber (Senate and House of Representatives) before it will be passed.
- Since each bill must pass both chambers, most bills have “Companion Bills” filed in the other chamber.
- These companion bills are not always exact replicas, yet the intent and purpose of the bills are typically identical.
- This allows bills to be able to move through the committee process of each chamber at the same time.



# FL Legislative Process 101

## The first step: Writing and filing a bill

- All bills must be filed for introduction with the chamber's appropriate leader- either the Clerk of the House or Secretary of Senate- by noon on January 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Who can file a bill?
  - An individual legislator can file a bill for passage
  - A committee or subcommittee can file a bill, known as a proposed committee bill (PCB)
- Once the bill is written and filed, it will be delegated to the appropriate committee(s)
  - Example: A recent bill revising telehealth practice standards was progressed to the Professions & Public Health Subcommittee

## First Reading of a bill

- After receiving the bill, the chairs of each committee will then determine if and when to place the bill on the committee's agenda
  - Many bills will fail to be placed on the agenda and will not receive further consideration
- If the bill is scheduled on the agenda, the bill will be read and debated on the appropriate day (known as the First Reading)
  - After the first reading, the committee will often first amend the original bill through a majority vote
  - The amendments will either be incorporated into the original bill or will added into a new, committee substitute bill

# First Reading (continued)

- The committee of reference will then vote to pass or to not pass the bill
  - If not passed, the bill will be reported 'unfavorably' and will likely not be considered any further during the Legislative session
  - If passed, the bill will progress to the Second Reading
  - All bills passed by the committee of reference will be ready to be placed on the calendar for Second Reading

*Reminder:* Bills may pass first reading and still never considered again on the floor of either chamber

# Second Reading

- If a bill is scheduled for second reading during the legislative session, the bill is introduced, read and its amendments are explained
- Amendments are then debated and may only be approved with majority vote
  - If an amendment is adopted during second reading, then the bill must add the appropriate amendments into the bill
- After amendments are debated, the chamber will vote using the same criteria as the first reading
  - If a bill is voted favorably, then it becomes ready for the third reading
  - If a bill is voted unfavorably, it will likely not progress any further

# Third Reading

Again, the bill is read, explained and debated

- The bill's sponsor will often deliver closing statements to try to win support
- Unlike the first two readings, amendments now require a two-thirds majority to be included

The bill is then voted on, with a simple majority needed to be passed

- If the bill is not passed, then the bill is very likely to die
- IF the bill is passed in the third reading, then the bill must be sent to the other chamber for consideration

# “In Messages”

Once a passed bill is sent to the other chamber, it is said to be ‘in messages’

- The bill is subsequently introduced to the other chamber and then referred to its appropriate committees

While going through an identical process of three readings, this chamber has the option to

- Approve the bill without amendment, in which case the bill is passed, ordered enrolled and set the Governor for approval
- Approve the bill with amendments, in which case the bill is returned to the other chamber to consider the new changes

## Returned Bills

If a chamber approves a bill with amendments, the bill is sent back to the original chamber who then has a few options:

- Can concur with the new amendments, passing the bill through the Legislature and onto the Governor
- Further amend the bill, in which case it is sent back to the other chamber for renewed consideration
- Refuse to concur with the other chamber's amendments, either killing the bill or sparking Conference Committee to work out the differences between the two bills
  - These Conference Committees are often needed to resolve disputes between each chamber's bill
  - If the committee can work through these differences, then it will issue a Conference Committee Report with the bill's text that is presented to each chamber and must be voted favorably without any amendment to be passed through the Legislature

# Governor's Role

- Once a bill is passed through the Legislature, the bill is presented to the Governor
- The Governor can then:
  - Approve the bill, rendering it into law upon the bill's effective date
  - Line-item veto the bill, essentially voting favorably with amendment
  - Veto the bill entirely, sending the bill back to its original chamber
    - The Legislature can override this veto with a two-thirds majority
- Each chamber must then vote whether to pass the governor's version of the bill



# Citizen Participation

Citizens can participate in the Legislative process both in person and online by:

- Speaking at committee meetings
  - [Visit this link](#) for more information about how to attend a committee meeting
  - Read [this brief outline](#) about how to effectively communicate with your representative for quick tips and tricks to maximize your communication
- Scheduling one-on-one meetings with your State legislator
  - Use this "[Find your Representative](#)" tool to find their contact information and reach out to their office