

2022

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WRAP - UP

GRAYROBINSON





P R E S E N T E R

"Be sincere; be brief; be seated."
- Franklin D. Roosevelt

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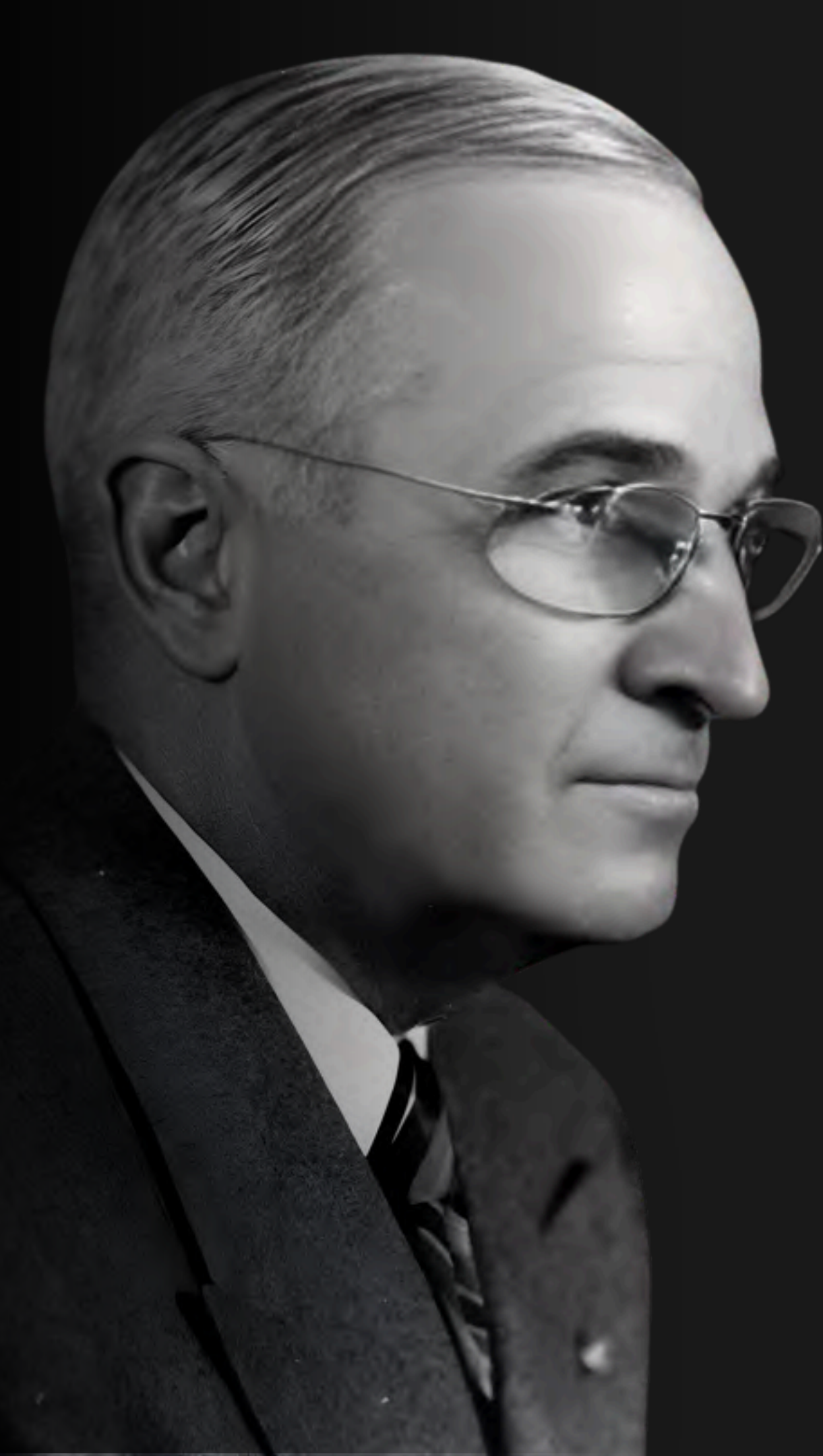
P R E S E N T E R



CHRISTOPHER L. CARMODY

Shareholder / Government Affairs Advisor
chris.carmody@gray-robinson.com

- ***Translates complexity into action.*** Breaks down fast-moving developments into clear, practical outcomes, helping you understand not just what passed or failed, but what that means for Volusia County Schools.
- ***Provides deep, real-time insight.*** With nearly two decades of experience working directly with legislative leaders, executive agencies, and procurement bodies, Chris brings an insider's perspective on how decisions are made and where opportunities emerge behind the scenes.
- ***Proven ability to connect policy to projects.*** Routinely bridges policymaking and appropriations, offering seasoned counsel on how statutory changes translate into funded initiatives and tangible community impact.
- ***Cross-sector perspective grounded in fierce client advocacy.*** Having advised on matters spanning infrastructure, development, and economic growth, Chris delivers insights that reflect what is happening across industries - not just in theory, but in active deals, disputes, and government approvals.



THE PLAYERS

"The buck stops here."
- Harry S. Truman

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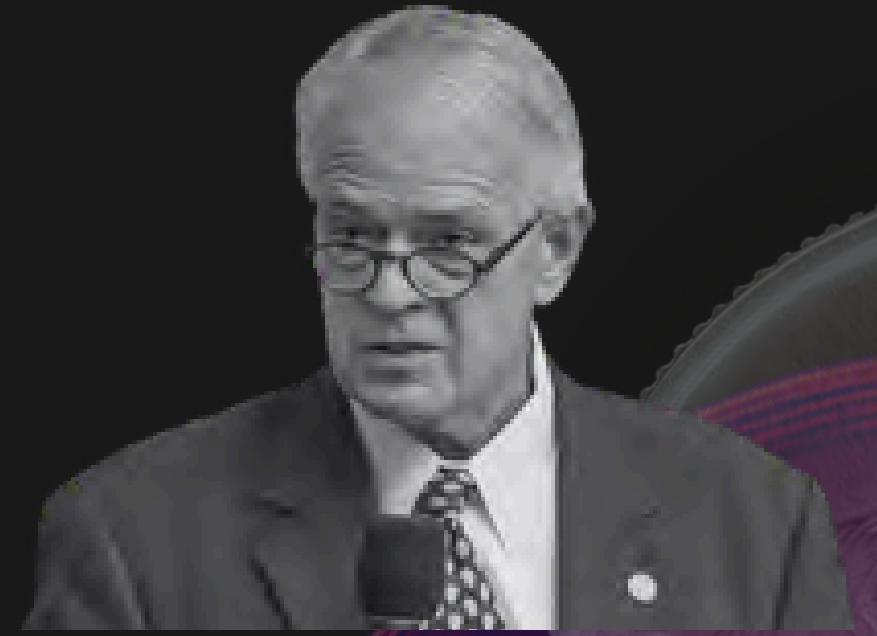
VOLUSIA DELEGATION



TOM WRIGHT
Florida Senate District 8



TOM LEEK
Florida Senate District 7



RICHARD GENTRY
Florida House District 27



BILL PARTINGTON
Florida House District 28



WEBSTER BARNABY
Florida House District 29



CHASE TRAMONT
Florida House District 30



SETTING THE SCENE

"It is not what we have that will make us a great nation; it is the way in which we use it."

- Teddy Roosevelt



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PROPERTY TAX REFORM

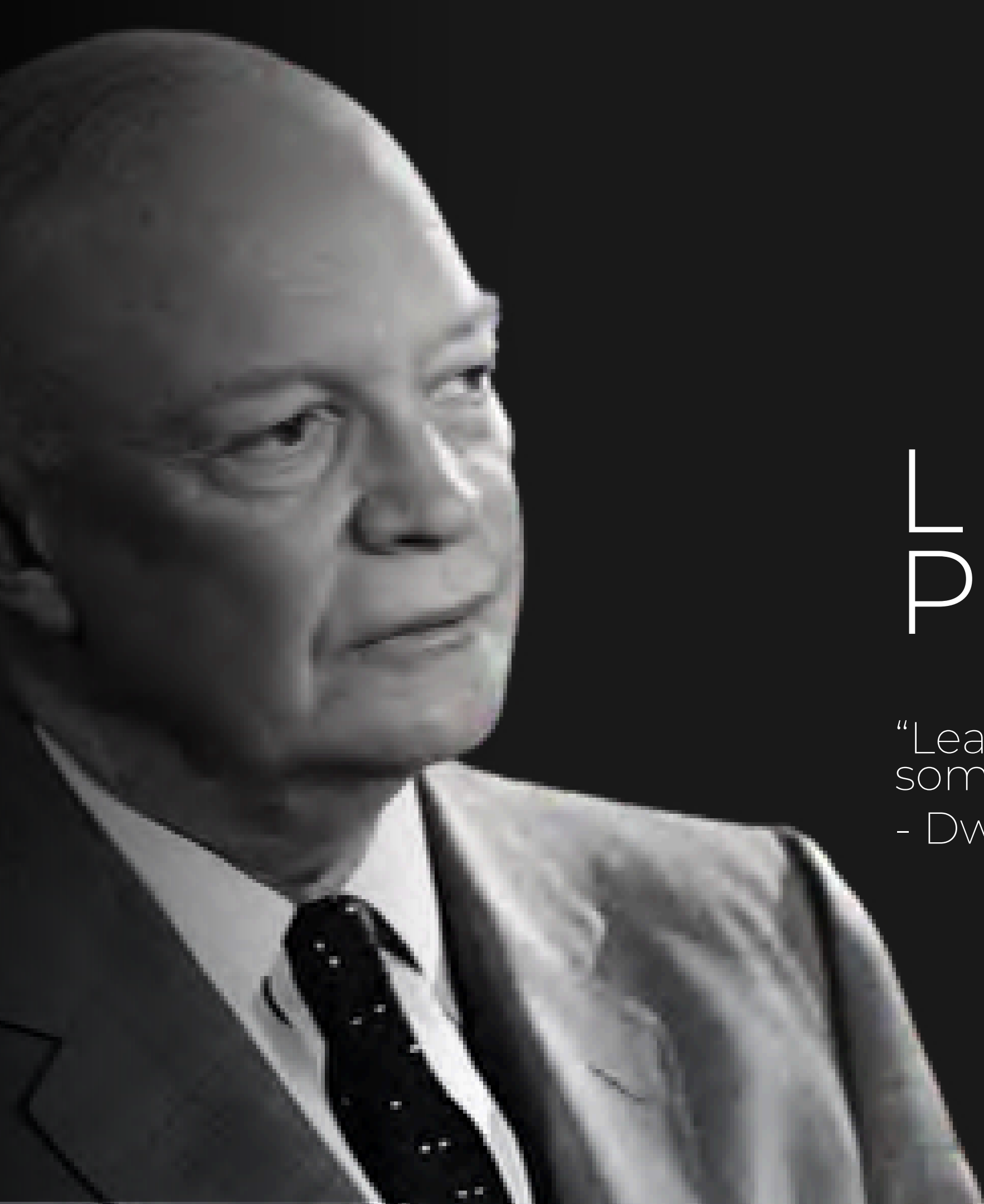
- The singular most dominant issue leading into the start of session. The House convened a select committee, the Senate engaged staff to study the issue extensively, and the Governor spoke about it at every available opportunity.
- Changes to local government property tax collections require a constitutional amendment, which must be approved by 60% of Florida voters.
- The House passed a joint resolution that would immediately and permanently eliminate all non-school homestead property taxes, but with a requirement that local governments could not cut public safety budgets.
- The Senate never took up this bill, and a special session was called for June 1-3 to hear and pass the Governor's proposed property tax plan.

CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING

- Following action by several other states to pursue mid-decade redistricting, Governor DeSantis expressed intent to do the same in Florida.
- The House convened a redistricting select committee and prepared to begin the work. The Senate suggested such work did not need to be done during regular session.
- Ultimately, the Governor decided to call a special session on congressional redistricting.
- The House and Senate approved the Governor's proposed map on April 29, and it was signed into law on May 4. Legal challenges are underway.

BUDGET BUILDING WITH DECLINING REVENUE FORECAST

- The one thing the Legislature *must* do during regular session is pass a balanced budget.
- In 2025, the House and Senate's inability to come to an agreement on a spending plan resulted in a 45-day extension to session, finishing just before the end of June.
- In the months leading up to the start of session, Florida's revenue estimators released a new long-range financial outlook that suggested significant state revenue shortfalls on the horizon.
- This forecast, combined with the end of COVID-era federal stimulus dollars created an atmosphere of budget reduction exercises at the state agencies along with initial House and Senate spending proposals that both began below the final FY 25-26 level.



LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES

“Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.”
- Dwight D. Eisenhower

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ROUND E S A N T I S FLORIDA GOVERNOR



○ Data Centers

SB 484: PASSED

○ AI Bill of Rights

DIED

○ Congressional Redistricting

Governor's proposed map
signed into law May 4.

○ Vaccine Mandate Rollback

DIED

○ Renewal of Emergency Trust Fund
for Immigration Enforcement

SB 7040: PASSED

○ National Push for Federal Balanced
Budget Amendment

ONGOING

○ State-level SAVE Act

PASSED

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BEN ALBRITTON SENATE PRESIDENT



○ Rural Renaissance

DIED

○ School District Deregulation

DIED

○ School Scholarship Reform

DIED



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DANIEL PEREZ

HOUSE SPEAKER



○ Sovereign Immunity

VETOED

○ “Free Kill” Medical Malpractice Elimination

DIED

○ Material Harmful to Minors

DIED

○ DEI

PASSED

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THE BUDGET

"The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining."

- John F. Kennedy

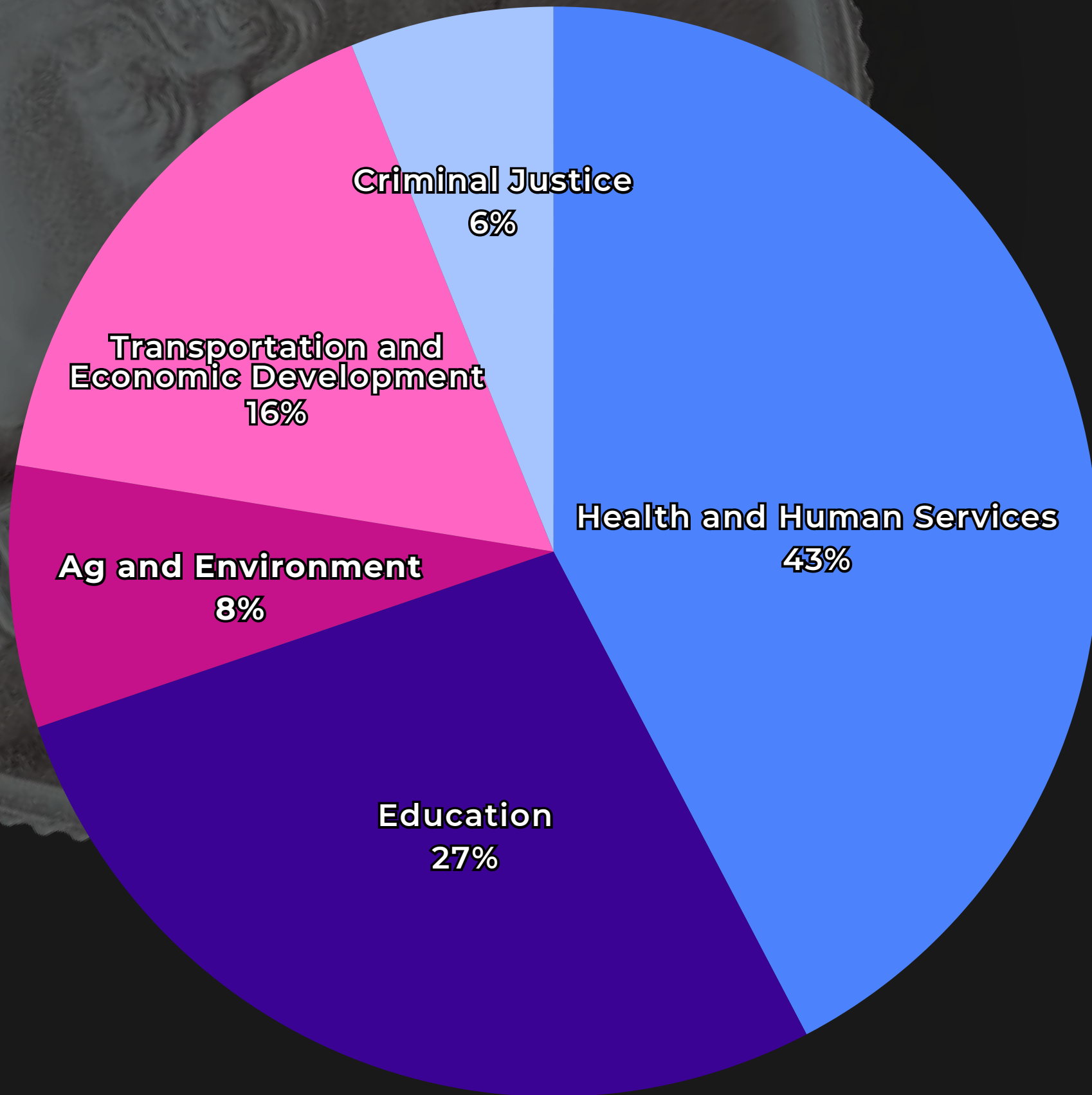
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STATE BUDGET

- House and Senate adjourned, Sine Die, WITHOUT passing or even conferencing on a State Budget.
- As a result, when they met again in special session, they had to “start over” on the budget process...not simply pick up where they left off (like last session - which was extended, not adjourned).
- The Governor proposed a \$117.4 billion budget, the House \$113.6 billion, and the Senate \$115 billion. Final budget came in at \$114.5 billion.
- BELOW current FY spending.
- Budget Special Session held May 12-29.

STATE BUDGET

\$114.5 B



- Health and Human Services: \$49 billion
- Education: \$31 billion
- Transportation and Econ Dev: \$19 billion
- Ag and Environment: \$9 billion
- Criminal Justice: \$6.5 billion

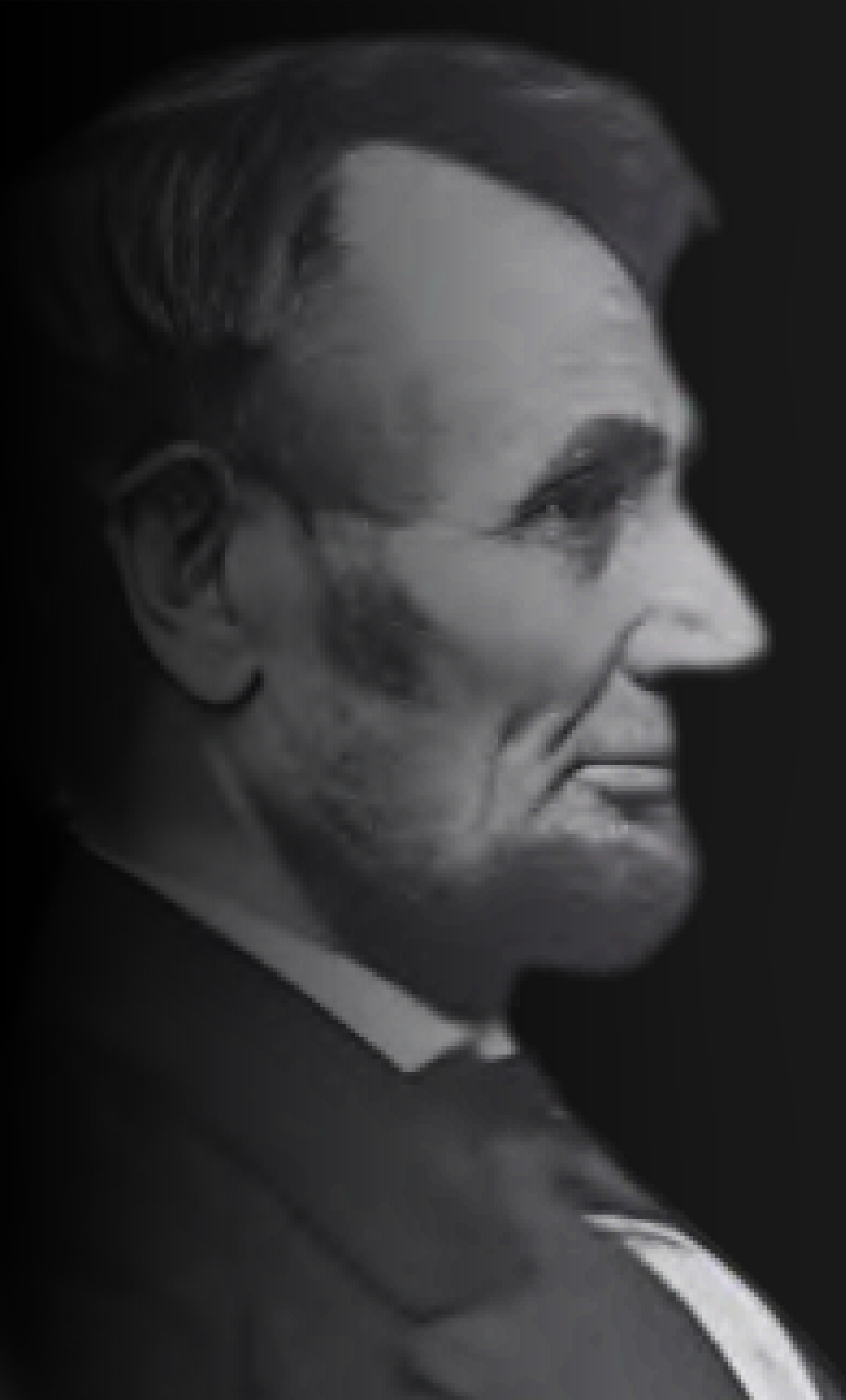
In addition to the \$114.5 billion budget, lawmakers maintained more than **\$14 billion in reserves**, including \$8.6 billion in unallocated General Revenue and \$5.7 billion in the Budget Stabilization Fund, while authorizing \$150 million for debt reduction.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- **Reduced spending for a second consecutive year:** Florida lawmakers approved a budget that is smaller than the FY26 budget, continuing a trend of spending restraint despite continued population growth and service demands.
- **State Employee Benefits Protected:** State employees and retirees will see no increase in health insurance premiums, while special risk class retirees receive a cost-of-living adjustment with a minimum increase of 1.5%
- **Targeted increases in public safety and justice compensation:** Correctional officer salary increase, law enforcement raises, firefighter raises, and prosecutor/public defender compensation increases collectively represent one of the clearest policy priorities in the budget.
- **\$1.1 billion invested in education infrastructure projects:** Including funding for university and college facilities, charter school repairs and maintenance, small school district facilities, and developmental research schools.
- **Approximately \$150 million in tax relief measures:** Including the back-to-school sales tax holiday and new tax exemptions for items such as home-hardening products and propane tanks.
- **Shift in conservation funding priorities:** Environmental funding discussions focused heavily on directing resources toward agricultural conservation easements through the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program, while traditional land-acquisition programs such as Florida Forever received significantly less emphasis.

KEY K-12 / FEFP PROVISIONS

- Total K-12 Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funding rises to **\$23.53 billion** for 2026-27, up **\$533.3 million (2.32%)** from the 2025-26.
- Total state + local funding for K-12 (FEFP plus local effort) reaches **\$30.03 billion**, an increase of **\$735.9 million (2.51%)** over 2025-26.
- The **Base Student Allocation** — the core per-student funding figure — rises from **\$5,372.60** to **\$5,457.60**, an increase of **\$85.00 (1.58%)**.
- **Class size reduction funding decreases** by about \$35 million (-1.30%), from \$2.69 billion to \$2.65 billion, even as overall funding rises.
- **Mental Health Assistance Allocation** and **Safe Schools Allocation** are both held flat at \$180 million and \$290 million, respectively — no year-over-year increase.
- The **Exceptional Student Education (ESE)** Guaranteed Allocation grows significantly, up **6.74%** (~\$94.3 million), among the largest percentage increases in any FEFP component.
- **Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES)** enrollment (weighted FTE) grows **14.21%**, far outpacing traditional public school enrollment, which is projected to decline 1.52% (weighted FTE) — reflecting continued school-choice/voucher expansion pressure on district enrollment.
- Statewide **required local effort** millage decreases slightly (3.092 → 3.057 mills), even as total local tax collections rise due to a 3.77% increase in taxable property value.
- Overall **unweighted student FTE (statewide, including FES)** grows **0.86%**, but **district-only unweighted FTE actually falls 1.21%** — meaning traditional public school district enrollment is shrinking even as choice-program enrollment climbs.



NOTABLE BILLS

"The best way to get a bad law repealed is to enforce it strictly."

- Abraham Lincoln

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SENATE BILL 182

EDUCATION

(Enacted, Ch. 2026-33, effective 7/1/2026)

What it does

- Creates the School Teacher Training and Mentoring Program, letting districts place retired/current teachers as mentors in "D"/"F" schools (stipends up to \$3,000).
- Requires portraits of George Washington and Lincoln in public schools (subject to appropriation).
- Requires cursive writing instruction in grades 3–5, with proficiency by end of grade 5.
- Gives small private schools zoning/fire-code flexibility.
- Revises Florida Tax Credit Scholarship fund reversion and limits charter schools from dismissing students for academic performance while under improvement plans.

District impact

- Districts may use Educational Enrichment Allocation (FEFP) funds for mentoring, which reduces funds available for other purposes if used; otherwise mostly administrative/compliance changes (cursive instruction, portrait display).

H O U S E B I L L 7 5 7

SCHOOL SAFETY

(Enacted, Ch. 2026-80, effective upon becoming law)

What it does

- Expands the school "Guardian Program" to postsecondary institutions (colleges/universities), not K-12.
- Creates the "ARMOR Act" requiring threat assessments, active-assailant plans, and mental health training at postsecondary campuses.
- Requires sharing of certain student records with colleges/universities upon enrollment.
- Makes discharging a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school a second-degree felony.

District impact

- This bill is primarily focused on postsecondary institutions, not K-12 school districts — direct impact on districts is minimal, mainly through the new firearm-discharge offense applying near school property generally.

HOUSE BILL 1279

EDUCATION

(Enacted, Ch. 2026-59, effective 7/1/2026)

This is a large omnibus PreK-20 bill. Key provisions:

- Expands virtual instruction notification requirements beyond Florida Virtual School.
- Authorizes public/private schools to use epinephrine devices broadly (not just auto-injectors).
- Confirms districts/charters may use any authorized combination of safe-school officer options.
- Requires DOE-developed applied algebra pathways for district implementation by 2029–30.
- Allows districts to reserve up to 1% of Title I funds for STEM services.
- Requires districts to notify parents within 10 days if an IEP service isn't delivered, and disclose service logs within 15 days.
- Expands "educational emergency" definition to include persistently low-performing schools.

District impact

- Substantial — new compliance deadlines (IEP notifications), new curriculum-pathway obligations, expanded safety-officer flexibility, and a modest new discretionary use of Title I funds.

SENATE BILL 178

ATHLETICS IN PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS

(Enacted, Ch. 2026-90, effective 7/1/2026)

What it does

- Requires FHSAA to adopt bylaws letting head coaches use personal funds (food, transportation, recovery services) to support student-athletes.
- Requires parental consent and FHSAA reporting when personal funds are used.
- Limits use to one head coach per team.

District impact

- Low direct fiscal impact on districts; mainly affects FHSAA bylaws and coach conduct rules.

SENATE BILL 538

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

(Enacted, Ch. 2026-93, effective 7/1/2026)

What it does

- Defines "eligible student" broadly (home education, charter, private, FLVS, alternative, and traditional public students) for extracurricular participation.
- Prohibits schools from charging additional participation fees for extracurriculars.
- Authorizes districts to negotiate compensation for extracurricular activities administrators.
- Creates timelines for eligibility appeals.
- Allows students to transfer schools/districts (even adjacent districts) for activities not offered locally.

District impact

- The bill could have an impact on school districts to the extent they must cover required insurance for students participating in specified activities and program costs, and could also affect districts if they decide to compensate athletic coaches under the new authority. Districts also lose some fee-based revenue and must handle broader eligibility/transfer requests.

H O U S E B I L L 1 4 5

CLAIMS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT

(VETOED by Gov. DeSantis, June 30, 2026 — did NOT become law)

What it would have done

- Raised the sovereign-immunity damages caps from \$200,000/\$300,000 (per person/per incident) to \$350,000/\$500,000 for claims accruing Oct. 1, 2026 -Sept. 30, 2031 (and higher after).
- Allowed subdivisions to settle claims above caps without legislative approval.
- Adjusted claim-presentment and statute-of-limitations periods.

District impact

- **Important:** This bill directly targeted district finances. Fourteen superintendents signed an April 2 veto letter from the Florida Panhandle Area Education Consortium (PAEC), warning of a "significant fiscal impact" on districts, noting member districts "operate within constrained local tax bases and narrow budget margins, leaving them with limited ability to absorb sudden financial liabilities." DeSantis vetoed the bill, so the current \$200,000/\$300,000 caps remain unchanged — no new district liability exposure resulted. *Florida Politics*

H O U S E B I L L 4 5 3

REQUIREMENTS FOR A STANDARD HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

(Enacted, Ch. 2026-70, effective 7/1/2026)

What it does

- Allows 2 years of marching band to satisfy both PE and performing-arts credit requirements.
- Allows students with disabilities to satisfy the PE credit via one year of Special Olympics participation (per IEP).

District impact

- Minimal administrative adjustment to how districts track/award diploma credit; no significant fiscal impact.

H O U S E B I L L 5 6 1

EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND CERTIFICATION

(Enacted, Ch. 2026-106, effective 7/1/2026)

What it does

- Streamlines reinstatement of expired professional educator certificates.
- Requires the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence to offer free professional learning for certificate renewal/reinstatement and report inservice points to DOE on educators' behalf.
- Requires the Center to inform educators about district professional-learning systems open to non-district-employed persons.
- Allows educator preparation institutes to let participants begin coursework earlier.

District impact

- Should ease districts' teacher-shortage pressures by making it easier for lapsed-certificate educators to return to the classroom; requires some coordination with the Center for Teaching Excellence.

H O U S E B I L L 1 0 7 3

PUBLIC EDUCATION (SCHOOL BOARD "BILL OF RIGHTS")

(Enacted, Ch. 2026-73, effective 7/1/2026)

What it does

- Guarantees individual school board members timely access to district documents without public-records requests or fees.
- Requires certain board-meeting documents be kept as public records.
- Bars districts from requiring/incentivizing employees to sign NDAs or confidentiality agreements.
- Prohibits districts from imposing certain conditions on employment tied to information-sharing with board members.

District impact

- The bill guarantees board members' right to have timely access to all district documents without having to file a public records request or pay for staff time and copying costs, and authorizes board members to consult with top district officials about the budget and line-item spending details, while barring district administrators from requiring employees to sign nondisclosure or confidentiality agreements. This increases district administrative/transparency obligations and limits districts' ability to use NDAs with staff.

H O U S E B I L L 8 5 1

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR INSTRUCTIONAL AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

What it does

- Requires professional learning systems for instructional and school administrative personnel to include at least one autism-specific professional learning opportunity.
- Amends related provisions on educator certification and professional development requirements tied to the state's professional learning framework.
- Creates a new statutory section establishing standards for how this autism-specific training component is delivered.
- Revises provisions on subject-matter competency and inservice components within existing educator professional development statutes.
- Ties implementation to district professional-development budgeting cycles referenced in the General Appropriations Act.

District impact

- Districts will need to build an autism-specific component into their existing professional learning systems for teachers and administrators — likely requiring curriculum/content development or vendor sourcing, tracking of completion, and possible reallocation of existing professional-development funds and time to accommodate the new requirement.

H O U S E B I L L 1 2 0 1

STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

What it does

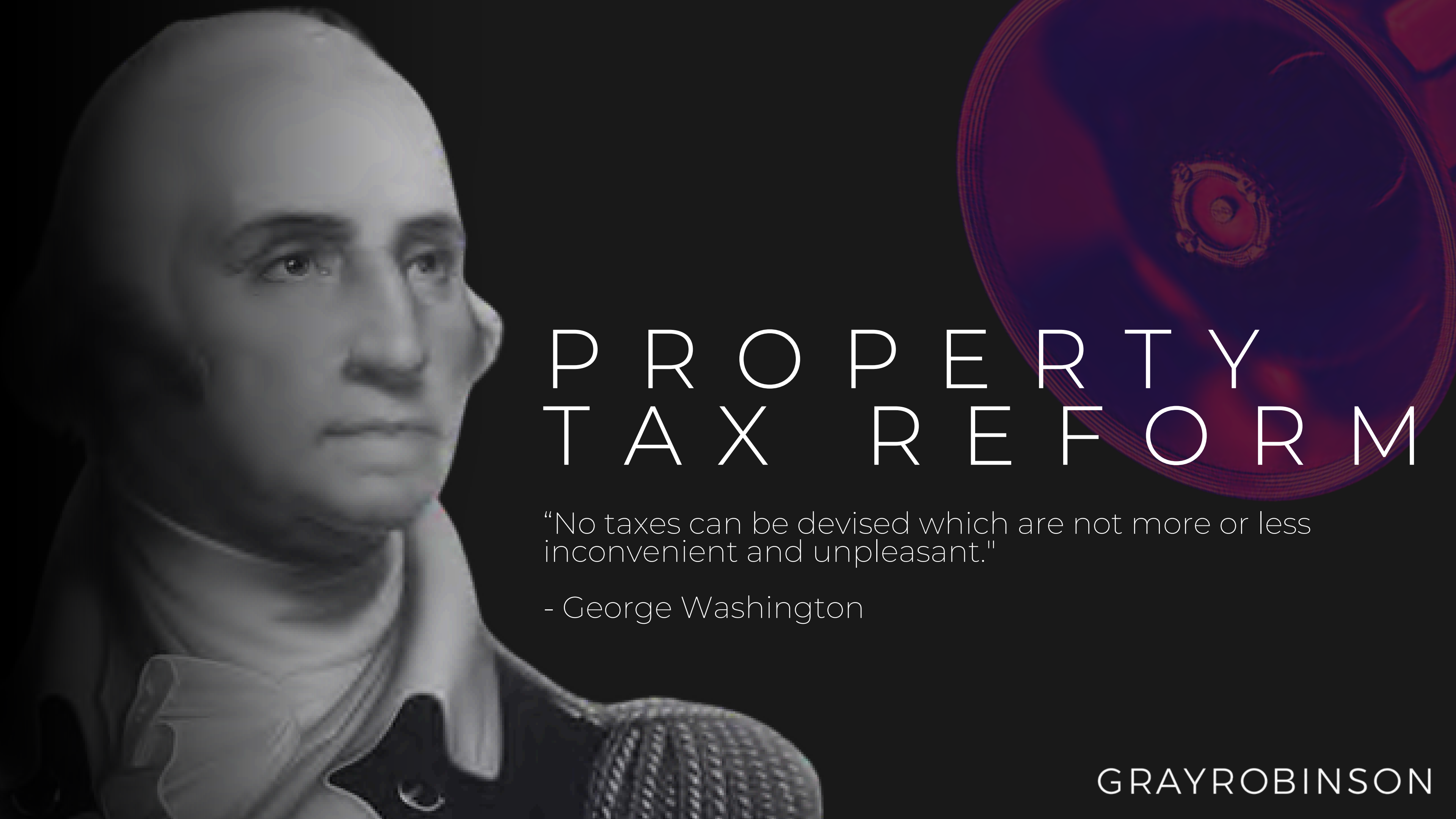
- Revises Department of Health responsibilities for educational programs concerning epilepsy.
- Updates requirements for a student's individualized seizure action plan.
- Expands/revises the list of school employees who must complete training in the care of students with epilepsy and seizure disorders.
- Extends the validity of that required training from its prior duration to 5 years.
- Sets updated coordination requirements between DOH-developed materials and school-level implementation.

District impact

- Districts must identify a broader set of employees (per the revised list) who need epilepsy/seizure-response training, update individualized seizure action plans for affected students, and track/retrain staff on a 5-year cycle — a modest but recurring administrative and training-compliance burden, somewhat eased by the longer (5-year) training validity period compared to prior law.

DIDN'T PASS BUT WILL BE BACK

- **SB 318** aimed to add accountability in the state's expanded universal school voucher program funding and expenditures, using unique student IDs, and improved student tracking systems, while separating voucher money from the rest of the main public schools' budget.
- **SB 320** included a provision that would have allowed teachers with good evaluations to get contracts of up to three years. Lawmakers abolished multi-year contracts in 2011. The provision was part of broader legislation that passed in the Senate but not the House.
- **HB 345, SB 512** would have revised funding for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program by recalculating and adjusting the base student allocation annually while allowing for additional legislative support.
- **HB 727, SB 1272** would have required raising the minimum base teacher salary from \$47,500 to \$65,000 and revised performance salary schedules to include step-based pay increases, cost-of-living adjustments, and longevity pay.
- **HB 6025, SB 1318** sought to remove the requirement that unspent scholarship funds from the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program revert to the state.



PROPERTY TAX REFORM

"No taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant."

- George Washington

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PROPERTY TAX REFORM

On the ballot for the November General Election.

- Increases the homestead tax exemption from \$50,000 to \$150,000 on January 1, 2027.
- Increases again to \$250,000 on January 1, 2028 and then indexed with CPI thereafter.
- School taxes are exempted and, if passed by the voters in November, would continue being collected as they are today.
- Total impact on a county-by-county and city-by-city level is not fully known, but it totals in the tens of billions annually.
- Also reduces the cap on non-homestead property tax increases from 10% annually (current) to 5% annually.
- Allows local governments to still increase millage rate with a super-majority vote of the city/county commission.

BALLOT SUMMARY LEGAL CHALLENGE

- Challenge filed by Save Our Voters From Misleading Ballot Language nonprofit.
- Claims the ballot title and summary are unconstitutional because they advocate for the amendment rather than neutrally describe it. Alleges:
 - Promotional and emotionally charged wording, including, "Save Our Homes From Excessive Property Taxes," "protecting small businesses," and "ensuring fairness," which they contend are campaign slogans rather than neutral descriptions.
 - Suggests that the amendment would eliminate excessive property taxes, when the measure actually expands homestead exemptions and reduces assessment growth caps but does not eliminate property taxes.
 - Fails to adequately disclose significant fiscal impacts on local governments and other affected taxing authorities.
 - Florida law requires ballot summaries to be clear, accurate, and impartial, and that this summary instead encourages a "yes" vote.
- Review by Florida Supreme Court
- If found misleading, Attorney General will prepare revised ballot language. Revised language may be subject to additional judicial review. Approved language is certified for use on the ballot.



PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX AMENDMENT IMPACT BY COUNTY

FY 2028-29

The “Cash” column in the second year (2028-29). The “Recurring” column is the fifth year. (2031-32).

Source: Florida Revenue Estimating Conference, Results of the Revenue Estimating Impact Conference for 2026F Special Session, June 12, 2026.

Million \$			Million \$		
County	Cash	Recurring	County	Cash	Recurring
Alachua	(133.5)	(180.1)	Lake	(178.5)	(241.6)
Baker	(6.7)	(7.6)	Lee	(328.8)	(449.4)
Bay	(40.9)	(41.3)	Leon	(99.2)	(107.0)
Bradford	(8.0)	(10.5)	Levy	(12.1)	(13.8)
Brevard	(212.7)	(267.7)	Liberty	(0.9)	(1.0)
Broward	(965.2)	(1,185.5)	Madison	(3.0)	(3.6)
Calhoun	(1.6)	(1.4)	Manatee	(160.2)	(212.3)
Charlotte	(80.8)	(127.5)	Marion	(142.3)	(174.3)
Citrus	(60.1)	(69.8)	Martin	(93.1)	(112.4)
Clay	(69.3)	(78.3)	Monroe	(26.2)	(38.7)
Collier	(130.0)	(190.8)	Nassau	(58.0)	(78.2)
Columbia	(13.7)	(14.3)	Okaloosa	(44.2)	(47.0)
Miami-Dade	(970.0)	(1,414.7)	Okeechobee	(8.8)	(12.0)
DeSoto	(6.9)	(8.9)	Orange	(535.6)	(811.7)
Dixie	(2.4)	(2.1)	Osceola	(161.1)	(253.3)
Duval	(333.7)	(417.8)	Palm Beach	(774.8)	(1,060.2)
Escambia	(69.3)	(82.0)	Pasco	(275.7)	(363.8)
Flagler	(85.7)	(113.1)	Pinellas	(450.9)	(551.7)
Franklin	(2.9)	(3.5)	Polk	(237.6)	(362.7)
Gadsden	(8.2)	(8.4)	Putnam	(15.0)	(15.7)
Gilchrist	(5.4)	(7.2)	St_Johns	(153.7)	(216.6)
Glades	(3.3)	(4.0)	St_Lucie	(200.7)	(276.0)
Gulf	(4.3)	(7.5)	Santa Rosa	(47.0)	(57.3)
Hamilton	(1.8)	(1.8)	Sarasota	(159.5)	(210.2)
Hardee	(3.6)	(4.2)	Seminole	(181.9)	(233.1)
Hendry	(11.5)	(15.7)	Sumter	(70.9)	(92.0)
Hernando	(62.5)	(78.1)	Suwannee	(9.9)	(12.5)
Highlands	(24.2)	(29.3)	Taylor	(3.1)	(3.3)
Hillsborough	(625.8)	(953.0)	Union	(1.8)	(1.6)
Holmes	(4.6)	(4.8)	Volusia	(272.4)	(351.9)
Indian River	(69.1)	(87.9)	Wakulla	(10.4)	(12.5)
Jackson	(5.5)	(4.9)	Walton	(26.5)	(50.1)
Jefferson	(3.1)	(3.3)	Washington	(4.5)	(5.5)
Lafayette	(1.3)	(1.3)	Statewide	(8,775.8)	(11,861.2)

2027 LEGISLATIVE SESSION PREVIEW

- **Committee Weeks** December, January, February
- **New Governor Sworn In** January 5, 2027
- **Legislative Session Starts** Tuesday, March 2
- **Session Ends** Friday, April 30

2027 LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP



SAM GARRISON
House Speaker-Designate
2026-2028



JOHN SNYDER /
TRACI KOSTER
House Budget Chair



JIM BOYD
Senate President-Designate
2026-2028



JASON BRODEUR
Senate Budget Chair

HOUSE PRIORITIES

Quality Schools, Safer Streets,
and Strong Economy

SENATE PRIORITIES

Property Insurance, Property
Tax, and Growth Management



2027 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Property Tax
- Growth Management
- Health Care/Mental Health
- Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Commission
- TDT



QUESTIONS

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THANK YOU

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