



Linking education to jobs and the economy: Business leaders and Senators discuss the Career and Professional Education Act

Senate President Gaetz (R-Niceville) and Senate Education Committee Chairman John Legg (R-Lutz) met with more than thirty representatives from Florida's major business and industry associations to discuss the expansion of the current Career and Professional Education Act (CAPE). This law, passed by the Legislature in 2007, created the first industry certification program in the nation for high school students in order to attract, expand, and retain targeted high-value industries and sustain a strong, knowledge-based economy.



CAPE initiatives link education to economic opportunity by matching industry-specific demands of Florida businesses with rigorous curriculum that can be applied toward graduation, college credit, or a high-demand industry certification for the workforce. Since the inception of the CAPE Act, more than 450 industry certification categories have had over 500,000 participants. In 2011, the 100,000th nationally-recognized industry certification was awarded.

Sponsored by Chairman Legg, SB 1076 expands the original CAPE Act and is expected to be heard in committee during the first week of the 2013 Session. The legislation will provide incentive funding to expand industry certifications into technology centers and colleges, moving the current initiatives beyond K-12 education.

Senator Hays sponsors bill to provide options for owners of Low Speed Vehicles

Senate Bill 62 by Senator Alan Hays (R-Umatilla), was reported favorably out of its fourth committee this week. Low Speed Vehicles (LSV) have grown in popularity for their open-air design and battery powered operation but many Floridians are unaware these vehicles must be licensed and insured similarly to a normal car.



For LSV owners who have no intention of taking their vehicle on major roads, the costs associated with ownership are prohibitive and unnecessary. Senator Hays' bill would allow LSV owners to convert their vehicle to golf cart specifications eliminating the need for licensing and insurance. LSVs must have a peak speed of 25 miles an hour while golf carts are limited to 20 miles an hour. Learn more about this bill and follow its progress during

legislative session here: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0062>.

Senate Republicans respond to Gov. Scott's call for Medicaid Expansion

On Wednesday, Governor Scott announced that he will support the expansion of Medicaid in Florida under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), commonly referred to as Obama Care. Both President Gaetz and Majority Leader Benacquisto released the following statements:

"The Senate Select Committee on PPACA is in the process of completing its thorough review of state options associated with federal health care reform. Senator Joe Negron, Chair of our PPACA Select Committee, anticipates that the committee will complete its work and be prepared to offer recommendations for consideration by the full Senate towards the beginning of the 2013 Session. I'm eager to read their recommendations and look forward to working with our partners in the House and with Governor Scott on the right solution for Florida." --President Gaetz (R-Niceville)



"I appreciate Governor Scott's thoughts on the issue of Medicaid expansion. President Gaetz formed the Senate Select Committee on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in order to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the law's impact on Florida and evaluate the state's options, I have the utmost faith in Chairman Negron as he and the committee continue to examine the potential outcomes of the healthcare law and look forward to their recommendations to the Senate." --Majority Leader Benacquisto (R-Ft. Myers)

The Committee on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act began its comprehensive assessment of the impact of PPACA on Florida in December. On March 4th the committee will hold a joint meeting with the House of Representatives PPACA Committee to review several economic analyses on Medicaid expansion. During the meeting the committee will review the findings of these reports as the Legislature continues to assess the impacts of PPACA. Citizens should remain engaged in the process and visit the Senate's PPACA website at <http://www.flsenate.gov/topics/ppaca>.

Ethics and Elections Committee Members Observe the Elections Process

On Wednesday, the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee continued its study of the state of voting in Florida. Senators made a site visit to the Leon County Supervisor of Elections Operation Facility in Tallahassee receiving a step-by-step walk through including ballot creation, voting, and the tabulation process. Elections workers explained how they prepare and conduct voting at early voting sites, via absentee ballots, and at precinct polling places on Election Day.

The committee will continue its ongoing examination of voting in the state, follow this work at <http://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/Show/EE/>.

Schedule

Session Begins: March 5th 2013