

FLORIDA SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

SENATOR WILTON SIMPSON
MAJORITY LEADER

THIS WEEK IN THE FLORIDA SENATE

OCTOBER 23 - 27, 2017

Republican Caucus Selects Senator Bill Galvano as President-Designate

This week, the Florida Senate Republican Caucus, led by Senate Majority Leader Wilton Simpson (R-Trilby), unanimously selected Senator Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton) as the President-Designate for the 2018-20 Legislative Term. Leader Simpson and Senate President Joe Negron (R-Stuart) presided over the ceremony.



Senator Galvano and his family are longtime residents of Bradenton, Florida. Senator Galvano served in the Florida House of Representatives from 2002-10, during which he served a term as Chair of the House Rules and Calendar Council from 2008-10.

Elected to the Florida Senate in 2012, Senator Galvano currently represents Senate District 21, which consists of Manatee County and part of Hillsborough

County. He has held several leadership positions in the Senate, including serving a term as Senate Majority Leader from 2014-2016.

Video of President-Designate Galvano's full acceptance speech can be viewed via the Florida Channel at: <http://thefloridachannel.org/videos/102417-republican-senate-president-designation-ceremony-senator-bill-galvano/>.

Legislation Protecting Minors from Childhood Marriage Passes First Committee Stop

The Senate Committee on Judiciary unanimously passed Senate Bill 140, Marriage of Minors, which makes it illegal to issue a marriage certificate to anyone under the age of 18. Under this bill, a person, without exception, must be at least 18 years of age to marry, or be able to receive a marriage license in the state of Florida. The current exceptions that allow for a minor to marry with or without parental consent when the couple has a child or is expecting a child, are repealed.

The current law is simply unacceptable and flies in the face of common sense. Girls as young as 11 years old have been forced to marry adults who have taken advantage of them. This legislation ends that practice in a continuing effort to put laws in place that protect Florida's children.

Veteran-Friendly Legislation Heard in Senate Committees

The Senate Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security passed Senate Bill 100, Identification Card and Driver License Fees for Veterans. The bill eliminates the \$1 or \$2 fee a veteran must pay to have the word “Veteran” displayed on an identification card or driver license issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV), along with the \$6.25 service fee for services at the Tax Collector. The bill also provides for additional forms of identification a veteran may present to the DHSMV as proof of veteran status.



Additionally, the Senate Committee on Transportation passed Senate Bill 328, Veteran Identification, directing the DHSMV to create a \$10 veteran identification card to be used by veterans as proof of their veteran status. The identification card can be used to obtain discounts or fee waivers, and it would be available to veterans who have been honorably discharged.

Florida currently offers numerous benefits that are available to veterans such as fee waivers for veterans and their spouses, and incentives for business entities with majority ownership held by a veteran or a spouse of a veteran. Senate Bills 100 and 328 will help solidify Florida’s reputation as the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

Senate Committees Continue Discussions Related to Hurricane Impacts on the State

Several Senate committees continued discussions regarding the impacts that recent hurricanes have had on the state of Florida. Listed below are the topics that were discussed.

- Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities Committee heard presentations from representatives of Florida’s electric utility associations who provided information on the power outages and restoration of services, mutual aid received from co-ops from across the country, and reviews on their internal disaster plans moving forward.
- Appropriations Committee held discussions regarding responses to Hurricane Irma and the potential impacts of the arrival of Hurricane Maria victims to Florida. The Office of Policy and Budget presented preliminary state budget impact estimates for the various state agencies, and explained the expectations for federal reimbursement for state expenditures. Additionally, the Florida Division of Emergency Management provided an update regarding recovery and reimbursement efforts.
- Appropriations Subcommittee on Pre-K – 12 Education received an update on hurricane-related fiscal issues for public schools.
- Agriculture Committee held a continuation of discussions on the impacts of recent hurricanes on Florida Agriculture.
- Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee heard a presentation by the Florida National Guard on Hurricane Irma preparedness and response efforts.

Video archives of these and all Senate committee meetings from this week can be viewed online via: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Media/Videos>.