



Senator Wilton Simpson

Weekly Update

Senate District 18

January 22nd – 25th, 2013

Friends,

I'm excited to have wrapped up January's committee weeks, and look forward to the coming weeks in February. I am hard at work drafting legislation for the upcoming session. Currently, I have filed bills dealing with the protection of consumers from unnecessary rate hikes due to utility thefts, and allowing for the expansion of all-inclusive care programs for the elderly in Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco counties. Also filed is a bill that will make changes to community development block grants, giving the Department of Economic Opportunity the latitude necessary to make the program more effective, increase economic development outcomes and remove burdensome and unnecessary requirements.

I would like to invite you to my webpage (<http://flsenate.gov/Senators/s18>) where you can sign up to get my media alerts in real time, see more details about the bills that I have filed, and track them to see how they progress through committees. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with your questions or concerns at: simpson.wilton.web@flsenate.gov.

Regards,
Wilton

Supporting Florida's Active Duty Military, Veterans and Their Families

On Wednesday, the Senate Military Affairs, Space and Domestic Security Committee passed SB 160, sponsored by Senator Garrett Richter, which addresses some of the obstacles that honorably discharged military veterans face after being discharged.

The legislation requires the Department of Health to waive certain licensure fees for honorably discharged military veterans within 24 months of their release from any

branch of the U.S. Armed Forces. The fees which will be waived include the initial licensing fee, the initiation application fee, and the initial unlicensed activity fee.

Additionally, The Senate Military Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee took an important step toward improving education for Florida's military children when unanimously passing SB 138 on Wednesday. Introduced by Senator Jeff Brandes, SB 138 reenacts provisions of law establishing and implementing the Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children, which addresses educational transition issues faced by active-duty military families uniformly throughout the United States. The compact will help military families moving to Florida in several areas, including school placement, enrollment, records transfer, participation in extracurricular activities and on-time graduation. Approximately 31,000 Florida children of military personal will have an easier time as they transition between schools throughout Florida and the United States.

Promoting Economic Improvement

Senate Bills 222 and 224, which facilitate continued improvement of Florida's economy and decrease unemployment, were unanimously passed through the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee. I had the honor of serving on this committee and voted in favor of Senate Bills 222 and 224, and will also hear them next in the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development.

Senate Bill 222, introduced by Senator Nancy Detert localizes the re-employment assistance appeals process through the creation of 24 regional appeal offices and review panels, allowing claimants to file and have their appeal heard in their own area. In addition, the bill protects businesses by enacting more detailed employee misconduct guidelines and amending job search requirements.

Senate Bill 224, also introduced by Senator Detert integrates several economic development efforts into Florida law. The Florida Small Business Development Center Network will be required to develop and maintain an advisory board of key industry representatives, encourage the adoption of small business assistance best practices by developing an innovative incentive program and establish performance budgeting requirements. The bill will also require the network's policies and goals to be jointly developed by the Department of Economic Opportunity, the Board of Governors, and the network's statewide advisory board in attempt to link economic development efforts to higher education.

2013 Committee Week Schedule

February 2013 - Week of the 4th
February 2013 - Week of the 11th
February 2013 - Week of the 18th

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