

Committee on Ethics and Elections

CS/CS/CS/SB 1632 — Special Districts

by Appropriations Committee; Community Affairs Committee; Ethics and Elections Committee; and Senator Stargel

CS/CS/CS/SB 1632 is an omnibus special district bill that reorganizes, renumbers and makes numerous technical and conforming changes to special district provisions in ch. 189, F.S. The bill outlines a process by which the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee (JLAC) and the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) may enforce reporting and other requirements when special districts fall out of compliance with their obligations or become inactive. After notifying the DEO, relevant legislators and the local general-purpose government, and after a public hearing, the JLAC may request that the DEO file a petition for enforcement with the Circuit Court of Leon County. Additionally, the bill:

- Requires special districts to maintain a website that offers the public specified information;
- Requires special districts to give the website address to the DEO for publication on its website;
- Amends the definition of agency in the Code of Ethics to specifically include special districts;
- Redefines the term special district in s. 189.403, F.S.;
- Removes provisions concerning a special district's application to amend its charter;
- Amends the circumstances under which the DEO may declare a special district inactive;
- Requires the DEO to notify the chair of the county legislative delegation and the Legislative Auditing Committee;
- Prohibits inactive districts from collecting taxes, fees, and assessments;
- Changes the required education for new special district members;
- Revises the provisions concerning the failure to file certain reports;
- Requires administrative fees be placed into the Grants and Donations Trust Fund; and
- Requires public hearings concerning certain noncompliance.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2014.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 115-0