

FLORIDA SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

SENATOR WILTON SIMPSON
MAJORITY LEADER

THIS WEEK IN THE FLORIDA SENATE JANUARY 29 – FEBRUARY 2, 2018

Senate Budget Prioritizes Education, Environment, Health Services & Public Safety Officers



THE FLORIDA SENATE PROPOSES
**A BALANCED BUDGET
WITH NO NEW TAXES**

PREPARING FOR FLORIDA'S
FUTURE
REMAINS OUR PRIORITY

 By Being Fiscally Responsible
Holding \$3.4 Billion in Reserves



This week, the Senate Committee on Appropriations, chaired by Senator Rob Bradley, unanimously passed Senate Bill 2500, the Senate's proposed budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. This balanced budget prioritizes Florida's K-12 and higher education systems, the environment, health services, and state Public Safety Officers, while setting aside \$3.4 billion in total reserves, with no new taxes.

The proposed budget reflects the Senate's strong commitment to supporting our students, and recognizes the link between education and our economy. From unprecedented per-student funding for our K-12 schools, to continuing historic investments in need and merit-based student financial aid, we understand that there is a significant return for taxpayers when we invest in Florida's future. Additionally, with the permanent expansion of the Bright Futures scholarship, students who have earned the right to attend college have a better chance of reaching their goal without financial burdens standing in the way of their dreams.

The Senate is committed to protecting Florida's environment and the budget reflects that by including \$154 million for Florida Forever Programs, \$183 million for Florida's Everglades, and \$95 million for Springs Restoration.

The Senate is also taking action to end Florida's opioid crisis by providing viable solutions to help communities combat this horrible epidemic. By funding over \$53 million for the treatment and prevention of opioid addiction, we are taking steps in the right direction to solve this rampant crisis in our state.

Additionally, we recognize the selfless dedication of those who work so hard to keep our communities safe, and our budget reflects that by proposing a pay raise for state law enforcement officers and state firefighters.

Preparing for Florida's future remains our top priority. By putting forth a balanced and fiscally responsible budget with no new taxes, the Senate is putting Florida families and communities first.

Child Marriage Ban Passes Unanimously in the Senate

This week, the Senate unanimously passed Senate Bill 140, Marriage Licenses, sponsored by Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto and cosponsored by Majority Leader Wilton Simpson, President Joe Negron, Senators Travis Hutson, Keith Perry, Dennis Baxley, Aaron Bean, Doug Broxson, Anitere Flores, George Gainer, Bill Galvano, Rene Garcia, Dorothy Hukill, Debbie Mayfield, Kathleen Passidomo, David Simmons, Greg Steube, and Dana Young.

The bill makes it illegal to issue a marriage certificate to anyone under the age of 18 in the state of Florida. Girls as young as 11 years old have been forced to marry adults who have taken advantage of them. Senate Bill 140 repeals 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.

Senate Keeps Florida Forever Promise with Passage of Land Acquisition Trust Fund Legislation

The Senate unanimously passed Senate Bill 370, Land Acquisition Trust Fund, sponsored by Senator Rob Bradley, and cosponsored by Senators Keith Perry, Aaron Bean, Debbie Mayfield, Dana Young, and Kathleen Passidomo.

The bill provides a minimum of \$100 million annually for the Florida Forever Trust Fund. These funds are used to manage and preserve 10 million acres of conservation land in Florida, and provide Floridians and tourists access to public lands for recreational use.

Senate Passes Bill Adding Safeguards to Protect Consumers from Telephone Scammers

The Senate unanimously passed Senate Bill 568, Telephone Solicitation, sponsored by Senator Dana Young. The legislation expands the Florida Do Not Call Act to prohibit the unsolicited ringless delivery of voicemail messages into consumers' voicemail boxes, in addition to phone calls and text messages. The bill also requires a telephone sales call solicitor to provide a returnable telephone number on the recipient's caller ID that is capable of connecting the call recipient to the telephone solicitor.