

News You Can Use from State Senator Audrey Gibson



**2019 Legislative
Session in Review
Week 7
April 15-19, 2019**



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Dear Constituent and Friend,

Week 7 is behind us as we now head into the last two weeks of Session 2019! It is now a race to the finish-line to get important legislation through final committees and to the floor for final vote. If you have been following legislation, or would like to begin, please click here www.flsenate.gov.

My bills in committee this week:

CS/SB 990: Unemployment Compensation, allows employees who are victims of domestic violence to become eligible for reemployment benefits when they must leave work because of a reasonable fear that they will be the victim of a future act of violence at, in transit to, or departing from work. Providing this assistance, for a limited time, increases protections for victims of domestic violence and allows individuals to seek safer employment, either in a different department at their current job or at a new job. There are affirmative processes a victim would complete, like filing for protection, for example, however the legislation is extremely important for self-protection and self-support. The bill passed the committee unanimously.

Other bills of interest this week:

CS/CS/CS/CS/SB 76: Driving While Using a Wireless Communications Device by Senator Wilton Simpson - Citrus

County: the "Florida Ban on Texting While Driving Law," hands free legislation, bans handheld devices while driving, and would create a primary offense punishable as a moving violation instead of the current nonmoving violation. During the period from October 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019, a law enforcement officer may stop motor vehicles to issue verbal or written warnings to persons who are driving while using a wireless communications device for the purposes of informing and educating such persons. Effective January 1, 2020, a law enforcement officer may stop motor vehicles and issue citations to persons who are driving while using a wireless communications device. Any person who violates this section commits a noncriminal traffic infraction, punishable as a moving violation, shall have 3 points assessed against his or her driver license. For a first offense in lieu of the penalty specified and the assessment of points, a person who violates this section may elect to participate in a wireless communications device driving safety program approved by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

CS/CS/SB 1418: Mental Health by Senator Bobby Powell – Palm

Beach: implements two recommendations of a Department of Children and Families (DCF) task force which has been studying the issue of Baker Act cases involving minors. The recommendations are:

- Encourages school districts to adopt a standardized suicide assessment tool that school-based mental health professionals would implement prior to the start of an involuntary examination
- Increases the number of days from next working day to five working days that the receiving facility has to submit forms to DCF. The extended time period allows DCF to capture data on the minor

The bill also requires that when a patient communicates a specific threat against an identifiable individual to a mental health service provider, the provider must release information from the clinical record of the patient to inform law enforcement of the potential threat.

If you have questions or comments, about these or other bills being considered this session, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

As always, it is an Honor and a Pleasure to serve you in the Florida Senate!

Sincerely,

Audrey Gibson
State Senator
District 6

Week 7 in the Senate!



**Thank you for serving in the Senate
this week as a "Page" Melba "Rozey"
Hill of Jacksonville, FL**



**Press Conference with Congressman
Darren Soto (FL-09) and members of
the Senate Democratic Caucus**



**Students and staff from River City Science Academy at the Capitol for
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Day.**



Meeting with constituents Luella McQueen and Bonnie Baker

Also tune into these stations between 6 am-6 pm Mon to Fri to watch legislative action:
www.flsenate.gov/offices/minority or WJCT-TV-Comcast channel 212, or WJCT-DT 7.4 or
WUFT-TV-Comcast channel 210, Digital Channel 5.2 or Cox 13.