



**State Senator
Audrey Gibson**

**Session in Review
Week 1
January 8-12, 2018**



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Dear Constituent and Friend,

As we begin week 2, I wanted to update you on Session happenings of week 1.

The first week of Session 2018 has flown by as we began our mission to produce a balanced budget for Florida's families in the next 60 days and each make our case to our colleagues to support priority legislation filed by individual Senators.

I have filed several bills this year with focus in several different subject matters that: improve health outcomes, protects our seniors, calls for Florida to ratify equal rights for men and women, protects renters, helps curb domestic gun violence, helps fund HBCUs, among other subject matter bills. Additionally, I have submitted budget requests that reflect the priority issues for Jacksonville, and other statewide entities that work collaboratively with Jacksonville residents and programs. To view a complete listing of my filed legislation visit: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/s6/?Tab=Bills>

My bill passing committee this week:

SB 422: Elder Abuse Fatality Review Teams: creates an elder abuse fatality review team in each judicial circuit to review files from any reporting agency where there is verified or suspected death due to elder abuse or neglect. There are currently no designated Elder Abuse Fatality Review Teams in Florida.

On the Senate Floor:

SB 4: Higher Education: among other provisions, the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship awards restores Bright Futures to its original award levels, permanently of 100% of tuition and fees, provides an additional \$300 each Fall and Spring academic term for student textbooks, and a semester of summer school is covered. Full-time, in-state Florida undergraduates would pay one flat rate per semester, instead of by the credit hour charges to encourage heavier course loads and a faster path to graduation. The qualifications for the Bright Futures Scholarship are as follows:

- Florida Academic Scholars: 3.5 weighted GPA, a 29 on ACT or 1,290 on the SAT, and 100 service hours an award equal to 100 percent of tuition and applicable fees, and an additional \$300 each fall and spring semester for textbooks and college-related expenses.

I supported the bill, though I had some concerns about missing additional benefits for students receiving need based aid, like including a text book stipend and a semester of summer school as well. Middle-class students who just miss the program's cutoff may end up with a life-altering financial load. The students who can least afford to carry debt end up carrying debt, even if their grade point average is just a little short off getting a full ride. We must address this issue in a more meaningful way for all students.

SB 88: High School Graduation Requirements: revises the requirements for a student to earn a high school diploma by establishing a separate one-half credit requirement in personal financial literacy and reducing the number of required elective credits from 8 to 7.5. This does not change the total graduation requirements which is a plus.

These two first bills of the Session passed unanimously.

Session Snapshots



Opening Day of the 2018 Legislative Session with Representative Tracie Davis



Opening Day of the 2018 Legislative Session with Representative Kimberly Daniels



Walmart team members stopped by to talk about their positive work environment

As we continue through Session, I will keep you informed on various issues. If you have questions or comments 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