

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

COMMITTEE WEEK 5: DECEMBER 1 – DECEMBER 5

PROPERTY TAXES

Four major property tax proposals advanced through the House State Affairs Committee on Tuesday, December 2, signaling the House's leading approaches to statewide tax relief this session. These measures now stand as the most prominent contenders among the property tax reforms under consideration. The Senate has yet to produce any of their own recommendations.

Accrued Save-Our-Homes Property Tax Benefit for Non-school Property Tax

HB 211 (Overdorf) passed with an 18–7 vote and proposes a constitutional amendment allowing homeowners to transfer the full value of their accrued Save-Our-Homes tax benefit to a new homestead for non-school property taxes, helping preserve lower taxable values when they relocate. The bill also requires counties and municipalities to maintain law-enforcement funding at no less than the highest amount budgeted in FY 2025–26 or 2026–27, preventing reductions due to shifting tax revenues. During questions, members asked how law-enforcement funding would be protected, whether an implementing bill would be required, whether voters would understand the proposal without one, and what services might experience reduced funding. Representative Overdorf explained that the constitutional requirement preserves law-enforcement budgets, that additional details will come in future legislation, and that any fiscal impact on local governments would be minimal. He confirmed that the measure does not apply to EMS or fire services, that Save-Our-Homes benefits split upon divorce, and that first-time homebuyers are not addressed. In debate, Representative Overdorf argued that homeowners should retain the value of the Save-Our-Homes benefit wherever they choose to move.

Property Insurance Relief Homestead Exemption of Non-school Property Tax

HB 209 (Busatta) passed 18–7 and proposes a constitutional amendment increasing the homestead exemption for all ad valorem taxes, excluding school levies, by \$100,000 for homeowners who carry a comprehensive multiperil insurance policy. The measure includes the same requirement that counties and municipalities maintain law-enforcement funding at the higher of their FY 2025–26 or 2026–27 budget levels beginning in FY 2027–28. Member questions focused on the definition of comprehensive multiperil insurance, potential alternatives such as capping insurance rates, and how the exemption would apply to seniors or individuals dropped by insurers mid-season. Representative Duggan clarified that qualifying policies must cover multiple perils such as wind, fire, or storm; that the bill does not address insurance rate caps; and that homeowners without a valid policy would not qualify. Concerns were also raised about the exclusion of seniors who cannot afford insurance and the lack of fraud-prevention language. In debate, supporters emphasized that the measure gives voters a say in addressing insurance affordability, while opponents argued that the bill disproportionately disadvantages lower-income homeowners, retirees on fixed incomes, and potentially undermines services such as storm management.

Elimination of Non-School Property Tax for Homesteads for Persons Age 65 or Older

HB 205 (Porrás) passed 18–7 and proposes a constitutional amendment eliminating all non-school ad valorem property taxes for homestead properties owned by individuals aged 65 or older. Like the other bills, it prohibits reductions in law-enforcement funding below local governments' FY 2025–26 or 2026–27 levels beginning in FY 2027–28. During questions, Representative Porrás confirmed that the exemption applies only to law-enforcement services and only to seniors with

homesteaded properties, with no income cap. He explained that seniors age 65 and older experience the greatest vulnerability to property tax pressures. Members raised concerns about potential reductions to local senior services and whether new residents aged 65+ would qualify. Representative Porras responded that any qualifying senior with a Florida homestead would receive the exemption and that the proposal applies beyond all existing homestead exemptions. In debate, supporters highlighted the relief this measure could provide for seniors still active in the workforce and emphasized that it ultimately leaves the decision to voters. Opponents expressed concern about the absence of an income cap, the potential shift of tax burdens onto renters, and the possibility of reduced funding for senior services.

Elimination of Non-school Property Tax for Homesteads

HB 201 (Steele & Miller) passed 18-5 and proposes a broader constitutional amendment eliminating all non-school ad valorem property taxes for homesteaded properties. It also includes the same mandate preventing local governments from reducing law-enforcement funding below FY 2025-26 or 2026-27 levels starting in FY 2027-28. During member questions, concerns centered on the exclusion of firefighters, EMS, and 911 dispatchers from the protected categories; the ability of rural counties to meet required funding levels; the impact on water-management districts; and whether local governments might raise sales taxes to offset lost revenue. Steele argued that most counties have sufficient non-homestead revenue to absorb the changes and noted that specific concerns could be addressed through future implementing legislation. Moreover, he also emphasized that the proposal applies only to law-enforcement services due to prior defunding concerns. Opponents cautioned that the bill overlooks critical public-safety services such as fire protection, EMS, stormwater and youth water programs. Additional concerns included potential cuts to essential local services, substantial impacts to water-management district budgets, the risk of shifting tax burdens to working-class families, and the lack of benefits for renters.

COMMITTEE WEEK 5 RECAP

Technology

AI Bill of Rights

Ahead of the Legislature's AI-focused committee week, Governor Ron DeSantis is urging legislators to adopt comprehensive state-level regulations on artificial intelligence to safeguard Floridians. His proposal targets exploitative uses of AI, prohibits the use of Chinese-developed AI tools by state and local agencies, restricts attorneys from relying on AI to generate legal filings, and strengthens parental rights regarding their children's interactions with AI platforms. The proposal also includes robust data-privacy protections by requiring that all information used to train or operate AI systems remain secure and private, and by prohibiting the sale or sharing of personal data.

Governor DeSantis has emphasized that AI oversight should remain a state responsibility, pushing back on recent comments from President Trump indicating the federal government may move to preempt state action. A few elements of the Governor's proposal align with legislation already filed by Republicans Senator Jennifer Bradley and Representative Hillary Cassel ([SB 202](#), [HB 527](#)). Their legislation would require a qualified human professional to review and approve any insurance claim denial involving AI. Representative Cassel's bill is scheduled for its first hearing next week in the House Insurance and Banking Subcommittee.

Politics and Elections

Redistricting: House, Senate, & Governor

Senate: Senate President Ben Albritton issued a [memo](#) cautioning senators about engaging in discussions related to potential mid-decade congressional redistricting. The renewed interest in redistricting is driven by Governor Ron DeSantis, President Trump, and national Republican leaders, who are urging the Legislature to redraw Florida's congressional districts due to population changes and other considerations. The Governor has indicated that redistricting will occur, likely during a special session following the conclusion of the regular session in March.

In his memo, President Albritton emphasized that the Florida Constitution expressly prohibits drawing maps that favor or disadvantage a political party and advised legislators to avoid influence from partisan-funded organizations and interest groups. He further noted that the Florida Supreme Court has narrowed the scope of legislative privilege, meaning legislators may be required to produce records or testify under oath regarding conversations related to mapmaking.

Albritton's primary message: despite public discussion, no redistricting work is currently underway in the Senate.

House: Republican Representative Mike Redondo, the future Speaker of the House and chair of the House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting, pushed back on the Governor's proposed timeline, stating that waiting until after session would be irresponsible. He noted that Florida is less than a year away from the next election and that the qualifying period for federal offices is in late April. Despite these concerns, it remains uncertain whether the House will ultimately move forward with a mid-decade redistricting effort. The next meeting of the House Select Committee on Congressional Redistricting is scheduled for December 10.

Health Care

New Session, Same Scandal: Hope Florida

On Thursday, Republican Representative Alex Andrade noted that new state payment records show the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) has reimbursed the federal government for the alleged misuse of funds diverted from the Medicaid settlement. Andrade highlighted that these records indicate \$16 million was repaid, even though the initial allegation involved \$10 million reportedly misused by the Hope Florida Foundation.

In response, AHCA Deputy Chief of Staff Mallory McManus clarified that, under the Federal Medical Assistance Program (FMAP), the federal government reimburses 57.2% of Medicaid expenditures in Florida. Consequently, when the state recovers Medicaid-related funds, that portion must be returned to the federal government.

Andrade argued that the most recent federal repayment of \$38 million aligns with the FMAP share of the full \$67 million settlement. He suggested that if some of the funds were not Medicaid-related, it could mean the state unnecessarily returned \$6 million to the federal government. Andrade has requested further explanation from AHCA regarding how the FMAP calculations were determined but has not yet received a response.

Civil

Increase in Sovereign Immunity Cap

Despite facing significant scrutiny, the House Budget Committee approved [HB 145](#) by a vote of 22-2, with the only dissenting votes coming from Republicans Patt Maney and Toby Overdorf. Sponsored by Republican Representative Fiona McFarland, the bill proposes increasing the amounts government agencies are required to pay when individuals are injured due to negligence.

Under the proposal, caps on damages would rise to \$500,000 per person and \$1,000,000 per incident for cases beginning October 1, 2026. These amounts would increase further on October 1, 2031, to \$600,000 per person and \$1,200,000 per incident. Supporters note that the bill could significantly reduce the need for claim bills in certain cases; opponents argue this will be an additional strain on local government budgets, especially with a potential reduction or elimination of property taxes. At this time, there is no companion bill in the Senate.

Wrongful Death Act

Legislation ([HB 289](#)), sponsored by Republican Representative Sam Greco, would expand Florida's Wrongful Death Act to allow parents to recover damages for the death of an unborn child at any stage of development. Having cleared its second and final committee stop, the bill now advances to the House floor. Supporters contend the measure will provide families a path to seek damages when pregnancies end due to incidents such as car crashes. Opponents, however, argue that the proposal could further anti-abortion efforts by creating new legal avenues. Representative Greco emphasized that the bill expressly prohibits legal actions against the mother for any conduct affecting the fetus.

Environment

Flow of Grant Money to Improve Florida's Waterways

Governor DeSantis has announced the awarding of \$112 million in environmental grants to support the restoration of Florida's waterways, strengthen water supplies, and advance research on harmful algal blooms.

Key funding allocations include:

- Alternative Water-Supply Projects: \$50 million allocated to 14 projects benefiting the St. Johns River, Suwannee River, and other critical waterways. Once operational, these projects are projected to provide an additional 94 million gallons of water per day.
- Freshwater Springs Restoration: \$50 million designated for 23 initiatives aimed at restoring and protecting freshwater springs.
- Algal Bloom Research and Technology: \$12 million directed to 16 research and technology projects addressing harmful algal blooms, conducted by state universities and county governments.

Governor DeSantis noted that his full budget recommendations will be released in the near future

Criminal Justice, Public Safety, and Law Enforcement

Leader Siroris' Priority Heads to House Floor

A highly debated measure, and one of the few bills to progress during committee weeks, is now ready for a vote on the House floor. [HB 133](#), sponsored by House Majority Leader Tyler Sirois, would lower the minimum age to purchase rifles and other long guns in Florida from 21 to 18, reversing a bipartisan reform enacted in 2018 following the Parkland tragedy. Given the Republican supermajority and the bill's priority status for Leader Sirois, approval in the House is widely anticipated. Supporters argue that raising age limits does little to address the underlying mental health issues associated with gun violence, while opponents contend the change is unnecessary since parents or other adults may already legally purchase firearms for individuals under 21. A House floor vote is expected during the first week of the legislative session, beginning January 13.

2026 SESSION BILL STATISTICS

As of December 5

Senate	
General Bills	365
Local Bills	7
House	
General Bills	332
Local Bills	21

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION DATES

Schedule

- Election Dates & Activities [[here](#)]
- Senate 2026 Regular Session [[here](#)]
- Major Budget Events [[here](#)]
- Bill Filing & Appropriation Project Request Deadlines [[here](#)]
- Important House Legislative Dates for the 2026 Regular Session [[here](#)]

House Calendar

- [House Authorized Meeting Schedule for December 8-12, 2025](#)
- [House Interim Agenda Calendar for December 11, 2025](#)

Senate Calendar

- [Senate Interim Agenda Calendar for December 8-12, 2025](#)
- [Weekly Schedule of Senate Meeting Time Allocations for December 8-12, 2025](#)