



A seemingly endless number of Bowl Games begin this weekend. Here's the complete schedule:

[Link to College Football Bowl Game Schedule](#)

The Briefing for December 15 - 2023

The last Briefing was December 11, – 2023

How's your weather – <https://weather.com/>

Legislature Completes Interim Committee Meetings

The Florida Senate and House of Representatives wrapped up the last round of committee meetings this week. The next action will be when the Legislature convenes the 2024 Regular Session on January 9th for 60 days of deliberations. Here's a look at some upcoming events that elected officials in small counties and school districts should be aware of:

2024

January 9-	Legislative Session Begins
January 16 -	Small County Coalition Legislative Reception and Briefing
January 17-	Florida Association of Counties Legislative Day
January 17 -	Small School District Council Consortium Legislative Briefing
January 17–18-	FSBA Day in the Legislature, Tallahassee, FL
January 24-25-	Rural Counties Day – A celebration of rural Florida.
March 8 -	Legislative Session Ends

Governor and Cabinet to Meet Tuesday

Agenda includes land buys in Highlands, Glades, Hendry, and DeSoto counties

Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Florida Cabinet on Tuesday will consider proposed deals that would shield from development chunks of land in Highlands, Glades, Hendry and DeSoto counties. The proposal totals spending \$19 million for conservation easements to protect about 5,000 acres. The largest portion of the proposal totals \$8.195 million for an easement on 2,101.5 acres of Syfrett Ranch in Highlands and Glades counties. In addition, the proposal includes paying \$5.243 million for an easement on 1,425.5

acres of cattle-ranch land from Ferguson-House Farms, Inc. in Hendry County. The third part of the land buy involves spending \$5.586 million for 1,531 acres of the 4L's Ranch LLC in west-central DeSoto County.

Baker County Delegation Concerned Over Privatization of Mental Health Hospital

A delegation of local leaders from the City of MacClenny and the Baker County Commission came to Tallahassee this week to express concerns to the House Appropriation Subcommittee on Health Care regarding portion of the Governor's budget proposal that directs the Department of Children and Families to initiate steps to privatize the operation of Northeast Florida State Hospital (NEFSH). The delegation led by Macclenny City Manager Mike Griffis expressed concerns regarding the proposal and the potential impact that "outsourcing" the operation of the hospital to a private vendor. After providing testimony expressing concerns about the proposal, the delegation met with committee Chair Sam Garrison and Vice-Chair Berny Jacques to explain the concerns. In addition, the delegation met with the Secretary of the Department of Children and Families to convey concerns. The effort was led by the Baker County Legislative delegation Representative Chuck Brannan and Senator Jennifer Bradley. This will be an ongoing effort by Baker County through the legislative session.

Bills Continued To Be Filed

To date 833 bills have been filed.
415 have been filed in the House.
418 have been filed in the Senate

Bills of Interest

Regional Rural Development Grants Program – HB 141 and SB 196
Sovereign Immunity – SB 472 and HB 569
Rural Emergency Hospitals – HB 309 and SB 644
Self-Defense When Threatened by Bears – HB 87 and SB 632
Term Limits for County Commissioners – HB 57 and SB 438

Legislative Priorities of the Small County Coalition

[The Small County Coalition - 2024 Legislative Program - November 2023 .docx](#)

Legislative Priorities of the Small School District Council Consortium

[SSDCC 2024 Legislative Priorities - Adopted - Final Revised - November 2023 .docx](#)

Links to Monitor the Legislative Session

[*Link to the Florida Senate*](#)
[*Link to the Florida House of Representatives*](#)
[*The Florida Channel*](#)

On the Docket – Week of December 17

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2023

- DESANTIS CAMPAIGNS IN IOWA - Sunday, 12:45 p.m. Central time. - Gov. Ron DeSantis will make an appearance in Iowa as part of his presidential campaign. - Smokey Row Coffee, 109 South Market St., Oskaloosa, Iowa.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023

- SALAZAR HELPS LAUNCH BUSINESS PROGRAM - Monday, 10 a.m. - U.S. Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar, R-Fla., will join leaders of the Florida Small Business Development Center at the Florida International University College of Business to launch the Business Growth and Acceleration Program. - CubaOcho Museum & Performing Arts Center, 1465 S.W. Eighth St., Miami.
- BARBERS BOARD - Monday, 10 a.m. - The Florida Barbers' Board is scheduled to meet. - Call-in number 1-888-585-9008. Code: 241687833
- COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN - Monday, 2 p.m. - The Florida Commission on the Status of Women is scheduled to meet. - Call 850-414-3300 for instructions on how to participate.
- LEEK SPEAKS AT CHAMBER EVENT - Monday, 3 p.m. - Rep. Tom Leek, R-Ormond Beach, is scheduled to speak at a Daytona Regional Chamber of Commerce event. - Daytona Beverages, LLC, 2275 Mason Ave., Daytona Beach.
- NATIONAL ECONOMY - Monday, 4 p.m. - The Economic Estimating Conference will discuss issues related to the national economy. - 117 Knott Building, the Capitol.
- DESANTIS CAMPAIGNS IN IOWA - Monday, 5:30 p.m. Central time. - Gov. Ron DeSantis is scheduled to make an appearance in Iowa as part of his presidential campaign. - Tanglewood Hills Pavilion, 4250 Middlewood Road, Bettendorf, Iowa.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2023

- DESANTIS, CABINET MEET - Tuesday, after the Elections Canvassing Commission meeting. - Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Florida Cabinet are scheduled to take up a series of issues, including land-conservation proposals. - DeSantis and Cabinet members will participate by phone. Public access in the Cabinet meeting room, the Capitol.
- JUDICIAL CANDIDATES - Tuesday, 9 a.m. - The 11th Circuit Judicial Nominating Commission will interview candidates for Miami-Dade County judge and circuit-judge positions. Candidates scheduled to be interviewed are Kimberly Hillery, Jennifer Hochstadt, Jose Rohaidy, Cristine Hernandez, Jason Quinones, Gilberto Barreto, Neila Nathaniel, Kevin Hellmann, Michelle Urbistondo, Kayla Quitana, Marcia Hansen, Stephanie Silver, Miesha Darrough, Elaine Sosa-Bruzon, Natalie Moore, Carlos Gamez and Cristina Correa. - Continental PLLC, 255 Alhambra Circle, Suite 640, Coral Gables.
- INTEREST RATES - Tuesday, 11 a.m. - The Economic Estimating Conference will analyze interest rates used in the state appropriations process. - 117 Knott Building, the Capitol.
- FLORIDA ECONOMY - Tuesday, 11:30 a.m. - The Economic Estimating Conference will discuss issues related to Florida's economy. - 117 Knott Building, the Capitol.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2023

- DESANTIS CAMPAIGNS IN IOWA - Wednesday, 7:15 a.m. Central time. - Gov. Ron DeSantis is scheduled to make an appearance in Iowa as part of his presidential campaign. - The Machine Shed, 11151 Hickman Road, Urbandale, Iowa.
- SCHOOL TRUST FUND - Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. - The Revenue Estimating Conference will take up issues related to the State School Trust Fund. - 117 Knott Building, the Capitol.
- COURT MONEY - Wednesday, 9 a.m. - The Revenue Estimating Conference will analyze what are known as "Article V" revenues, which help fund the court system. - 117 Knott Building, the Capitol.
- UNEMPLOYMENT CASES AT ISSUE - Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. - The state Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission will meet. - Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission, 1211 Governors Square Blvd., Suite 300, Tallahassee. Call-in number: 850-988-5144. Conference ID: 261180880

- CHILDREN'S ISSUES ADDRESSED - Wednesday, 10 a.m. - The Florida Children and Youth Cabinet is scheduled to meet in Jacksonville. - Florida Department of Health in Duval County, 921 North Davis St., Jacksonville.
- HEALTH INSURANCE - Wednesday, 1:30 p.m. - The Self-Insurance Estimating Conference will discuss issues related to the health-insurance program for state employees. - 117 Knott Building, the Capitol.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2023

- DESANTIS CAMPAIGNS IN IOWA - Thursday, 8:15 a.m. Central time and 10:30 a.m. Central time. - Gov. Ron DeSantis is scheduled to make appearances in Iowa as part of his presidential campaign. 8:15 a.m. at American Legion Post 712, 901 Second St., Coralville, Iowa. Also, 10:30 a.m. at Steinbeck Conference Hall, Marr Park, 2943 Iowa 92, Ainsworth, Iowa.
- TRANSGENDER TREATMENT TRIAL - Thursday, 9 a.m. - U.S. District Judge Robert Hinkle will continue a trial in a challenge to a state law and rules that restrict treatments for transgender children and adults diagnosed with gender dysphoria. - Joseph Woodrow Hatchett United States Courthouse and Federal Building, 111 North Adams St., Tallahassee.
- KIDCARE SPENDING - Thursday, 9 a.m. - The Social Services Estimating Conference will analyze expenditures in the KidCare subsidized health-insurance program. - 117 Knott Building, the Capitol.
- SUPREME COURT RELEASES OPINIONS - Thursday, 11 a.m. - The Florida Supreme Court is expected to release regular weekly opinions.
- PRISON MEDICAL ISSUES - Thursday, 11 a.m. - The state Correctional Medical Authority is scheduled to meet. - Call-in number: 1-888-585-9008. Code: 344085830

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2023

- UNEMPLOYMENT NUMBERS RELEASED - Friday, 10 a.m. - The Florida Department of Commerce will release November unemployment numbers.

Headlines Around The State

NPR: As 2024 nears, DeSantis, Haley remain opening acts to Trump

FlaPol: Ron DeSantis finance committees have a Florida feel

FlaPol: Ron DeSantis wants more debates on Fox News

The Hill: DeSantis asks Hannity to arrange debate with Trump

Gainesville Sun: Already rocked by political intrigue, search for new FAU president must start over

WLRN: State officials order FAU to restart its presidential search

FlaPol: UF highlights impact of tech on agriculture in Senate Ag Committee

FlaPol: Insurance Summit: Recent legislation starting to get results in court

FlaPol: Medicaid managed care plans return \$1B in excessive profits over 4-year span

Times: Pinellas put a college and career center in every high school. It's working.

NBC: Florida GOP balks at idea of buyout for party chair accused of rape

WaPo: Embattled Florida GOP chair demands buyout to quit, party members say

FlaPol: Sources: Christian Ziegler wants multimillion-dollar buyout to step down as Florida GOP Chair

Herald Tribune: Christian Ziegler denies requesting buyout to resign as Florida GOP chair

The Hill: McCarthy's exit interview: Gaetz, Trump and Mike Johnson

The Hill: Mullin slams Gaetz: 'Living off your daddy's money'

Floridian: Gaetz 'Rises in Regret' Against NDAA Containing FISA Extensions, Wokeness

Floridian: New Rubio Bill Seeks to Increase Biological Fathers' Child Support Responsibilities

Floridian: Rubio Urges Release of Imprisoned Nicaraguan Bishop

FlaPol: Citizens Property CEO: U.S. Senate probe 'a bit infuriating'

Times: Pinellas denies Moms for Liberty book challenge. 'The Lovely Bones' stays.

Sun-Sentinel: Arrested Broward schools volunteer won't face criminal charges, state attorney says

Times: St. Petersburg City Council softens Rays name change pitch

WUSF: St. Petersburg City Council is not moving forward on changing the Tampa Bay Rays name

FlaPol: Personnel note: Patrick Manderfield named FCCC Director of Marketing and Communications

About the Briefing!

The Briefing is prepared by Chris Doolin

cdoolin@doolinandassoc.com

The Briefing is compiled to provide information to elected officials and staff in counties that are members of the Small County Coalition and the Small School Representing District Council Consortium. It is also sent to Professional Colleagues and Associates. For Questions Email _cdoolin@DoolinandAssoc.com

If you want to see all of the latest briefings – you can go www.smallcountycoalition.org or www.ssdcc.org and click on the red Briefing button.