

It's that time of year!

The Whiskey Speech is coming!

The next Briefing will be dedicated to a holiday custom of including the text of the "Whiskey Speech" one of the craftiest orations in the history of American politics. The "Whiskey Speech" was delivered in April 1952 by a young Mississippi legislator named Noah S. "Soggy" Sweat, Jr. It demonstrates the art for taking both sides of an issue! The text and a recording of the speech will be provided so you can listen and read for full enjoyment.

The Briefing for December 19 - 2023

The last Briefing was December 15, - 2023

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

Small County Coalition Legislative Reception

Tuesday - January 16th - 5:15pm-7:15pm

American Institute of Architects Florida Headquarters - 104 E. Jefferson St., Tallahassee, FL.

Small School District Council Consortium Special Legislative Briefing

Wednesday – January 17 - 10:00am-11:45am

The Hayward House - 228 Adams Street

New Commissioners Appointed to fill vacancies in Franklin, Jefferson, and Union

Governor Ron DeSantis has appointed Anthony Croom, Jr. to the Franklin County Board of County Commissioners, Benjamin White to the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners, and, Donna Jackson to the Union County Board of County Commissioners.

- **Anthony Croom, Jr.**- Croom is a Safety Specialist with the Franklin County School District. Previously, he was a Lieutenant with the Franklin County Sheriff's Office, a Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and a Sergeant for the Apalachicola Police Department. Croom attended Chipola College.
- **Benjamin White** - White, of Monticello, is the Co-Owner of WW Cattle, LLC. Active in his community, he is the current President of the Jefferson County Cattlemen's Association and a trustee of the Tri-County Electric Cooperative. White attended Tallahassee Community College.
- **Donna Jackson** - Jackson, of Lake Butler, is the Office Manager of New River Developers. She serves her community on the Union County Housing Authority and previously served as the Finance Director for New River Public Library Cooperative. Jackson earned her associate degree from Santa Fe College and her bachelor's degree in business administration from Saint Leo University.

Dr. Patrick Wnek-NEFEC Director- Receives Leader of Distinction Award

Congratulation to Dr. Patrick Wnek, Ex. Director of North East Florida Educational Consortium, for his **Leader of Distinction** recognition presented by the District Administration Leadership Institute a national PreK-12 membership organization serving district leaders. The DALI recognizes leaders who have demonstrated a clear and inspiring vision, fostering a culture of excellence and continuous

improvement, and, leaders who have implemented effective strategies aimed at improved student outcomes, increased graduation rates, or enhanced educational opportunities.

Governor and Cabinet Approve Land Purchases

At today’s meeting, Governor DeSantis and the Cabinet approved three conservation-easement deals, with one under the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program and two under the state’s Florida Forever program.

- The largest deal involves the state paying \$8.195 million for an easement on 2,101.5 acres of Syfrett Ranch in Highlands and Glades counties. That deal is under the Rural and Family Lands Protection program. The property is in the Lake Okeechobee watershed and the planned Florida Wildlife Corridor. Also approved was \$5.243 million for an easement on 1,425.5 acres of cattle-ranch land from Ferguson-House Farms, Inc. in Hendry County. Another \$5.586 million was approved for an easement covering 1,531 acres of 4L’s Ranch LLC property in west-central DeSoto County.

Rural and Family Lands Priority List Approved

DeSantis and the Cabinet also approved the new priority list for the Rural and Family Lands Protection program, topped by a 12,098-acre parcel owned by Trailhead Blue Springs LLC in Levy County. Second is 12,000-acres owned by Anderson Land & Timber Company in Dixie County. Third is 8,665 acres in Jefferson County owned by Pines of Avalon LLC and Avalon Plantation LLC.

Note - Excerpts above are based on an article from the News Service of Florida

2024

January 9-	Legislative Session Begins
January 16 -	Small County Coalition Legislative Reception and Briefing Venue - American Institute of Architects - 104 E. Jefferson St.,
January 17-	Florida Association of Counties Legislative Day
January 17 -	Small School District Council Consortium Legislative Briefing Venue – Hayward House –228 Adams Street
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

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

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

Politico: Complaint accuses DeSantis campaign of illegally coordinating with Never Back Down

WUSF: Watchdog group accuses Ron DeSantis of breaking campaign finance law

FlaPol: Ron DeSantis says 'real risk' Nikki Haley would send U.S. troops to Ukraine

The Floridian: DeSantis Says Trump 'Could Have Done More,' Criticizes His Trashing of Former Officials

FlaPol: Ron DeSantis won't be 'smeared' with Thomas Massie's Israel position
NYTimes: New Group Backing DeSantis Has a George Santos Connection
FlaPol: Tucker Carlson blames Ken Griffin for Ron DeSantis' Ukraine pivot
Democrat: GOP Sen. Rick Scott responds to Bill Hancock, College Football Playoff Committee on FSU snub
FlaPol: 'Bigger than college football': Rick Scott keeps probing FSU playoff snub
FlaPol: Neal Dunn announces he will seek re-election in CD 2
The Floridian: Rubio, Senators Call for Transparency from Tampa VA after Nurse Failed to Meet Standards
The Floridian: Bilirakis-Led Bill Fighting Against Parkinson's Passes House
FlaPol: Vern Buchanan wants to chip away at PGA's tax-exempt status
Politico: Former Miami Young Republicans director arrested over Jan. 6 charges
WUSF: Florida reports 8,070 COVID-linked deaths in 2023; far less than previous years
Post: Florida on track to reach 100,000 total COVID deaths by end of 2023, according to FDOH data
The Capitolist: Florida's major cities battered by heavy rains, flooding
The Capitolist: Miami-Dade County named America's most competitive rental market
PNJ: Pensacola misses passenger rail grant, but not giving up on bringing Amtrak back
The Hill: Wheels threaten to come off DeSantis campaign
FlaPol: Ron DeSantis urges conservative students to 'speak up' for 'truth' in hostile schools
FlaPol: Ron DeSantis doesn't know what Donald Trump meant by 'poisoning the blood'
Sentinel: DeSantis seeks energy-saving rebates in apparent change of heart
My News 13: Florida Republicans and Democrats gathering signatures for petitions on both sides of abortion issue
TCPalm: Gov. Ron DeSantis funds \$100 million of projects to benefit Indian River Lagoon
Sun-Sentinel: Home-hardening grant program seeks permanent funding. Former state senator calls idea 'terrible'
Times: Florida State Guard unit received weapons training for migrant responses
FlaPol: Lawmaker refiles bill to ban pride flag from government buildings
Sun-Sentinel: State leaders focus on closing funding gap for Moving Florida Forward transportation program
My News 13: Florida bill looks to mandate law enforcement training on autism
WUSF: Florida deputy's legal team says he didn't have an obligation to stop Parkland school shooter
WUSF: The University of Tampa has found its new president after a months-long, nationwide search
Sentinel: City of Orlando will take lead on Pulse memorial, launch new fund
Ledger: Defense attorney in 8 death penalty cases calls Polk jail policies unconstitutional
Herald: Rent decreased or stayed the same in several South Florida cities. See the savings

Times: Florida's new Protect the Panther license plate design is now available

About the Briefing!

The Briefing is prepared by Chris Doolin

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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.