



The Briefing for February 6, 2025

The Last Briefing was Feb. 3, 2025

What's the weather outlook?

[10-Day Weather Forecast for Tallahassee, FL – The Weather Channel | weather.com](#)

Legislative Deliberations can be watched live on

[The Florida Channel: Home](#)

Updates from this week!

Governor DeSantis' Budget Released - [2025-Governors-Bill.pdf](#)

It appears that most of the Small County priorities are included. The budget proposal will now go to the House and Senate for deliberation.

25-26 Governors Recommendation for the FEFP - [Education Funding - Summary Report.pdf](#)

School Start Time Revision - bills have been filed in both the House and Senate give the decision of setting start times back to the school districts. There seems to be support at this point but there's a ways to go on this - Please ask your House and Senate members to support these bills.

[SB 296 - School Start Times - Senator Bradley](#)

[HB 261 – School Start Times - by Gerwig](#)

Sovereign Immunity - HB 301 - Suits Against Governments -this bill increases statutory limits on liability for tort claims from \$200,000 per individual and \$300,000 per incident to \$1,000,000 per individual and \$3,000,000 per incident. Although there is no Senate Bill at this time – it is coming. These increases will have a substantial impact on the cost of insurance and the potential for an increase in suits.

Regional Education Consortia were on the agenda in two Senate committees. Consortia Directors and Small District Superintendents presented the issues faced in our rural districts. Thanks to the following Superintendents for participating in panels – Darryl Taylor – Calhoun, Rick Surrency – Putnam, Mike Swindel - Hendry, Bobby Bennett – DeSoto, Buddy Brown – Holmes, Robby Edwards – Lafayette, and Mike Ripplinger – Union. It amounted to a full court press. Well done!

Special Facility Construction Projects – Good News here! The Governor’s budget included recommended funding for all seven Special Facility Projects. The recommendation provides for an amount of 1/3 of the projected cost. We know that the cost of these projects will increase the longer that the projects wait for full funding.

Arts Funding – we are also pleased to report that the Governors Budget includes \$27,000,000 million for Arts and Cultural Grants. The funding for the 24-25 year was vetoed due to concern over ensuring public funds were only used for “age appropriate” projects or programs.

Solar Fields – there are proposals being discussed that address the pre-emption of local governments from exercising judgement over Solar Field permits. Currently counties can not “Yeah” or “Nay” a project. Local government can only exercise oversight of buffers and landscape. The proposals will remove the pre-emption.

Regional Emergency Shelters – DEM Director Kevin Guthrie presented in several committees on the impact and costs of the hurricanes this year. A major point made during his presentation was a discussion regarding the potential of “regional” shelters that would give additional capacity to respond and shelter folks in rural areas. More to follow on this! _

Property Tax Exemption - HJR 359 - Expansion of Property Tax Exemptions – this legislative provides a wide range of exemption from property tax including a new \$100,000 exemption from assessed value of real property for all levies. Any expansion of property tax exemption must be accompanied by an Offset for Fiscally Constrained counties.

Adopted Legislative Programs for 2025 Legislative Session

Both the Small School District Council Consortium (SSDCC) and the Small County Coalition have adopted Legislative Programs for the 2025 Session. We encourage utilization of the information included to support your local legislative effort. Also listed below the adopted legislative programs are ‘Higher-Level’ issues of concern in Florida’s small counties and school districts . Feel free to cut an paste sections or text, if that will help you express support for those items included.

[SSDCC 2025 Legislative Priorities - Adopted December 2024.docx](#)

Providing Flexibility in the School Start Time Mandate
Offset impact of Sharing 1.5 millage revenues
Addressing Acceleration Issues
Funding for the Special Facility Construction Account Program
Provide a substantial increase in funding to the School Transportation Formula
Recovery from impacts of hurricanes on district facilities and enrollment
Support for the Regional Education Consortia program.

[The Small County Coalition - 2025 Legislative Program - Adopted December 2024.docx](#)

Unrestricted Determination of Local Elected Officials
Solar Facilities on Agricultural Lands
Hurricane Relief
Increased Funding for Small County Road Programs
Stability and Sustainability of funding for Fiscally Constrained Counties
Enhance Funding in Key Programs

Headlines Around the State

- Times: What Trump's tariffs could mean for Florida*
- Floridian: Steube Reintroduces Bill Protecting More Women's Sports*
- WLRN: Trump policy opening churches to immigration raids worries some Florida pastors*
- WLRN: Everglades advocates mark 40 years of highs and lows in the work to save the River of Grass*
- CBS Miami: Florida Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nunez expected to be named interim FIU president*
- Democrat: Florida Gov. DeSantis pushes Legislature for open carry of guns amid immigration tension*
- The Capitolist: Mayfield rips DeSantis in candidacy dispute*
- Today: Mayfield fails to qualify for special Senate election, claims retaliation by DeSantis*
- FlaPol: Gov. DeSantis hails 'stable market' in once-embattled insurance sector*
- News4JAX: Gov. DeSantis says GEICO, Progressive among auto insurance companies to decrease rates in Florida*
- CBS Miami: Gov. DeSantis announces rate cuts for many South Florida Citizens Property Insurance customers*
- The Capitolist: House bill seeks to curb corporate purchases of single-family homes*
- CBS Miami: Florida families struggle to buy homes amid corporate ownership boom*
- FlaPol: Tom Leek bill seeks to name and shame animal abusers*
- PNJ: Crowded field of 9 candidates qualify to run for District 3 House seat vacated by Rudman*
- FlaPol: Nathan Boyles, Hayden Hudson lead field of candidates in HD 3 Special Election to replace Joel Rudman*
- The Capitolist: Sen. Gayle Harrell introduces bill to expand autism services, research*
- FlaPol: Swimming safety bill filed to help prevent child drownings*
- Democrat: Fundraising, business skills ideal qualities of next president, FAMU panel suggests*
- Post: State told shingle roofs don't protect after 10 years. What's next?*
- News4JAX: DeSantis goes to battle with Florida Republicans in trying to get closer to Trump*
- FlaPol: 'Hit him': Donald Trump drove decision to turf Ron DeSantis early in 2024 GOP race*
- My News 13: Senate confirms Pam Bondi as U.S. attorney general, putting Trump ally at Justice Department's helm*
- NBC 6: Trump looks to abolish Dept. of Education – what does it do for Florida schools?*
- Democrat: Election supervisors say poll workers need to be shielded from harassment, threats*
- Floridian: Florida Delegation Unites Around Franklin, Wasserman Schultz to Help Citrus Growers*
- The Capitolist: Troubled citrus industry looks for help*
- The Hill: Trump touts Florida county flipping to Republican in voter registration majority*

[FlaPol: 'Knock on wood': Citizens Insurance expects to hit depopulation goals in next two years](#)
[Democrat: More immigrants are being arrested or detained by ICE in Florida this week. Here's where](#)
[Sun-Sentinel: Asphalt shingle roofs begin to lose wind resistance after only 10 years, state officials say](#)
[Times: AI is hitting Tampa classrooms. So far, teachers and students love it](#)
[The Capitolist: Florida Lottery transfers to state coffers were down 3 percent in 2024](#)
[TCPalm: DEP, SFWMD investigate St. Lucie River water pollution, possibly from construction](#)
[News-Press: Burmese pythons in Florida: What to do if you catch one, how much state will pay you](#)
[News-Press: Southwest Florida's burrowing owls: Our underground neighbors facing growing threats](#)
[WUSF: DeSantis pitched a record-size education budget. Florida's teacher union still has concerns](#)
[Democrat: Florida Gov. DeSantis pushes Legislature for open carry of guns amid immigration tension](#)
[Post: Gov. DeSantis names top state health care official Jason Weida as new chief of staff](#)
[Herald: Florida's elections supervisors want lawmakers to reconsider change to vote-by-mail law](#)
[FlaPol: Wilton Simpson's Agriculture Department wants crackdown on psychedelic shrooms, plant milk, and fake meat](#)
[Sun-Sentinel: 'Petty, retaliatory': One South Florida lawmaker punished, another promoted in wake of state immigration bill fight](#)
[FlaPol: More than 120,000 students apply for Florida education choice scholarships in record opening weekend](#)
[FlaPol: Sheriffs call for more resources to investigate drug offenses, crimes against kids](#)
[News-Press: Pending the 'full rundown': Gov. Ron DeSantis discusses accusations against Lee sheriff](#)
[Democrat: Leon schools chief: 'Significant decrease' in attendance during immigrant strike this week](#)
[WUSF: Statewide tornado drill to sound across Florida Wednesday](#)
[Times: Duke Energy, Tampa Electric customers to pay at least \\$20 monthly hike for storm costs](#)
[Herald: Here's what the memorial for the victims of the Parkland school shooting will look like](#)
[St. Augustine Record: 'The consequences of leaving': Florida reminds drivers to stay at the scene of crashes](#)

On the Docket

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2025

- BOARD OF MEDICINE - Friday, 8 a.m. - The Florida Board of Medicine will meet. - Aloft Jacksonville Tapestry Park, 4812 Deer Lake Dr. West, Jacksonville.
- PHYSICAL THERAPISTS - Friday, 8 a.m. - The Florida Board of Physical Therapy will meet. - Hyatt Place St. Augustine/Vilano Beach, 117 Vilano Road, St. Augustine.
- NURSING BOARD - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - The Florida Board of Nursing will meet. - Hyatt Place St. Augustine/Vilano Beach, 117 Vilano Road, St. Augustine.

- MEDICAL MALPRACTICE - Friday, 9 a.m. - The Florida Medical Malpractice Joint Underwriting Association Board of Directors is scheduled to meet. - Opal Key Hotel, 245 Front St., Key West.
- HISTORICAL PANEL - Friday, 9:30 a.m. - The Florida Historical Commission will meet. - R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough St., Tallahassee. <https://dosmyflorida.zoom.us/j/85035635618?pwd=MbqZdov6aCJMoj1lnbziZCx2gEvdYX.1>. Meeting ID: 85035635618. Code: 63032
- ‘IMPACT’ CONFERENCE HELD - Friday, 1:30 p.m. - The Revenue Estimating Conference will hold an “impact” conference, which involves estimating potential costs of legislation. - 117 Knott Building, the Capitol.
- MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES - Friday, 2 p.m. - The state Commission on Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder will meet. - <https://www.myflfamilies.com/news-events/public-events-meetings/commission-mental-health-and-substance-use-disorder-0>

Mark Your Calendars

2025

- February 2 - Deadline for release of Governors recommended budget
- February 3 – 7 Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
- February 10 – 14 Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
- February 17 – 21 Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
- March 4 Regular Session Begins
- March 18 - Small County Coalition Legislative Briefing/Reception
- March 19- FAC Day in the Legislature
- March 19 – 20 FSBA 38th Annual Day in the Legislature, Tallahassee, FL
- March 19 Small School District Legislative Briefing
- March 19 -20 Rural Counties Day in the Legislature
- May 2 - Regular Session Ends

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 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.ssdec.org and click on the red **Briefing button**