

Day 18 of 60!

The Briefing – Friday -January 30, 2026

The Last Briefing – Saturday – January 24 , 2026

What's the weather outlook?

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

In Memoriam



Allen Jeffries Massey

Jan. 28, 1958 – Jan. 27, 2026

It is with profound sadness that we were advised of the passing of “Jeff” Massey. Jeff passed away earlier this week after an extended battle with cancer. For the past nine years, Jeff served as County Administrator for the Washington County Board of County Commissioners. His contribution to the people of Florida and especially folks in small and rural counties were significant – We owe him a great deal of gratitude. We thank his family for sharing him with us! He was a good man! We will miss him! May he rest in peace. Service will be held 11 AM CST Monday, February 2, 2026 at Shiloh Baptist Church in Chipley. The family will receive friends for visitation one hour prior to the service at Shiloh Baptist Church..

Governors Office Issues DOGE Report on Local Government Spending

The governor’s budget office delivered to the Legislature a 98-page report assembled by the state’s “Department of Government Efficiency”. The report was ordered by state legislators last year when they gave DeSantis the go-ahead to audit local government spending after he issued an executive order to initiate a Florida DOGE program modeled after federal DOGE efforts. The report ([Microsoft Word - Florida DOGE Report \(REVISED Jan 27 2026\) Final](#)) includes recommendations including a suggestion that a review of Florida’s 411 cities should be done to see if some could be abolished or consolidated with other governments. Interestingly, the report asserts that Florida has engaged in “disciplined” spending since DeSantis became governor in 2019 and that the state budget could be as large as \$126 billion due to population growth and inflation. During the governor’s first year in office, the total budget was nearly \$91 billion. This current year, it is nearly \$115 billion, or an increase of more than 26 percent in the past seven years. If federal funds are stripped out, the state budget has increased more than 35 percent during his tenure.

Legislative Calendar

[Senate Calendar for Week Four – Committee Agenda for Monday and Tuesday outlined](#)
[Legislative Calendar for the House Next Week - Agenda for Monday specified](#)

Heads Up

Sovereign Immunity – SB1366 to be heard Tuesday in Senate Judiciary

SB 1366 is up in Senate Judiciary on Tuesday. The bill increases the caps for individual claims from \$200,000 to \$300,000 and the caps from multiple claims from \$300,000 to \$450,000. The increases were based on CPI increase

from the last time the caps were set. The House bill - HB 145 has already passed the House and is in Senate messages. The bill increases the caps to \$500,000 per person from \$200,000 and the cap for multiple claims or judgments arising out of the same incident is increased to \$1,000,000 from \$300,000. This is an increased cost and if something has to pass we would prefer the Senate Bill as is!

Restriction on Employment of Relatives - SB1620 is up in Senate Education Pre K – 12 Tuesday

Senate Bill 1620 is up Tuesday. The bill makes School Districts an agency under FS 112.3135 Restriction on employment of relatives. The House bill HB 1073 has been amended to take out the restriction on employment of relatives.

Update Week Three Bill Actions

Week Three is in the books – a lot of folks were in Tallahassee this week visiting legislators in the Capitol. House and Senate committees continued to meet considering a range of bills. Here is information on the bills relating to Local Government and Education that were considered this week. The report links provide a narrative and last action. The bill listings will take you to each bill. More information can be found at <https://www.flhouse.gov/> or <https://www.flsenate.gov/>

 **[Week Three - Local Government Bills Considered this week.docx](#)**

The link provides for a brief narrative and last action for the following bills that received action this week.

- [HB 0011](#) Designation of the State Birds by Mooney, Jr.**
- [SB 0048](#) Housing by Gaetz**
- [HB 0167](#) Former Phosphate Mining Lands by McClure**
- [HB 0213](#) Modification of Limitations on Property Assessment Increases by Griffiths Jr.**
- [SB 0228](#) Toll Discounts for Certified Veteran Business Enterprises by Smith**
- [SB 0290](#) Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services by Truenow**
- [SB 0332](#) Public Meetings/Private Property Rights by Bradley**
- [HB 0339](#) Advertisement of a Harmful Vaccine by Miller**
- [SB 0380](#) Legal Notices by Trumbull**
- [SB 0386](#) Farm Equipment by Trumbull**
- [HB 0441](#) Conservation Lands by Kendall**
- [SB 0558](#) Standards for Stormwater Systems by Burgess**
- [HB 0827](#) Disclosure of Estimated Ad Valorem Taxes by Anderson**
- [SB 0856](#) Disclosure Of Estimated Ad Valorem Taxes by DiCeglie**
- [HB 1009](#) Governmental Agency Publication of Advertisements and Public Notices by Griffiths Jr.**
- [HB 1049](#) Building Permit Requirements by Esposito**
- [HB 1245](#) Biosolids Management by Shoaf**
- [SB 1294](#) Biosolids Management by Bradley**

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 **[Week Three Action on Education Bills .docx](#)**

The link provides for a brief narrative and last action for the following bills that received action this week.

- [SB 0124](#) Florida Virtual School by Rodriguez**

<u>HB 0157</u>	School Teacher Training and Mentoring Program by Hinson
<u>SB 0420</u>	Patriotic Displays in Classrooms by Burgess
<u>HB 0615</u>	Individual Education Plans by Tendrich
<u>HB 0753</u>	School Counselors by Hunschofsky
<u>HB 0757</u>	School Safety by Salzman
<u>HB 0859</u>	Exceptional Students and Video Cameras in Public Schools by Chambliss
<u>SB 1062</u>	Speech and Debate by Brodeur
<u>HB 1071</u>	Education by Trabulsy
<u>HB 1073</u>	School Districts by Koster
<u>HB 1119</u>	Materials Harmful to Minors by Bankson
<u>HB 1201</u>	Student Health and Safety by Mooney, Jr.
<u>SB 1340</u>	Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring by Harrell
<u>SB 1646</u>	Educational Facilities by Simon
<u>SB 1718</u>	Educator Preparation and Certification by Calatayud

Significant Bill Lists

[Significant Education Bills .docx](#)

[Significant County Bills - 2026 .docx](#)

Items of Note

Update on Senate President Ben Albritton

[Senator Albritton's Memo to Florida Senate](#)

Senate President Ben Albritton, R-Wauchula, was released late Tuesday afternoon from UF Health Shands Hospital and returned to Tallahassee after a health scare that started with chest pain over the weekend. Albritton said in a memo to senators Wednesday morning that he will receive care for recurring blood clots but that tests did not show a heart abnormality. Albritton went to Tallahassee Memorial Hospital after experiencing chest pain Sunday and was found to have a blood clot in his lung and what was described as a “potential abnormality” in his heart. He subsequently went to Shands in Gainesville for further tests.

Florida Opt's Into New Federal Tax Credit Program

[FACT SHEET - Education Freedom Tax Credit](#)

Florida is opting into a new tax credit scholarship program. Under the *Federal Education Freedom Tax Credit*, Floridians can receive a credit of up to \$1,700 per year for contributing to the program beginning next year in an effort to help K-12 students and their parents with educational expenses and other needs. Parents may use the additional funds to further their child's educational needs, including more private tutoring and educational supplies, such as books.

Bills propose allowing Cattle to graze on public lands

The House Natural Resources and Disasters Subcommittee voted 16-2 to advance HB 1421, a bill that would require state agencies to evaluate the suitability of public lands for cattle. Under the bill, any lands deemed appropriate would need to be outlined in a land management plan and allowed for cattle grazing leases. If an agency determines lands are unsuitable for cattle, it would need to provide an explanation in its management plan. The bill doesn't outline how lands will be deemed suitable or whether state agencies will get the final say on a cattle grazing decision. State parks, wildlife management areas,

forests, preserves and other agency-managed lands would be subject to the new bill. Agencies are required to submit land management plans at least every decade, if there are significant land use changes or within one year of acquiring significant new lands. The bill moves next to the House State Affairs Committee. The Senate version of the bill, SB 1658 has yet to be heard in committee.

Here are some links that will assist you in monitoring the session.

<https://www.flhouse.gov/>

<https://www.flsenate.gov/>

[The Florida Channel To Watch Proceedings](#)

[House Directory](#)

[Senate Directory](#)

The following Reports provide a comprehensive analysis of Florida Ad Valorem structure

- **FAC PROPERTY TAX REPORT** - <https://www.fl-counties.com/report-property-taxes/>
- **FLORIDA TAXWATCH REPORT - How-Florida-Counties-Compare-2025.pdf** –
- **Fla. League of Cities -Fiscal Structure & Rev. Resilience of Florida Municipalities**

Headlines Around The State

[*WLRN: Florida to tap in to Big Beautiful Bill school choice tax credit*](#)

[*Times: DeSantis seeks to supplement Florida school vouchers with federal tax plan*](#)

[*WUSF: Federal judge frees high school student 'unlawfully detained' by ICE in Orlando*](#)

[*WUSF: Polk County Public Schools responds to rumors of Immigration and Customs Enforcement on campus*](#)

[*TCPalm: One of last 4 remaining Florida Highwaymen artists dies in Cocoa at age 84*](#)

[*Democrat: Leon Schools enrollment is shifting. What does it mean for your kids?*](#)

[*WUSF: A new report grades Florida poorly in efforts to reduce tobacco use*](#)

[*FlaPol: UWF's Apalachicola Bay archaeology project earns international award*](#)

[*TCPalm: Will DeSantis succeed in blocking Florida's largest data center?*](#)

[*FlaPol: Ben Albritton returns to Tallahassee after medical scare, will finish the Session strong*](#)

[*Democrat: Florida may rethink a 'jumbled' religious freedom proposal*](#)

[*FlaPol: House subcommittee OKs bill to allow workers to be paid under minimum wage*](#)

[*FlaPol: 'Unimpeachable character': Dan Gelber endorses José Javier Rodríguez for Attorney General*](#)

[*FlaPol: Florida Sheriffs swing behind Byron Donalds in Governor's race*](#)

[*WUSF: Florida's CFO brings his property tax cut tour to St. Petersburg*](#)

[*WLRN: Florida lawmakers advance bill requiring Abraham Lincoln, George Washington portraits in schools*](#)

[*FlaPol: Proposed private cattle grazing on state lands moves along in first public hearing*](#)

[*Democrat: State officials 'surprised' by FAMU's progress with audit report*](#)

FlaPol: Port grant could 'change the trajectory' of Pensacola

WLRN: Feds and state pull out of annual Everglades conference. Was Alligator Alcatraz the reason?

DBNJ: In just a week, Florida gas prices are dramatically surging again. Why?

Times: Florida agriculture commissioner pushes back after farm bill postponed in Senate

FlaPol: House panel approves resolution to slow property tax increases

WLRN: Florida farms squeezed by worker fear and new E-Verify mandate

FlaPol: Senate and House committees advance bills targeting new-age smoking

FlaPol: Bill boosting student volunteers at polls rolls on in Senate

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.ssdcc.org and click on the red Briefing button

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