



Week One Legislative Update

2026 Florida Legislative Session (January 13–17)

The 2026 Florida Legislative Session officially convened on **January 13** and will run through **March 13**. While the opening days of session traditionally focus on organizational matters, legislative leadership moved quickly this year, with multiple bills already advancing to the House floor. Several measures were placed on the **House Special Order Calendar for January 15**, signaling early legislative priorities and a fast pace heading into the first full week of committee work.

The early scheduling of floor action underscores that the Legislature entered session with momentum. While there has been early action in both chambers, with the priority legislation for the Speaker and President, they are not the same priorities.

Special Elections – January 13

In addition to the opening of the 2026 Legislative Session, **special elections were held across Florida on Tuesday, January 13**, coinciding with Opening Day. These elections were conducted to fill vacancies and advance candidates in districts requiring representation during the session.

Notably, a **special primary election for Florida House District 87** was held to determine party nominees who will advance to a **special general election later this spring**. The election was called following a vacancy in the district and was intended to restore full legislative representation as the session gets underway. As of the close of Week One reporting, official certification of results was still pending.

Several local and municipal special elections were also conducted statewide. While these contests do not directly impact statewide legislative leadership, they contribute to the broader political and electoral landscape shaping the 2026 Session.



Bills on the House Special Order Calendar (January 15)

The following bills were on the House Special Order Calendar for floor consideration on **Thursday, January 15:**

- [HB 167 Former Phosphate Mining Lands](#) – passed 87-24.
- [HB 121 – Nursing Education Programs](#)
- [HB 289 – Civil Liability for the Wrongful Death of an Unborn Child](#) – passed 76-34.
- [HB 355 – Health Care Patient Protection](#)
- [HB 6003 – Recovery of Damages for Medical Negligence Resulting in Death](#) – passed 88-17.
- [HB 0145 Suits Against the Government](#) – passed 104-7.
- [HB 0133 Minimum Age for Firearm Purchase or Transfer](#) - passed 74-37.
- [HB 0197 Employment Eligibility](#)

Placement on the Special-Order Calendar indicates leaderships intent for early floor action and passage. Several of these measures touch on health care delivery, professional education, and medical liability issues, while others reflect broader policy priorities being advanced at the outset of session. These will certainly be top of the list priorities for the Speaker – while the President of the Senate advances his Rural Communities SB250. SB250 was read on the floor of the Senate on Wednesday, January 14, and is now in House messages. The House version has not made it through its first of four committee stops. Conversely, the house special order bills' senate companions have not been heard in committee. The priority bills for each of the chamber leaders are not the same, so there will be much wrangling in the weeks ahead.

Committee Activity – Week One

Committee meetings began this week following the release of finalized agendas late on **January 12**. Several standing committees and subcommittees met during the first week, initiating the first round of bill hearings for the 2026 Session. The House was busy both in committee and on the floor.

Committees scheduled to meet during Week One included, but were not limited to:

- Government Operations Subcommittee
- Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee
- Human Services Subcommittee
- Health Professions & Programs Subcommittee met on Wednesday to discuss HB375, HB327, HB301, and HB237, see details of the bills below. All four passed, notably the autonomous practice by a CRNA (HB375) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Autonomous Practice (HB301) passed their first committee stop.



Health Care Legislation Filed to Date

As of the close of Week One, a significant number of health care–related bills have been filed for the 2026 Legislative Session. These measures span scope of practice, professional licensure, medical liability, insurance regulation, patient rights, and vaccine-related policy. While many of these bills have not yet been scheduled for committee hearings, their filing reflects key policy areas likely to receive attention as the session progresses.

Scope of Practice and Professional Licensure

Several bills propose changes to scope of practice and autonomous authority for non-physician health care professionals:

- **Big Beautiful Healthcare Frontier Act – [HB 693](#) / [HB 695](#) (Redondo)**
Filed as part of a Speaker-supported legislative package, these bills propose multiple scope-of-practice expansions across health care professions.
- **Autonomous Practice by Physician Assistants – [SB 668](#) (Truenow)**
Authorizes physician assistants to practice independently.
- **Prescribing for Physician Assistants – [HB 683](#) / [SB 374](#) (Partington / Trumbull)**
Allows physician assistants to practice independently during a declared state of emergency.
- **Autonomous Practice by a CRNA – [HB 375](#) / [SB 462](#) (Giallombardo / Rodriguez)**
Permits certified registered nurse anesthetists to practice independently. PASSED HOUSE COMMITTEE on JANUARY 14, 2026; FOMA presented testimony against;
- **Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Autonomous Practice – [HB 301](#) / [SB 138](#) (Shoaf / Truenow)**
Expands autonomous practice authority for psychiatric advanced practice registered nurses. PASSED HOUSE COMMITTEE on JANUARY 14, 2026; FOMA presented testimony against;
- **Naturopathic Medicine – [HB 223](#) / [SB 688](#) / [SB 542](#) (Smith / Rodriguez / Garcia)**
Creates a licensure pathway for naturopathic practitioners.
- **Chiropractic Medicine – [HB 439](#) / [SB 1524](#) (Cobb / Simon)**
Authorizes chiropractic physicians to possess, prescribe, and administer specified substances, including vitamins, dietary supplements, and epinephrine.
- **Acupuncture – [HB 169](#) / [SB 672](#) (Alvarez / Calatayud)**
Updates statutory language governing acupuncture practice.
- **Use of Professional Nursing Titles – [HB 237](#) / [SB 36](#) (Salzman / Sharief)**
Authorizes use of doctoral nursing titles while requiring clarification of professional role when using the term “doctor.” PASSED HOUSE COMMITTEE on JANUARY 14, 2026.



Pharmacy Practice

Multiple bills address pharmacy practice and pharmacist authority:

- **Pharmacy** – [SB 1142](#) / [HB 1425](#) (Wright / Booth)
Expands consultant pharmacy provisions to include clinics.
- **Administration of Medications by Pharmacists** – [HB 407](#) / [SB 294](#) (Alvarez / Rodriguez)
Authorizes pharmacists to administer medications for medication-assisted treatment and opioid addiction.
- **Practice of the Profession of Pharmacy** – [HB 1021](#) / [SB 868](#) (Young / Sharief)
Allows pharmacists to administer medications in Level I and Level II trauma centers.

Wrongful Death and Medical Liability

- **Medical Negligence/Wrongful Death** – [HB 6003](#) / [SB 1700](#) (Trabulsy / Grall)
Removes the prohibition on recovery of noneconomic damages in certain medical negligence wrongful death cases involving adult children and parents.
- **Civil Liability for the Wrongful Death of an Unborn Child** – [HB 289](#) / [SB 164](#) (Greco / Grall)
Expands Florida's Wrongful Death Act to allow parents of an unborn child to recover damages.

Vaccines, Parental Rights, and Medical Conscience

- **Parental Rights** – [HB 173](#) / [SB 166](#) (Kendall / Grall)
Requires parental consent in various health care situations, including contraceptive information and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.
- **Vaccines** – [HB 917](#) / [HB 1756](#) (Holcomb / Yarborough)
Addresses vaccination discrimination, parental consent and disclosures, alternative vaccination schedules, pharmacist authority to dispense ivermectin, exemptions from immunization requirements, and related liability provisions.
- **Medical Conscience** – [HB 551](#) / [SB 670](#) (Black / Yarborough)
Authorizes health care providers to bring a civil cause of action based on medical conscience protections.
- **Advertisement of a Harmful Vaccine** – [SB408](#) / [HB339](#) (Grall/Miller) – defines advertisement for vaccine promotions and impose liability on manufacturers for harm caused by advertised vaccines.



Patient Access to Records

- **Patient Access to Records – [HB 1309](#) / [SB 1140](#) (Booth / Grall)**
Requires medical records to be furnished within 14 days of request.

Health Insurance and Managed Care

Several bills propose reforms to insurance practices, managed care, and patient protections:

- **Managed Care Plans – [HB 531](#) / [SB 568](#) (Barnaby, Basabe / Harrell)**
Revises Medicaid managed care contract requirements, including limits on prior authorization reviews.
- **Insurance Claims Payments to Health Care Providers – [HB 1015](#) / [SB 1130](#) (Cassel / Massullo)**
Prohibits certain insurance payment practices, including downloading requirements.
- **Insurance Claims Payments to Health Care Providers – [HB 1023](#) / [SB 1198](#) (Black / Massullo)**
Addresses claim disputes, fees, and related insurance reforms.
- **Health Insurer Accountability – [HB 1097](#) (Berfield)**
Requires insurer credentialing within 30 days and includes prompt payment and retroactive denial provisions.
- **Step Therapy – [SB 70](#) (Harrell)**
Requires AHCA approval of certain drug products for Medicaid recipients with serious mental illness without step-therapy prior authorization.
- **Continuity of Care in Health Insurance Contracts – [HB 577](#) / [SB 114](#) (Woodson / Jones)**
Requires 60 days' notice to policyholders before termination of provider contracts.

Other Legislation of Interest

- **Health Care Patient Protection – [SB 68](#) (Harrell (R-Stuart)) and [HB 355](#) by Rep. (Oliver (R-Punta Gorda))** require AHCA, in consultation with the Florida Emergency Medical Services for Children State Partnership Program, to adopt rules that establish minimum standards for pediatric patient care in hospital emergency departments (ED). The bills require all hospitals with EDs to develop and implement policies and procedures for pediatric patient care in the ED, and to designate a physician, physician assistant, nurse, or paramedic to serve as the pediatric emergency care coordinator in the ED. Finally, the bills require all hospital EDs to conduct the National Pediatric Readiness Assessment in accordance with timelines established by the National Pediatric Readiness

Project. THIS BILL WAS UP ON SPECIAL ORDER CALENDER IN THE HOUSE ON THURSDAY January 15, 2026.

- **Employment Eligibility** – [HB 197](#) by Rep. Berny Jacques (R-Clearwater) requires all private employers, rather than only those employing more than specified number of employees, use E-Verify system to verify new employee's employment.
- **Florida Health Choices Program** – [SB 440](#) (Leek (R-St. Augustine)) and [HB 141](#) (Yarkosky (R-Clermont)) rename the "Florida Health Choices Program" as "Florida Employee Health Choices Program" and revise purposes and components of the program. The bills revise eligibility and participation requirements for vendors under the program, the types of health insurance products that are available for purchase through program, removes certain pricing transparency requirements, revise the structure of the insurance marketplace process under the program, remove the option for risk pooling under the program, and remove exemptions from certain requirements of Florida Insurance Code under the program.
- **Rural Communities** – [SB 250](#) (Simon (R-Tallahassee)) and [HB723](#) (Abbott (R-Washington)) is a comprehensive package of legislative proposals to create opportunities for rural communities to expand education offerings, increase health care services, and modernize commerce. The bill invests in farm-to-market roads, requires the state land planning agency to give preference for technical assistance funding to local governments located in a rural area of opportunity, revises the conditions required for a county to be considered a fiscally constrained county, creates the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce, requires the Office of Rural Prosperity to administer the Renaissance Grants Program to provide block grants to eligible communities, creates the Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program within the Office of Rural Prosperity, expands the existing FRAME program to include medical doctors or osteopathic doctors who are board certified or board eligible in emergency medicine, establishes the Stroke, Cardiac, and Obstetric Response and Education (SCORE) Grant Program, appropriates additional funding to enhance Medicaid payments to reimburse rural hospitals similar to Medicare reimbursement, and creates the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program within the Department of Transportation.
- **Sale and Purchase of Ivermectin** – [HB 29](#) (Holcomb (R-Springhill)) authorizes the sale and purchase of ivermectin suitable for human use as over-the-counter medication without prescription or consultation with a health care provider.

Looking Ahead

As the Legislature moves into the second week of session, committee activity is expected to accelerate, with a broader range of bills receiving their first hearings. Additional measures may be placed on future Special-Order Calendars, and early patterns of legislative focus will become clearer as committees continue to meet.