

2020 Weekly Legislative Update - Week 2: January 24, 2020

Florida's Capitol was abuzz with entrepreneurial spirit during week two of the 2020 Legislative Session.

The **tourism**, **space exploration**, **nursing**, **trucking** and **commercial real estate** industries converged in Tallahassee this week to highlight the important roll each of these industries play in diversifying Florida's economy. And their voices were echoed by business leaders from the **Citrus County Chamber of Commerce**, who led 100-plus entrepreneurs to the Capitol to hear from elected leaders on how we can keep Florida's momentum going.

As the Florida Chamber unites business for good, we continue championing your **Florida Chamber 2020 Jobs Agenda**.







HIGHLIGHTS FROM WEEK 2:

Targeted Industries = High-Wage Jobs:

Industries such as aviation and aerospace, information technology, manufacturing, logistics and distribution, and others will help diversify Florida's economy and create high-wage jobs. Right now, **Florida's industry diversification ranking is 19th** in the U.S. We believe Florida can and must do better, and we've made it our **goal** to grow Florida's industry diversification into the top 12. This week a Florida Senate committee took a step closer to extending the **Qualified Targeted Industry (QTI) Tax Refund** program for existing and relocating companies that create new, full-time jobs paying at least 115 percent of the private-sector annual average wage. Thank you **Senator Joe Gruters** for sponsoring the Florida Chamber-backed SB 922, and for supporting an innovation economy.

Lawsuit Abuse Goes Under the Legislative Microscope:

The Florida Chamber is uniting business for good and leading the charge to improve Florida's bottom five legal climate, joining **Governor Ron DeSantis** and legislative leaders in taking steps to build on lawsuit abuse reform successes from last session. Already lawmakers have held a series of hearings focused on common sense solutions to further make Florida more competitive. Topping the list of legal climate reforms are: **Accuracy in Damages**, **Bad**



Rep. Pigman Encourages Giving More Floridians Access to Safe, Quality Healthcare



Governor DeSantis is Committed to Taking on Powerful Trial Lawyer Special Interests

Faith, **Predatory Practices by Lawsuit Lenders**, **Contingency Risk Multiplier**, **Municipal Litigation**, **Innocent Sellers**, **Motor Vehicle Dealers**, **Solicitation of Legal Services**, **Asbestos Trust Claims.** Ensure your voice is heard. Click **here** to share which issues are most important to you, and to **watch Representative Bob Rommel** explain how lawsuit abuse is costing Florida families more money.

Leveling the Internet Sales Tax Playing Field:

The Florida Chamber this week joined **Senator Joe Gruters** and **Representative Chuck Clemons** and our Florida Retail Federation partners in calling on the Florida Legislature to level the internet sales tax playing field between online and brick and mortar businesses. Foreign and out-of-state companies are capitalizing on Florida's outdated tax laws, and Florida retailers are competing with a hand tied behind their back. Florida Chamber Executive Vice President **David Hart** called on lawmakers to take action on Florida Chamber-backed legislation – SB 126 and
HB 159.

Give More Floridians Access to Safe Healthcare:

With 900 new residents moving to Florida each day, and 4.5 million more residents expected to call Florida home by 2030, it's vital that Floridians have greater access to healthcare, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The **Florida Chamber's Healthcare Partnership** has a long history of supporting expanded scope of practice for Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners to allow them to practice medicine to the full extent of their education and training, and therefore provide more Floridians greater access to high-value, quality healthcare. This week, Florida Chamber President **Mark Wilson** joined **Representative Cary Pigman** and nurses from across Florida in urging lawmakers to pass HB 607 to do what 30 other states have already done – allow trained nurse practitioners to practice medicine as skillfully as a physician does. **Watch Rep. Pigman discuss** why lawmakers should take steps to ensure more Floridians have access to safe healthcare.

Protecting Employee Paychecks:

Over the objections of the AFL-CIO and other unions, a Florida Chamber-backed public sector reform package cleared the first of two committees and now heads to the powerful State Affairs Committee. HB 1 sponsored by



Rep. Bob Rommel Explains How Lawsuit Abuse is Costing Floridians More Money



Representative Jamie Grant will make the process easier for public servants to associate or disassociate with a union. This measure would require public employees who want to join a union to sign a membership authorization form and for employers to verify the employee's intent before any union dues are collected. In addition to annual reauthorization by the employee, it would also require unions to terminate membership, without any questions, upon written request from the employee.

E-Verify Back in the Headlines:

E-Verify bills filed in the Florida House and Senate are back in the headlines this week. ***Politico*** is reporting that the Republican Party of Florida will take a position vote on Monday. **Senate President Bill Galvano** recently discussed this employer mandate on the Florida Chamber's ***Bottom Line*** public affairs program saying - "We have to be very cautious about what burdens we put on private business…we don't want to make business an arm of government."

Record Low 3% Unemployment Rate:

Florida's latest employment figures show the state's unemployment level has dropped to a new record low 3%. This is the first time Florida recorded the unprecedented low unemployment rate since the series began in 1976. Florida gained 212,000 jobs over the year, an increase of 2.4 percent. Nationally, the number of jobs rose 1.4 percent over the year. Florida continues to outpace the nation in job growth. Get the latest performance data by visiting **www.TheFloridaScorecard.org**.



Download the Florida Chamber's 2020 Jobs Agenda



Lawsuit Abuse Reform will Help Lower the Cost of Living on Florida Families

Chamber Newswire

- **All internet sales tax should be collected in Florida – Tampa Bay Times**
- **Legislature should fully fund affordable housing program – Florida Times**

Union/Northwest Florida Daily News

- [New water quality bill, imposing new regulations on polluters, clears Florida Senate panel](#) - **Tallahassee Democrat**
- [Ron DeSantis in Great Shape According to New Poll from the Florida Chamber of Commerce](#) – **Florida Daily**
- [Majority of Likely Voters Disapprove of Removing Trump from Office](#) - **Breitbart**
- [Florida Poll: President Trump Leads Top Democrats in Head to Head Matchups](#) – **Breitbart**
- [Florida Voters Reject Impeachment, Back Trump in New Poll](#) – **The Union Journal**
- [Florida Tourism Day comes as VISIT FLORIDA faces uncertain future](#) – **Florida Politics**
- [Republican Florida House leaders are trying to curb new constitutional amendments on the ballot](#) – **Orlando Weekly**

Below is a more comprehensive review of legislative activity from Week 2 of the 2020 Legislative Session.

Improving Florida's Talent Pipeline for a Better Workforce



Florida Chamber Supports

Mastery Based Education

Allows a diversified pathway for students by providing an educational environment that allows students to progress to higher levels of learning based upon the mastery of concepts and skills.

A Senate Bill Has Not Been Filed

HB 523: Rep. Nick DiCeglie

The House did not take action.



Designation of School Grades

Florida Chamber Supports

Modifies the high school acceleration component of the school grading model to add to the calculation students who complete career certificate dual enrollment courses resulting in 300 or more clock hours that are identified by the State Board of Education.

SB 434: Sen. Bill Montford
Placed on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education agenda for January 28.

HB 957: Rep. Jason Shoaf
The House did not take action.



Early Learning and Early Grade Success

Florida Chamber Supports

Updates how Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten students are assessed to better identify their needs in the classroom. Additionally this bill seeks to help ensure that all educational instructors meet high academic standards.

A Senate Bill Has Not Been Filed

HB 1013: Rep. Erin Grall
The House did not take action.

Creating Quality Jobs by Diversifying Florida's Economy



VISIT FLORIDA

Reauthorizes VISIT FLORIDA, Florida's tourism marketing organization, which is scheduled to be eliminated on July 1, 2020 without legislative action.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 362: Sen. Ed Hooper
The Senate did not take action.

HB 213: Rep. Mel Ponder
The House did not take action.



Entertainment Industry

Creates a new tax rebate program for family-friendly TV productions, movies and digital media that are produced in Florida using Florida talent.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 530: Sen. Joe Gruters
The Senate did not take action.

HB 497: Rep. James Buchanan
The House did not take action.



Regional Rural Development Grants

Provides additional resources and assistance to underserved rural communities to improve economic vitality and encourage economic development efforts.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 426: Sen. Bill Montford
Passed the Senate Appropriations Committee.

HB 1139: Rep. Chuck Clemons
The House did not take action.



Research & Development Tax Credit

Encourages high wage jobs and capital investments by increasing the amount of tax credits available for qualified research and development activities in Florida.

Florida Chamber Supports

Rep. Pigman Encourages Giving More Floridians Access to Safe, Quality Healthcare

SB 576: Sen. Joe Gruters
The Senate did not take action.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Economic Development

Florida Chamber Supports

Reauthorizes the Qualified Targeted Industry Tax Refund Program, a key economic development initiative that encourages high wage jobs and is set to expire on July 1, 2020 without legislative action; improves access to the program for counties impacted by Hurricane Michael.

SB 922: Sen. Joe Gruters
Passed the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee.

HB 779: Rep. Spencer Roach
The House did not take action.

Preparing Florida's Infrastructure for Smart Growth & Development



High Speed Passenger Rail

Florida Chamber Opposes

Discourages private transportation investment by creating an unnecessary set of state and local regulations in a system that is adequately regulated and preempted by federal law.

SB 676: Sen. Debbie Mayfield
Passed the Infrastructure and Security Committee.

HB 465: Rep. Tyler Sirois
The House did not take action.



Allowing Local Regulations on 5G

Removes Florida Chamber backed legislation that provided a uniform set of rules for the next generation of cellular technology.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 1848: Sen. Jose Rodriguez
The Senate did not take action.

HB 6075: Rep. Anna Eskamani
The House did not take action.



Environmental Protection Act

Protects Florida's environmental regulatory structure from a fringe legal philosophy that would grant nearly unlimited standing for frivolous lawsuits

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 1382: Sen. Ben Albritton
Placed on the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee agenda for January 27.

HB 1199: Rep. Blaise Ingoglia
The House did not take action.

Building the Perfect Climate for Business



Rep. Erin Grall
R-Vero Beach

Motor Vehicle Insurance

Repeals Florida's motor vehicle no-fault law (personal injury protection insurance) and creates mandatory bodily injury coverage.

Florida Chamber Monitoring

SB 378: Sen. Tom Lee
Passed the the Infrastructure and Security Committee.

HB 771: Rep. Erin Grall
The House did not take action.



Sen. Jeff Brandes
R-Saint Petersburg

Fair Settlement

Improves Florida's bottom-five legal climate by addressing Florida's broken bad faith standard.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 924: Sen. Jeff Brandes
Placed on the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee agenda for January 28.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Property Insurance

Improves Florida's bottom-five legal climate by addressing unnecessary lawsuit costs in property insurance claims due to contingency fee multipliers for attorney fees.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 914: Sen. Jeff Brandes
Passed the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Asbestos Trust Claims

Decreases the gamesmanship in asbestos trust claims by improving transparency and adding notice requirements by the plaintiff within 30 days of a claim being filed.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 1582: Sen. David Simmons
The Senate did not take action.

HB 741: Rep. Tom Leek
One committee reference removed.
Now in Judiciary Committee.



Damages

Improves Florida's bottom-five legal climate by allowing a jury to see how much is usually paid for medical care versus the amount billed.

Florida Chamber Supports

A Senate Bill Has Not Been Filed

HB 9: Rep. Tom Leek

The House did not take action.



Damages

Defines damages in personal injury cases for past, present or future medicals as usual and customary charges in the community for medical expenses.

Florida Chamber Monitoring

SB 1668: Sen. David Simmons

Placed on the Senate Judiciary Committee agenda for January 28.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Innocent Sellers

Improves Florida's bottom-five legal climate by eliminating vicarious liability for product sellers in a product liability action.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 896: Sen. Jeff Brandes
The Senate did not take action.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Motor Vehicle Dealers

Clarifies that the dangerous instrumentality doctrine, which does not apply to rental vehicles, also does not apply to loaner vehicles when a car is being serviced and certain insurance requirements are met.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 1738: Sen. Jeff Brandes
The Senate did not take action.

HB 977: Rep. Bob Rommel
The House did not take action.



Solicitation of Legal Services

Increases health safety by adding certain requirements and disclosures for advertisements that intend to solicit legal services from patients of medical devices and pharmaceuticals.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 1288: Sen. Tom Wright
The Senate did not take action.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Florida Commission on Human Relations

Clarifies that for discrimination complaints before the Florida Commission on Human Relations, the statute of limitations is one year for an aggrieved party regardless of whether the Commission made a reasonable cause determination within 180 days. This fixes a 2000 Florida Supreme Court decision, *Joshua v. City of Gainesville*.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 726: Sen. Darryl Rouson
The Senate did not take action.

HB 255: Rep. Bruce Antone
The House did not take action.



Minimum Wage

Incrementally increases the state minimum wage to over $15 an hour to the detriment of small businesses and certain employees.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 456: Sen. Jose Javier Rodriguez
The Senate did not take action.

HB 691: Rep. Al Jacquet
The House did not take action.



Discrimination in Labor and Employment

Interferes in employment practices by prohibiting a job creator from requesting or relying on previous wage or salary information to interview, hire, promote or employ an employee.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 90: Sen. Linda Stewart
The Senate did not take action.

HB 739: Rep. Geraldine Thompson
The House did not take action.



Prohibited Discrimination Hair

Creates a new cause of action by adding hairstyle to the list of protected classes, such as gender, race or creed, under which it's unlawful to discriminate for housing or employment opportunities.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 566: Sen. Randolph Bracy
The Senate did not take action.

HB 761: Rep. Kamia Brown
The House did not take action.



Unlawful Discrimination - Height/Weight

Creates a new cause of action by adding height and weight to the list of protected classes, such as gender, race or creed, under which it's unlawful to discriminate for housing or employment opportunities.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 644: Sen. Oscar Braynon
The Senate did not take action.

HB 635: Rep. Barbara Watson
The House did not take action.



Pregnant Employees

Interferes in the employer-employee relationship by creating new mandates for employers of pregnant employees.

Florida Chamber Opposes

A Senate Bill Has Not Been Filed

HB 795: Rep. Dotie Joseph
The House did not take action.



Employment Practices

Creates a new cause of action and interferes with the employer-employee relationship by mandating job creators provide up to three months of paid family leave for the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a new child.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 1194: Sen. Janet Cruz
The Senate did not take action.

HB 889: Rep. Tracie Davis
The House did not take action.



Heat Related Illness

Adds redundant mandates for job creators with employees that regularly perform work outside.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 882: Sen. Victor Torres, Jr.
The Senate did not take action.

HB 513: Rep. Carlos Guillermo Smith
The House did not take action.



Background Screening (Ban the Box)

Prohibits job creators from requesting information about an applicant's criminal history prior to an initial job interview, regardless of the nature of employment.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 616: Sen. Bobby Powell
The Senate did not take action.

HB 473: Rep. Anika Omphroy
The House did not take action.



Medical Marijuana Employee Protection

Florida Chamber Opposes

Eliminates the ability of job creators to maintain a Drug-Free Workplace by creating a new cause of action against employers that take an adverse action against a person who tests positive for medical marijuana while on the job.

SB 962: Sen. Lori Berman
The Senate did not take action.

HB 595: Rep. Tina Polsky
The House did not take action.



Overtime Pay

Florida Chamber Opposes

Interferes in the employer-employee relationship by mandating overtime pay for all salaried employees earning less than $51,064 a year, regardless of employee class or existing benefit and wage structure.

SB 1436: Sen. Victor Torres, Jr.
The Senate did not take action.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Wage and Employment Benefits Requirements

Encourages a patchwork of burdensome regulations by allowing local governments to set minimum wage requirements and mandated benefit requirements.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 1520: Sen. Jose Javier Rodriguez
The Senate did not take action.

HB 6065: Rep. Carlos Guillermo Smith
The House did not take action.



Preemption of Conditions of Employment

Prohibits local governments from passing regulations on businesses that interfere with conditions of employment, including wages, scheduling, benefits and background screening.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 1126: Sen. Joe Gruters
The Senate did not take action.

HB 305: Rep. Bob Rommel
The House did not take action.



Home Delivery Services

Creates a new cause of action and mandates level II background screenings for the delivery of household goods.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 1796: Sen. Keith Perry
The Senate did not take action.

HB 1129: Rep. Mike Caruso
The House did not take action.



Sales Tax Modernization

Modernizes Florida's tax code and levels the playing field for main street businesses by allowing for the collection of sales tax already due from internet retailers.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 126: Sen. Joe Gruters
The Senate did not take action.

HB 159: Rep. Chuck Clemons
The House did not take action.



Corporate Income Tax

Increases the corporate income tax burden on Florida businesses by eliminating the rate reduction that was provided by the legislature in response to the increased tax base as a result of the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 1576: Sen. Jose Javier Rodriguez
The Senate did not take action.

HB 6021: Rep. Anna Eskamani
The House did not take action.



Communications Services Tax

Streamlines and reduces the local communications services tax, reducing the tax burden for Florida families and job creators.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 1174: Sen. Travis Hutson
The Senate did not take action.

HB 701: Rep. Jason Fischer
The House did not take action.



Small Business Exemption - Business Rent Tax

Florida Chamber Supports

Exempts small businesses under a certain number of employees from the business rent tax, the Florida-only sales tax charged on commercial leases.

SB 1778: Sen. Joe Gruters
The Senate did not take action.

HB 1141: Rep. Mike Caruso
The House did not take action.



Corporate Income Tax Combined Reporting

Florida Chamber Supports

Mandates an affiliated group of corporations with common ownership file a combined water's edge corporate income tax return, which may include income that may not be attributable to Florida.

SB 1596: Sen. Jose Javier Rodriguez
The Senate did not take action.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Small Business Saturday

Supports shopping at local small businesses by eliminating the sales tax on purchases on the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 1052: Sen. Annette Taddeo
The Senate did not take action.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Property Tax Exemptions Used by Hospitals

Treats non-profit hospitals differently for property tax purposes than other non-profits.

Florida Chamber Opposes

A Senate Bill Has Not Been Filed

HB 919: Rep. Mike Caruso
The House did not take action.



Litigation Financing Consumer Protection

Protects injured parties from unscrupulous lenders offering high interest rates that hope to take advantage of the lawsuit and draw out litigation in favor of a greater reward that doesn't always make the injured party whole.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 1828: Sen. Doug Broxson
The Senate did not take action.

CJS-1: Rep. Bob Rommel
Passed the House Civil Justice Subcommittee (filed now as HB 7041, Leek).



Contingency Fees

Addresses rising attorney fees in property insurance lawsuits by narrowing the practice of a contingency risk multiplier being added in addition to an hourly fee.

Florida Chamber Supports

A Senate Bill Has Not Been Filed

JDC-2: Rep. Paul Renner
Passed the House Judiciary Committee.

Making Government and Civics More Efficient and Effective



Drug and Cosmetic Act

Creates statewide uniformity in the sale of drugs, cosmetics, and sunscreen.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 172: Sen. Rob Bradley
Poised for final passage on the Senate Floor on January 29.

HB 113: Rep. Spencer Roach
Passed the House Local, Federal and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee.



Sale of Sunscreen

Bans the sale of FDA-approved sunscreen outside of very narrow provisions.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 318: Sen. Linda Stewart
The Senate did not take action.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Plastic Bag and Plastic Straw Ban

Bans the use of plastic straws and bags statewide.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 40: Sen. Kevin Rader
The Senate did not take action.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



State Funds

Protects the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund and makes housing more attainable for Florida families and workers.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 306: Sen. Debbie Mayfield
The Senate did not take action.

HB 381: Sam Killebrew
The House did not take action.



Collective Bargaining

Removes Florida Chamber-backed reforms.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 624: Sen. Linda Stewart
The Senate did not take action.

A House Bill Has Not Been Filed



Vacation Rentals

Protects the private property rights of owners by establishing a statewide framework for the use of short term vacation rentals.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 1128: Sen. Manny Diaz, Jr.
The Senate did not take action.

HB 1011: Rep. Jason Fischer
Passed the House Workforce Development and Tourism Subcommittee.



Preemption Removal

Removes a Florida Chamber-backed reform that brought a statewide system for food packaging regulations.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 182: Sen. Linda Stewart
The Senate did not take action.

HB 6043: Rep. Michael Grieco
The House did not take action.



E-Verify Mandate

Mandates a flawed E-Verify system, creating more unneeded regulations without commiserate benefit.

Florida Chamber Opposes

SB 664: Sen. Tom Lee
The Senate did not take action.
SB 1822: Joe Gruters
The Senate did not take action.

HB 1265: Rep. Cord Byrd
The House did not take action.



Paycheck Protection

Protects public sector workers from being automatically enrolled in a union against their wishes.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 804: Sen. Jeff Brandes
The Senate did not take action.

HB 1: Rep. Jamie Grant
Passed the House Oversight, Transparency and Public Management Subcommittee.



Constitutional Protections

Protects Florida's Constitution from out-of-state interests buying their way onto the ballot.

Florida Chamber Supports

SB 1794: Sen. Travis Hutson
Placed on the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee agenda for January 27.

JDC-1: Rep. Paul Renner
Passed the House Judiciary Committee (filed now as HB 7037, J. Grant).



Patient Safety Culture Surveys

Requires hospitals to provide specified information & data relating to patient safety & quality measures to patient under certain circumstances or to any person upon request; requires hospitals & ambulatory surgical centers to submit patient safety culture survey data to AHCA.

Florida Chamber Monitoring

SB 1370: Sen. Gayle Harrell
The Senate did not take action.

HB 763: Rep. Michael Grant
The House did not take action.



Health Care Practitioners

Allows Physician Assistants (PA) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN) to practice medicine to the full extent of their education and training.

Florida Chamber Supports

A Senate Bill Has Not Been Filed

HB 607: Rep. Cary Pigman
The House did not take action.