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2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Session Week 2 | January 19 – 23

Senate Transportation Committee – 1/20/2026

SB 654 Traffic Infraction Enforcement by Representative DiCeglie

Meeting Summary

Representative DiCeglie presented the bill; SB 654 expands and refines traffic infraction enforcement tools and procedures, particularly for school zones and school bus violations, while revising requirements for fine distributions and privacy protections.

Member Debate & Questions

Senator Davis

- *Asked whether the bill prohibits any type of information-sharing agreement with federal agencies.*
- *Asked if the bill restricts face-recognition technologies.*
- *Response (Senator DiCeglie):*
 - *Noted that the bill “doesn’t specifically touch on” federal data-sharing agreements but emphasizes privacy.*
 - *Clarified that the bill does not introduce new face-recognition systems.*

Senator Martin

- *Asked about requiring flashing amber lights in school zones whenever a camera is enforcing the reduced speed limit.*
- *Asked whether private school buses may place cameras on buses and follow a comparable enforcement process.*
- *Asked about placing bus stops on major roads with multiple lanes and whether engineer opinion is standard to ensure safe locations.*
- *Response (Senator DiCeglie):*
 - *Expressed willingness to clarify that cameras should be active only when flashing beacons operate, to ensure fairness.*
 - *Offered to research how private school bus camera enforcement might work.*



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- *Recognized that bus-stop placement is primarily a local district matter and not explicitly addressed in the bill, but safety remains paramount.*
- *Senator Wright, Davis, and Massuloo stated their support for the bill.*

Vote

Reported Favorably

9 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Arrington, Davis, Jones, Avila, Martin, Massullo, Jr., McClain, Truenow, Wright

House Pre-K – 12 Budget Subcommittee – 1/20/2026

HB 731 Interscholastic or Intrasccholastic Extracurricular Activities by Representative Abbott

Meeting Summary

Representative Abbott presented the bill; HB 731 authorizes the use of booster club funds to pay coaches or sponsors, revise student transfer eligibility rules for extracurricular activities, and allow certain athletic administrators to negotiate higher compensation.

Member Debate & Questions

- *Representative Ashley Viola Gantt, Ranking Member*
 - *Asked about the booster club provision (lines 37–43), including whether a booster club could represent a single sport or multiple activities within a school.*
 - *Sought clarification on the language “...may not control the provision of funds,” specifically asking, “What does that mean?”*
 - *Asked about the 20-day timeline on eligibility determinations (line 83) and whether it followed an existing standard.*
 - *Expressed concerns about whether coaches could be exploited or pressured by wealthy donors if boosters are allowed to pay them different amounts (e.g., \$500 vs. \$15,000).*
 - *Inquired about the new term “athletic administrator” (lines 105–111), whether it already exists, and asked if coaches who are considered administrative personnel could individually negotiate their salaries.*

The sponsors (Representatives Abbott and Anderson) responded that local school districts would retain authority to approve booster associations and create oversight policies. They

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also noted that the bill language does not prescribe specific contract terms, but they remain open to additional safeguards.

- *Representative Jervonte “Tae” Edmonds*
 - *Asked for the average coaching stipend in Florida and whether it is paid monthly or per year.*
 - *Inquired if the bill, which permits booster clubs to supplement coaches’ pay, prioritizes sports over academics when teachers are also underpaid.*

The sponsors clarified that top stipends often range around \$6,000 to \$8,000 annually for high school football coaches, with some other sports receiving much less. They emphasized that most coaches are also teachers, so the stipend supplements an existing salary.

- *Representative Tobin “Toby” Overdorf*
 - *Requested a walkthrough of the bill’s new transfer rules for student athletes and whether a statewide governing body would determine eligibility.*

The sponsors explained that the bill centralizes transfer oversight to one governing association, ensuring uniform rules rather than relying on disparate district policies.

- *Representative Fiona McFarland*
 - *Confirmed a student could still transfer schools multiple times for academic reasons under district choice policies, but the new law would address only athletic eligibility.*

-

Vote

Reported Favorably

15 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Daniels, Edmonds, Gantt, Lopez, Brackett, Gerwig, McFarland, Michael, Nix, Jr. Overdorf, Persons-Mulicka, Rizo, Snyder, Trabulsy, Yeager

Senate Community Affairs Committee – 1/20/2026

SB 548 Growth Management by Senator McClain

Meeting Summary

Senator McClain presented the bill; SB 548 strengthens concurrency requirements and impact fee regulations by introducing a plan-based methodology and new standards for local governments, school districts, and special districts.



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Member Debate & Questions

- *Senator Jones*
- *Asked whether there were significant changes from a similar bill last year, especially regarding the definition of extraordinary circumstances.*
- *Senator McClain (R) noted he had not presented a comparable bill previously and confirmed that extraordinary circumstances remain a key point in current legislation.*
- *Senator McClain and Pizzo expressed their support for the bill.*

Vote

Reported Favorably

15 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Alvarez, J., Aristide, Campbell, Rosenwald, Young, Basabe, Chaney, Conerly, Greco, Griffiths Jr., Holcomb, Plasencia, Stark, Valdés, Weinberger

Senate Education Prek-K-12 Committee – 1/20/2026

SB 7022 Public Records/Examination and Assessment Instruments by Education Pre-K-12

Meeting Summary

SB 7022 was presented; SB 7022 deletes duplicative language regarding public records exemptions, expands confidentiality of examination and assessment instruments, and revises disclosure and retention requirements.

Member Debate & Questions

- *Senator Berman*
- *Asked if there are any cases where students or parents have requested the information and gotten access to testing items before tests.*
- *Answer (Deputy Staff Director Alex Brick): “I’m not aware of any...there haven’t been issues with that.”*
- *Representative Blanco and Gossett-Seidman both expressed their support for the bill.*

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Reported Favorably

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6 Yeas; 2 Nays

Yeas: Osgood, Burgess, Calatayud, Gaetz, Simon, Yarborough

Nays: Berman, Davis

SB 178 Athletics in Public K-12 Schools by Senator Jones

Meeting Summary

Senator Jones explained the bill; SB 178 authorize coaches to use personal funds to provide certain benefits to student-athletes under specified conditions.

Member Debate & Questions

- *Senator Don Gaetz*
 - *Asked whether there is any limit or guardrail on where the funds may come from if a coach deploys personal funds.*
 - *Senator Shevrin “Shev” Jones noted that such guardrails are not in the current language but indicated he plans to add them so funds are genuinely personal and not funneled by boosters.*
- *Chair Corey Simon*
 - *Inquired if the bill should apply to “all governing bodies” of school athletics, not just the Florida High School Athletic Association.*
 - *Senator Jones agreed and plans to include that in future amendments.*
- *Senator Jones, Burgess and Simon expressed their support of the bill.*

Vote

Reported Favorably

8 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Berman, Davis, Osgood, Burgess, Calatayud, Gaetz, Simon, Yarborough

SB 430 Oaths of School Personnel by Senator Yarborough

Meeting Summary

The bill was temporarily postponed. SB 430 requires certain school and higher education personnel to take a specified oath before beginning their duties.

SB 464 Observance of Veterans’ Day by K-12 Schools by Senator Avila

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Meeting Summary

Senator Avila presented the bill; SB 464 requires K-12 schools to observe Veterans' Day as a holiday.

Member Debate & Questions

- Senator Osgood asked Senator Avila:
“As a veteran, does it ... offend you that a school is open on Veterans Day? ... Do you find it offensive that a school is open?”
 - Senator Avila responded:
“I’m not speaking on behalf of ... the 1,400,000 veterans in the State of Florida. ... November in general is Veterans Appreciation Month. ... I think, you know, one specific day that we dedicate to them ... and then have the activities on the day prior or the day after.”
- Senator Berman asked Senator Avila about using Veterans Day as a teacher professional development day:
“Is there a possibility that you would ... consider amending your bill ... so the students would still have the day off, but the teachers would not?”
 - Senator Avila replied:
“If it truly is a holiday, then it is a holiday. If not, then don’t call it a holiday.”
- Senator Burgess asked Senator Avila about military grooming standards in a lighthearted exchange:
“Is it fair to assume that given your low fade and ... clean-cut face that you might have had duty this weekend?”
 - Senator Avila responded by discussing ongoing physical fitness requirements for servicemembers.
- Senator Davis asked how this change would affect contractual obligations for teachers.
 - Senator Avila answered:
“Each and every school district gets to put their schedule together ... They could certainly ... fold a day into that [or] ... put a day on the front or back end.”
- Senator Osgood, Berman, Burgess, and Davis expressed their support for the bill.

Vote

Reported Favorably

8 Yeas; 0 Nays

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Yeas: Berman, Davis, Osgood, Burgess, Calatayud, Gaetz, Simon, Yarborough

SB 538 Extracurricular Activities by Senator Simon

Meeting Summary

Senator Simon presented the bill; SB 538 expands and clarifies eligibility for extracurricular activities while streamlining transfer rules, mandating a youth fitness program, and allowing flexible compensation for athletic coaches.

Member Debate & Questions

- **Senator Lori Berman**

Asked Senator Corey Simon (R) to clarify whether the new framework for additional coaching compensation “only applied to sports.”

- Senator Simon replied: “So yes, in its current form, it only applies to sports, but as our discussion last night... I do want to open that up to other [extracurricular] activities ... that are being presented on our campuses.”

- **Senator Tracie Davis**

Requested additional details about possible extra funding for coaches.

- Senator Simon explained: “In terms of the framework for the additional coaches’ compensation, there is no fee attached to this bill. That will be determined at the district level... and those fees can come from booster clubs or things of that sort.”

- **Senator Corey Simon**

Presented the bill and an amendment intended to:

- Standardize student eligibility rules for extracurricular activities across all education settings.
- Prohibit additional participation fees.
- Mandate annual participation in the Presidential Youth Fitness Program as part of physical education.
- Permit school districts to set coaching compensation locally.

Vote

Reported Favorably

8 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Berman, Davis, Osgood, Burgess, Calatayud, Gaetz, Simon, Yarborough

SB 920 Mathematics Education by Senator Gaetz

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Meeting Summary

Senator Gaetz presented the bill; SB 920 creates new mathematics pathways emphasizing career-oriented applied algebra courses and develop recommendations for an adaptive artificial intelligence tool to support mathematics instruction.

Member Debate & Questions

Senator Berman

- Asked:
“So you said ... only one third of the students basically pass the Algebra exam. If we change the program ... will the students still have to pass an Algebra exam?”
- Answered by **Senator Gaetz**:
“The bill requires that students continue to take and pass the end-of-course exam and ... sustain [and] fulfill all other graduation requirements.
- Senator Gaetz and Simon expressed their support for the bill.

Vote

Reported Favorably

8 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Berman, Davis, Osgood, Burgess, Calatayud, Gaetz, Simon, Yarborough

SB 1036 School Counselors by Senator Calatayud

Meeting Summary

Senator Calatayud presented the bill; SB 1036 exempts school counselors from certain educator certification requirements while allowing school districts to impose them at their discretion.

Member Debate & Questions

- Senator Berman asked why the bill did not include other positions such as library and media specialists:
 - Senator Calatayud responded that the bill continues work with the same House sponsor, Representative Hunschofsky, on a larger mental health focus. She explained that past legislation addressed mental health counselors and that, this year, they are focusing on school counselors.
- Senator Berman expressed her support for the bill.



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Reported Favorably

8 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Berman, Davis, Osgood, Burgess, Calatayud, Gaetz, Simon, Yarborough

SB 1136 Dental Screenings for K-12 Students by Senator Calatayud

Meeting Summary

Senator Calatayud presented the bill; SB 1036 authorizes limited, noninvasive dental screenings for K-12 students after providing written notice and allowing parents or guardians to opt out.

Member Debate & Questions

No questions were asked.

- Senator Lori Berman
 - Expressed enthusiasm: “I am married to a dentist. So I love this bill.”
 - Stressed the importance of reducing student absenteeism due to dental issues.

Vote

Reported Favorably

8 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Berman, Davis, Osgood, Burgess, Calatayud, Gaetz, Simon, Yarborough

SB 1216 Public School Personnel Compensation by Senator Rodriguez

Meeting Summary

Senator Rodriguez presented the bill; SB 1216 expands cost-of-living salary adjustments to more public school employees while removing certain pay limitations and broadening the use of advanced degrees for salary purposes.

Member Debate & Questions

No questions were asked.

- Senator Calatayud
 - “I just want to say thank you to Senator Rodriguez. I think this is a great bill ... [and] a solution-focused bill on feedback we’ve received from stakeholders.”
- Senator Osgood



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- Praised the increased flexibility in the bill for designing compensation packages.
- “It really empowers a school district to be flexible when designing a compensation package and not just stuck into something that the state gave the school districts years ago.”
- Also appreciated the provision recognizing advanced degrees.

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Reported Favorably

8 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Berman, Davis, Osgood, Burgess, Calatayud, Gaetz, Simon, Yarborough

Careers & Workforce Subcommittee – 1/20/26

HB 1115 Grants for Genetic Counseling Education by Representative Anderson

Meeting Summary

Representative Anderson presented the bill; HB 1115 establishes the Genetic Counseling Education Enhancement Grant Program within the State University System to support accredited graduate genetic counseling programs through competitive grants.

Member Debate & Questions

- Representative Gantt
 - Asked: “The grant that’s gonna be created, what funding source is that ...?”
 - Representative Anderson answered there is no prescriptive funding in the bill; it would be subject to appropriations.
 - Follow-up: “Would schools be eligible to apply for a grant if they don’t currently have a program ...?”
 - Representative Anderson confirmed that universities without a program in place would be eligible to apply.
- Representative Johnson explained personal experience with long wait times to see geneticists and stated “I think this is going to add really a critical next step for us as a state, to be able to grow more.”

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Reported Favorably with Committee Substitute

16 Yeas; 0 Nays

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Yeas: Daley, Gantt, Rosenwald, Tant, Baker, Bankson, Cobb, Esposito, Jacques, Johnson, Kincart Jonsson, Koster, Melo, Plakon, Plasencia, Stark

SB 325 Education and Workforce Development for Current and Former Inmates by Senator Kendall

Meeting Summary

Representative Kendall presented the bill; SB 325 expands the Department of Transportation's workforce development funding for inmates, establish commercial driver license training programs, and reimburse employers for hiring qualified former inmates.

Member Debate & Questions

- Representative Johnson
 - Question: "Just for confirmation, the Department of Corrections and Secretary Dixon is signed off and okay with this?"
 - Answer (Representative Kendall): "Yes ... we really did thoroughly ... we've thoroughly done our homework as best we can." Representative Kendall noted a 16-person work group involving the Department of Corrections, industry stakeholders, and policy chiefs.
- Representative Kendall highlighted Florida's "dire need ... for over 16,000 CDL drivers," expanding CDL training behind the fence for nonviolent inmates with fewer than two years remaining on their sentences. The program includes allowing supervised training using state-owned vehicles and requires an annual report on outcomes.

Vote

Reported Favorably

16 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Daley, Gantt, Rosenwald, Tant, Baker, Bankson, Cobb, Esposito, Jacques, Johnson, Kendall, Kincart Jonsson, Koster, Plakon, Plasencia, Stark

HB 753 School Counselors by Representative Hunschofsky

Meeting Summary

Representative Hunschofsky presented the bill; HB 753 requires standardized evaluation criteria for certified school counselors based on the Florida School Counseling Standards



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and exempt prospective school counselors from specified educator certification requirements.

Member Debate & Questions

No questions were asked.

- Representative Hunschofsky explained the bill and stated:

“PCS for HB 753 school counselors removes two of the educator certificate requirements, the mastery of general knowledge and professional preparation and education competence for school counselors seeking employment in schools. These are requirements that are not related to the field of counseling and can be a barrier to entry in getting school counselors in schools.”

- She further clarified:

“This bill does not impact or change the requirement for school counselors to still have their master’s degree or higher in school counseling or in general counseling with school experience.”

- Representative Hunschofsky, on behalf of Representative McFarland, presented an amendment:

“What this amendment does, it specifies that school counselors are evaluated based on Florida school counselor standards and not classroom teacher standards.”

Vote

Reported Favorably

15 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Daley, Gantt, Rosenwald, Tant, Baker, Bankson, Cobb, Esposito, Jacques, Johnson, Koster, Melo, Plakon, Plasencia, Stark

HB 1081 Cybersecurity Internships by Representative Sirois

Meeting Summary

Representative Sirois presented the bill; HB 1081 creates the Cybersecurity Experiential Internship and Clearance Readiness Program to expand the state's cybersecurity workforce.



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Member Debate & Questions

No questions were asked.

- Representative Tyler I. Sirois introduced HB 1081, stating:
“This bill creates the cybersecurity experiential internship and clearance readiness program within the Department of Commerce. That is the bill.”
- In closing, Representative Sirois added:
“I want to thank the committee members, and I want to thank you especially for helping me work through the particulars of this bill.”

Senate Criminal Justice – 1/20/2026

SB 212 Sexual Offenders and Sexual Predators by Senator McClain

Meeting Summary

Senator McClain presented the bill; SB 212 expand residency and location restrictions for persons convicted of specified sexual offenses involving minors by defining new prohibited areas, imposing additional limitations on where they may live or visit, and enhancing penalties for violations.

Member Debate & Questions

No substantive questions were asked by committee members.

- Senator McClain, Bill Sponsor
 - Described a delete-all amendment replacing the bill’s text.
 - Clarified that the amendment refines definitions in section 775.215, Florida Statutes, including “public bathing place” and “public swimming pool,” and adds a restricted presence provision.
 - Emphasized retention of registry checks for specified employment or volunteer positions.

Vote

Reported Favorably with Committee Substitute

7 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Bernard, Pizzo, Bradley, Garcia, Martin, Simon, Yarborough

Commerce and Tourism Committee – 1/21/26

SB 482 Artificial Intelligence Bill of Rights by Senator Leek

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Meeting Summary

Senator Leek presented the bill; SB 482 establishes an Artificial Intelligence Bill of Rights, restricts government contracts with foreign-controlled AI entities, mandates transparency and parental consent for minors' use of companion chatbots, and forbids unauthorized commercial use of AI-generated personal likenesses.

Member Debate & Questions

- *Senator LaVon Bracy Davis*
 - *Asked whether the bill aligns with President Trump's recent executive order threatening to withhold federal funding from states that enact "onerous" AI regulations. She also inquired about AI assistants like ChatGPT, Claude, or Google Gemini possibly being considered "companion chatbots."*
 - *Senator Tom Leek, bill sponsor, clarified that the bill focuses on consumer protections and is therefore not in conflict with the executive order's concerns about restrictive regulations. He noted that straightforward question-and-answer tools (e.g., ChatGPT) would not typically qualify as companion chatbots, though more personalized AI tools might.*
- *Senator Tracie Davis*
 - *Asked how the bill's parental control provisions affect minors, including privacy implications for older teenagers discussing topics like sexual orientation, gender identity, or mental health. She also inquired about how these controls intersect with Florida's existing privacy laws.*
 - *Senator Tom Leek stated that the bill helps parents supervise companion-chatbot usage, allowing them to terminate minors' accounts. He acknowledged that the bill does not create special exemptions for older teens' privacy, nor does it directly address how these rules might overlap with health privacy laws.*
 - *Senator Tracie Davis asked whether any other states have passed AI regulations.*
 - *Senator Tom Leek mentioned California, Texas, and Utah, among others, as having some form of AI regulation, with varying levels of restrictiveness.*
- *Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith*
 - *Requested clarification on the definition of "de-identified data," noting that the phrase "cannot reasonably be linked" can vary in interpretation. Asked who would determine what is "reasonable."*



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- *Senator Tom Leek explained that the term fosters flexibility to accommodate evolving technology and that courts would ultimately determine whether data has been sufficiently de-identified, meaning personal identifying information has been scrubbed. Leek also said that changes to definitions may be expected as the bill moves forward.*
 - *Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith asked whether any auditing or compliance mechanisms exist besides the Attorney General's enforcement powers.*
 - *Senator Tom Leek confirmed the bill does not mandate additional audits. Enforcement remains under the state Attorney General's authority.*
 - *Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith inquired about a private right of action for adults.*
 - *Senator Tom Leek stated that the bill's private right of action is limited to cases involving minors. Adults may bring complaints through the Attorney General's office, which is "the enforcer" of state laws. Leek noted that Florida's Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act also allows individuals to file suit.*
-
- *Senator Carlos Guillermo Smith*
 - *Praised the bill as a needed first step in regulating AI and protecting minors, emphasizing the importance of refining definitions and strengthening enforcement. Suggested exploring clearer rules for "de-identified data" and broader civil and labor protections.*
 - *Senator Tracie Davis*
 - *Expressed support for creating a framework to address AI's rapidly evolving impact, referencing the digital divide in some communities. Highlighted concerns over potential discrimination in jobs, housing, and loans. Supported ongoing revisions to strengthen protections and rights in the bill.*

Vote

Reported Favorably

10 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Arrington, Bracy Davis, Davis, Smith, DiCeglie, Leek, Mayfield, McClain, Wright, Yarborough



Senate Education Postsecondary – 1/21/26

SB 194 Charlie Kirk Remembrance Day by Senator Mayfield

Meeting Summary

Senator Mayfield presented the bill; SB 194 designate October 14 as Charlie Kirk Day of Remembrance and authorize the Governor to issue an annual proclamation.

Member Debate & Questions

- *Senator Berman*
- *Asked, “What criteria does the Legislature generally use when deciding to create a statutorily designated day of remembrance?”*
 - *Senator Martin responded he was unfamiliar with any formal standard and instead emphasized that individuals should follow their own criteria.*
- *Inquired, “What’s the purpose for making this in statute rather than just relying on a resolution or a gubernatorial proclamation?”*
 - *Senator Martin noted, “There’s quite a number of days of remembrance...that Florida recognizes, many way more controversial than this one,” and said the statutory method was a matter of preference.*
- *Wondered whether others “with similar professional backgrounds” had been honored in statute, noting that the only other individuals recognized were Ronald Reagan and Jefferson Davis.*
 - *Senator Martin noted Kirk’s influence on civic debates, especially for “young leaders,” set him apart despite not being an elected official.*
- *Followed up citing the example of Minnesota legislator, Melissa Hortman, who was assassinated also on the basis of political violence, asking “Do you think we should have Melissa Hortman day of remembrance?”*
 - *Senator Martin responded, “Not to minimize her impact... [but] I wouldn’t expect Minnesota to have a day of remembrance for someone with no notoriety... Charlie Kirk’s impact was nationwide.”*
- *Pressed further, stating “So having a well known name like the Kardashians and a packed funeral should be qualifications for having a day of remembrance?”*
 - *Senator Martin emphasized that what makes Charlie Kirk’s death so impactful is that Mr. Kirk was assassinated while actively engaging in his first amendment right.*



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- Asked, *“Do you have any concerns that establishing this could lead to an increase in future requests for recognition of individuals such as media personalities...?”*
 - Senator Martin responded, *“I don’t have concerns with people requesting that other people be recognized.”*
- Senator Martin, Bill Sponsor
 - Emphasized Charlie Kirk’s impact on civic engagement, stating he encouraged students *“to think critically, engage in civic life, and stand up for constitutional freedoms.”*
 - Suggested that Kirk’s role in prompting controversial debates on college campuses was *“integral to the framework and the fabric of our country.”*
- Senator Simon
 - Praised Kirk for driving *“conversations in places that weren’t always favorable,”* calling that *“courage.”*
 - Argued it is important to foster open discourse: *“When conversation stops, the fighting starts.”*
- Chair Calatayud
 - Noted appreciation for Senator Martin’s willingness to engage in conversations with Senator Jones in the future to discuss Jones’ failed amendment.
- Senator Berman
 - Questioned the need for a statutory dedication: *“There’s really no reason why we in this Legislature should be having a day of remembrance.”*
 - Took issue with Kirk’s remarks she considered *“bigoted,” “racist,”* and *“misogynist,”* calling it *“a horrible message for the state of Florida.”*
- Senator Jones
 - Expressed concerns that honoring Kirk *“delegitimizes”* certain groups, especially communities of color.
 - Proposed an amendment to recognize George Floyd on the same date, saying, *“We must be prepared to remember fully, not selectively.”*
 - Called out the hypocrisy of establishing a Charlie Kirk day of remembrance on the grounds of defending the first amendment while actively censoring teachers, stating *“please let’s not come here and act as if we’re trying to set some standard... let’s be honest.”*

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Reported Favorably

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4 Yeas; 2 Nays

Yeas: Calatayud, Harrell, Rodriguez, Simon

Nays: Berman, Jones

Senate Ethics and Elections – 1/21/26

A Senate Confirmation Hearing was held and several executive appointments were held for consideration to offices.

SB 964 Financial Disclosures by Senator Wright

Meeting Summary

Senator Wright presented the bill; SB 964 requires reporting individuals and procurement employees to file annual gift and honorarium expense reports with the Commission on Ethics rather than with their financial disclosure statements.

Member Debate & Questions

- *There were no substantive questions posed by committee members.*
- *Senator Wright presented SB 964. He described it as “an excellent bill” and explained that it clarifies where reporting individuals must file certain gift and honoraria disclosures, aligning them with Commission on Ethics processes.*

Vote

Reported Favorably

7 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Bernard, Polsky, Rouson, Ávila, Bradley, Gaetz, García, Grall

House Government Operations Subcommittee – 1/21/2026

HB 603 Ethics for Public Employees by Representative Lopez

Meeting Summary

Representative Lopez presented the bill; HB 603 expand the definition of “relative” to include foster parents and foster children for public employees under state ethics provisions.

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Member Debate & Questions

No questions were asked during the meeting.

- Representative Johanna López presented the bill, stating:
 - “House Bill 603 makes an update to Florida’s ethics laws by recognizing foster families as family.”
 - She emphasized that “many foster parents and foster children maintain deep familial bonds throughout their lives,” and the measure “simply recognizes that reality.”
 - She concluded by noting, “This is about fairness and recognizing the profound bonds created through foster care.”

Vote

Reported Favorably

18 yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Alvarez, Jr., Artside, Campbell, Rosenwald, Rount, Basabe, Chaney, Conerly, Gentry, Greco, Griffiths Jr., Holcomb, Nix Jr., Plasencia, Sapp, Stark, Valdes, Weinberger

House Student Academic Success Subcommittee – 1/21/26

HB 461 Volunteering at Polling Locations by Representative Michael

Meeting Summary

Representative Michael presented the bill; HB 461 exempts registered or preregistered high school students from the prohibition on private funds when volunteering as poll worker assistants.

Member Debate & Questions

- Representative López asked:
 - “Why only students? And if it’s only during the time frame of the school day, or can they do it after school hours?”
- Representative Michael responded: “We want to engage our students into such a great civic opportunity... that covers a 16-year-old on up... They can participate on weekends,” and about after school during the week, “I will ask my SoE (Supervisor of Elections) and get back with you on that.”
- Representative Antone, Minority Ranking Member:



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- Expressed support, noting, “Because of your support for Representative Michael’s bill, I’m going to support her bill.”
- Representative Hinson:
 - Praised the measure as “hands-on civic education” and stated, “This is the kind of thing I came to Tallahassee for.”
- Bill Sponsor Representative Michael:
 - Emphasized that it “offers a narrow, common-sense clarification that protects election integrity while allowing students to serve their communities,” highlighting its role in giving students a “positive hands-on civic experience.”

Vote

Reported Favorably

16 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Antone, Dinkley, Hinson, Tendrich, Bankson, Benaroch, Berfield, Blanco, Gerwig, Hodgers, McFarland, Michael, Oliver, Owen, Rizo, Yarkosky

HB 1071 Education by Representative Trabulsy

Meeting Summary

Representative Trabulsy presented the bill; HB 1071 prohibits discriminatory educational expenditures, strengthen parent opt-out rights, require FDA-approved epinephrine devices, shorten provider ineligibility periods, mandate mathematics instruction plans, remove certain door lock provisions, and revise district and educator accountability requirements.

Member Debate & Questions

- Representative Yvonne Hayes Hinson
 - Asked whether HB 1071 would prohibit using state or federal funds for political activism groups, such as Turning Point.
 - Bill Sponsor (Rep. Dana Trabulsy) responded that the bill “would not allow state dollars to be spent on political activism.”
 - Asked who would create materials on human embryological and fetal development, and how they would remain factual.
 - Sponsor noted it “will be determined by the Department of Education in rulemaking,” with an expectation of “medically accurate” content.
- Representative Debra Tendrich

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- Asked how the prohibition on funding for political activism affects programs like “Ought to Be a Law” or student government.
 - Sponsor indicated that civics education can cover such topics, but schools “aren’t allowed to spend state dollars on political activism.”
- Representative Lisa Dunkley
 - Asked how revised VPK standards might reduce access in underserved areas.
 - Sponsor replied that access is not reduced and quality is improved.
 - Asked about potential disruption if instructional materials are removed mid-year.
 - Sponsor stated no “free pass” on testing, but teachers can obtain alternate curriculum from the Department of Education.
- Ranking Member Bruce Antone
 - Asked about the amendment prohibiting charter schools from dismissing students for academic reasons while under a school-improvement plan.
 - Sponsor indicated the specifics of enforcement or consequences would be decided in rulemaking.
- Representative Taylor Michael Yarkosky
 - Asked whether corrective measures for persistently low-performing schools affect an entire district or just the individual school.
 - Sponsor answered that only the specific underperforming school would be impacted.
- Representative Bankson, Michael, and Yarkosky expressed their support for the bill.
- Representative Antone, Dunkley, Hinson, Lopez, and Tendrich expressed they were not supportive of the bill.

House Education Administration – 1/20/26

HB 901 Diabetes Research by Representative Kincart Jonsson

Meeting Summary

Representative Kincart Jonsson presented the bill; SB 901 establishes the University of Florida Diabetes Institute as a centralized resource for diabetes research, screening, prevention, treatment, and education.

Member Debate & Questions

*All summaries are created with AI



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- Representative Susan L. Valdés asked if the University of Florida has examined the correlation between obesity and diabetes.
 - Bill sponsor Representative Jennifer Kincart Jonsson replied she would follow up and “work with you outside of the committee.”
- Representative Jennifer Kincart Jonsson, bill sponsor, emphasized that diabetes “affects more than two million Floridians” and highlighted its economic impact, stating it “costs our state tens of billions of dollars each year in medical expenses and lost productivity.”
- She underscored that the Legislature previously invested \$10 million in the University of Florida Diabetes Institute.
- She noted the proposal “does not create a new program” but places the institute in statute to improve diabetes research, treatment, and education while positioning Florida as “a national leader in fighting diabetes.”

Vote

Reported Favorably

18 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Alvarez, J., Artiside, Long, Nixon, Woodson, Albert, Basabe, Black, Boyles, Gossett-Seidman, Holcomb, Mooney, Jr., Nix, Jr, Porras, Sapp, Trabulsy, Valdes, Weinberger

HB 1119 Material Harmful to Minors by Representative Bankson

Meeting Summary

Representative Bankson presented the bill; SB 1119 defines “harmful to minors” and strengthens processes for objecting to and removing objectionable instructional materials.

Member Debate & Questions

- Representative Susan L. Valdés asked whether the bill’s restrictions apply to “general public libraries” or only to schools. Representative Doug Bankson (R) clarified, “Yes... only schools.”
- Representative Marie Paule Woodson questioned why the state needs to “override local decisions” if laws already prohibit harmful content. Representative Bankson explained that “existing standards... have been bypassed,” so the bill closes that loophole.
- Representative Woodson also asked how the bill balances removing harmful materials with ensuring students retain exposure to diverse perspectives.



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Representative Bankson replied, “This... does not ban books,” and said it only targets “material that is harmful to minors...based upon our statute.”

- Representative Woodson further inquired about students' readiness for real-world discussions if sensitive topics are removed. Representative Bankson responded that the definitions focus on “prurient” content and do not bar age-appropriate discussions.
- Representative James Vernon “Jim” Mooney, Jr. said he was concerned about allowing objections from residents without children in the school system. The sponsor noted that such provisions are already part of existing law, meant to ensure “the board... can see” if any material violates standards.
- Representative Angela “Angie” Nixon asked who would make final decisions on removing materials and whether “mere discussion” of sexual assault could lead to removal. Representative Bankson replied that local school boards retain final authority and that only content “of a prurient nature” is disqualified.
- Representative Nixon also asked if the bill contradicts “recent supreme court rulings.” Representative Bankson referenced the ability to differentiate between adults and minors, stating, “Ginsburg in ’68... gave us the mandate to... protect children differently.”
- Representative Wallace Aristide asked about “college and career readiness,” specifically in advanced courses, like AP courses, and whether advanced texts with difficult themes might be removed. Representative Bankson argued the bill would remove only material containing explicit sexual content and would not ban valuable scholarly works that avoid “prurient” passages.
- Representative Nixon asked why there should be a “more restrictive censorship standard” for public schools as compared to private schools. Representative Bankson responded that private settings are directed by parents, while “for public education, we have... a responsibility... to protect minors.”
- Representative Black, Weinberger, Holcomb, and Valdes expressed their support for the bill.
- Representative Nixon, Woodson, and Artisde expressed their concerns with the bill

Vote

Reported Favorably

13 Yeas; 5 Nays

*All summaries are created with AI



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Yeas: Albert, Basabe, Black, Boyles, Gossett-Seidman, Holcomb, Mooney, Jr., Nix, Jr, Porras, Sapp, Trabulsy, Valdes, Weinberger
Nays: Alvarez, J., Artiside, Long, Nixon, Woodson,

HB 4027 Hillsborough County Public Schools, Hillsborough County by Representative Owen

Meeting Summary

Representative Owen presented the bill; HB 4027 transitions the Hillsborough County Superintendent of Schools from an appointed position to an elected, partisan position pending voter approval.

Member Debate & Questions

- *Representative Angela “Angie” Nixon asked, “Are you concerned that this bill is actually going to politicize education?”*
 - *Bill sponsor Representative Michael Owen replied that it is “already politicized,” given that elected school boards choose the superintendent. He emphasized the bill is “simply a referendum,” allowing voters in Hillsborough County to decide whether to elect the superintendent.*
- *Representative Fabián Basabe – Stated the proposal “is just about letting the people decide how they want their governance to occur.” He suggested that if voters oppose an elected superintendent, they can vote against it at the ballot box.*
- *Representative Nathan Boyles – Shared that both counties in his district have long used elected superintendents with success. He likened the current appointed model to “the legislature pick[ing] the governor,” arguing direct election may offer clearer accountability.*
- *Representative Jeff Holcomb – Observed that “politics is everywhere,” including in school board races. He contended that allowing citizens to elect the superintendent is more transparent than the board making that appointment.*
- *Representative Danny Nix, Jr. –Suggested elected leadership strengthens oversight, preventing lackluster superintendents from remaining in place due to preexisting board relationships.*
- *Representative Susan L. Valdés – Cited her experience as a former Hillsborough County School Board member, noting that “the politics was heavy” with appointed superintendents as well. She favored allowing local voters to decide.*



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- *Representative Michael Owen – Concluded that the bill gives “the parents of the children of Hillsborough County” a direct choice. He reiterated it is a referendum, so if voters reject an elected superintendent, “they can vote no.”*
- *Representative Angela “Angie” Nixon – Expressed concern that an elected superintendent would “cause an infusion of private interest funds” and shift the emphasis from qualifications to “who flashes a nice smile.” She noted that only Florida and Alabama elect superintendents, linking such politics to lower academic outcomes. She urged focusing on “experience and effectiveness over politics.”*

Vote

Reported Favorably

17 Yeas; 1 Nays

Yeas: Alvarez, J., Artiside, Long, Nixon, Woodson, Albert, Basabe, Black, Boyles, Gossett-Seidman, Holcomb, Mooney, Jr., Nix, Jr, Porras, Sapp, Trabulsy, Valdes, Weinberger

Nays: Nixon

Senate Session– 1/22/26

SB 320 Administrative Efficiency in Public Schools by Senator Simon

Meeting Summary

Senator Simon presented the bill; SB 320 streamlines district responsibilities and remove certain mandates to increase administrative efficiency in public schools.

Member Debate & Questions

- Senator LaVon Bracy Davis
 - Asked whether the bill’s provision requiring charter schools to respond directly to the Department of Education included any specific consequences or remedies if a charter school fails to comply.
 - In his closing, Senator Corey Simon responded that the bill simply creates a direct pipeline between charter schools and the DOE, removing the need to go through the district. No particular penalties or enforcement measures were described.
- Senator Osgood, Bracy Davis, and Simon expressed their support for the bill.



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House Education & Employment Committee – 1/22/26

HB 127 Required Instruction in Cursive Writing by Representative Overdorf

Meeting Summary

Representative Overdorf presented the bill; HB 127 requires instruction in cursive writing for certain grade levels and ensure students demonstrate proficiency by the end of grade 5.

Member Debate & Questions

- *Ranking Member Hinson asked:*
 - *“Will there be grade equivalents for each proficiency? Is it specified?”*
 - *Representative Trabulsy answered that it would be similar to any other subject taught in schools, where the standards of proficiency learned in second grade will be different than that in fifth grade.*
 - *“If a student fails to demonstrate proficiency in cursive when taking the written evaluation, what would happen? Will that have any impact on ... grade level?”*
 - *Representative Trabulsy clarified: “No, that is not part of Florida’s testing requirements to move to the next grade level.”*
 - *“[Will] charter schools ... need to provide instruction in cursive writing as well?”*
 - *Representative Trabulsy stated: “Yes. Cursive instruction is incorporated into the state standards that all public schools and charter schools must teach.”*
- *Representative Sapp: Discussed the importance of cursive in “the AI era” when students “are gonna have to be able to write [and] test in person again.”*
- *Representative Trabulsy, presenting on behalf of Representative Overdorf:*
 - *In opening statements, highlighted the teaching of cursive helps with the early diagnosis of autism and dyslexia, as well as improvements in hand-eye and coordination skills.*
 - *Emphasized that without learning cursive, students “can’t read the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution, or even a grandparent’s handwritten letter.”*
 - *Shared feedback from a bank teller who noted that some customers “don’t have a signature ... They just put an ‘X’.”*



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- *Concluded that a signature is “as unique as our fingerprints,” underscoring the need to preserve cursive writing skills. “Everyone will be able to uniquely write their name on a formal document.”*

Vote

Reported Favorably

17 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Dunkley, Harris, Hinson, Berfield, Canady, Gerwig, Kendall, Michael, Nix, Jr., Perons-Mulicka, Rizo, Sapp, Stark, Trabulsy, Valdes, Yarkosky, Yeager

HB 409 Observance of Veterans’ Day by K-12 Schools by Senator Giallombardo

Meeting Summary

Representative Giallombardo presented the bill; HB 409 Members asked why some districts still hold classes on Veterans Day and learned that 19 school districts remained open; debate was overwhelmingly supportive of closing schools to observe the holiday. Ultimately, the committee advanced HB 409 with unanimous approval, emphasizing respect and gratitude for those who served.

Member Debate & Questions

- Representative Valdés asked: “Representative Giallombardo, not every district honors Veterans Day, for real?”
- Representative Giallombardo answered: “There were 19 school districts in Florida last year that went to school on Veterans Day.”
- *Representative Nixon, Nix, Holcomb and Valdes expreseed their support of the bill and some highlighted personal experiences.*

Vote

Reported Favorably with Committee Substitute

18 Yeas; 0 Nays

Yeas: Alvarez, J., Aristide, Long, Nixon, Woodson, Albert, Basabe, Black, Boyles, Gossett-Seidman, Holcomb, Mooney, Jr., Nix, Jr., Porras, Sapp, Trabulsy, Valdés, Weinberger



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HB 453 Protection of Religious Expression in Public Schools by Representative Gossett-Seidman

Meeting Summary

Representative Tramont presented the bill; HB 453 Expand the ways students can satisfy physical education and performing arts requirements for a standard high school diploma.

Member Debate & Questions

- Representative Hinson (D) asked:
“Do you know if every school has Special Olympics, or will this be just schools that do hold Special Olympics? How is that going to work?”
 - Representative Gossett Seidman (R) answered:
“It would be the Special Olympics held in their municipality or county...They would have forms completely authorized and signed by the parents, the Special Olympics staff. It would be very much overseen.”
- Representative Hinson (D) followed up briefly about how participation would be documented for course credit, noting the idea was beneficial for students with disabilities.

Vote

Reported Favorably

16 Yeas, 0 Nays

Yeas: Aristide, Dunkley, Edmonds, Hinson, Berfield, Canady, Gerwig, Kendall, Michael, Nix. Jr., Persons-Mulicka, Rizo, Sapp, Stark, Trubus, Valdes, Yarkosky, Yeager

HB 583 Protection of Religious Expression in Public Schools by Representative Tramont

Meeting Summary

Representative Tramont presented the bill; HB 583 prohibits discrimination in public schools based on religious expression by students or school personnel.

Member Debate & Questions

- Representative Woodson asked why this measure is necessary if “the provisions are already in state law and also in federal law.”



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- *Representative Tramont acknowledged that current law protects religious expression but noted statutes “can be repealed” and placing protections in the Florida Constitution would grant them “the utmost amount of protection.”*
- *Representative Nixon asked whether the measure “is inclusive of all religions,” citing examples such as Muslim, Jewish, or Ifa practice.*
 - *Representative Tramont confirmed, “The short answer is yes,” emphasizing that the text “does not mention one specific faith” and protects freedom of expression for all religions.*
- *Representative Artiside, Woodson, Alvarez and Black expressed their support of the bill and some highlighted personal experiences.*
- *Representative Nixon expressed that while the measure claims to protect freedom for all faiths, many debates in practice “push Christianity.” Also raised concern that the language regarding curriculum might affect science instruction. She ultimately stated she would not support the measure unless further clarified, observing that some groups are “still demonized or left out.”*

Vote

Reported Favorably

18 Yeas; 1 Nays

Yeas: Aristide, Dunkley, Edmonds, Hinson, Berfield, Canady, Gerwig, Kendall, Michael, Nix. Jr., Persons-Mulicka, Rizo, Sapp, Stark, Trabulsky, Valdes, Yarkosky, Yeager

Nays: Harris

2026 Session Bill Statistics

House

General Bills:	783 Bills
Local Bills:	49 Bills
Joint Resolutions:	18 Bills

Senate

General Bills:	800 Bills
Local Bills:	0 Bills
Joint Resolutions:	12 Bills

*All summaries are created with AI



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2026 Legislative Session Dates

- Election Dates & Activities [[here](#)]
- Senate 2026 Regular Session Dates [[here](#)]
- Major Budget Events [[here](#)]
- Bill Filing and Appropriation Project Request Deadlines [[here](#)]
- Important House Legislative Dates for the 2026 Regular Session [[here](#)]