

SINE DIE BRIEF

2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



The following is a quick look at some of the bills that we have been tracking throughout the 2021 Florida Legislative Session and their final status. The list is neither exclusive or exhaustive but represents some of our top priorities.

	PASS	FAIL
<p>EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS – OPPOSE</p> <p>SB 78 by Rodrigues / HB 947 by Plakon SB 1014 by Baxley / HB 835 by Byrd</p> <p>These union busting legislative packages changed dramatically over time, with bills moving and stalling beginning before session during the Interim Committee process in January. In the end, anti-worker forces settled on SB 1014/HB 853 which would have extended a 50% membership requirement, a ban on automatic paycheck deductions for dues and an onerous new recertification process to all public sector unions except those representing police officers, firefighters and correctional officers.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>FLORIDA RETIREMENT SYSTEM (ELIMINATING FRS PUBLIC PENSION)- OPPOSE</p> <p>SB 84 by Rodrigues (R)</p> <p>The Florida Retirement System is one of the strongest in the nation and provides minimal retirement security for over one million active employees and retirees, contributing over \$18.2 billion to Florida’s economy. The Florida Senate moved a couple variations of proposals to close the Defined Benefit portion of FRS to all new hires, forcing them into the 401(k)-type investment plan. This would have completely destabilized the fund for current and future participants and would have cost the taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>SALES AND USE TAX- OPPOSE</p> <p>SB 50 by Gruters / HB 15 by Clemons</p> <p>This legislation started as a good bill to start collecting sales taxes on internet sales. This would have generated precious resources for Florida’s General Revenue fund and could have paid for healthcare, schools, environmental protection and other critically underfunded needs. Midway in the process, the legislation was changed so that all those resources, estimated to be \$1 billion the first year, would be used exclusively to bail out big businesses from paying their proper Unemployment Insurance Premiums and cuts to taxes on commercial leases, while doing nothing to fix the failed Unemployment Insurance System.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Pass

Fail

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE-SUPPORT



SB 1906 by Brodeur

As filed, this bill only looked to raise the maximum weekly unemployment benefit amount by \$100 to \$375 per week, but we worked hard to add increases in eligibility that would have helped address the fact that almost 90% of unemployed workers never qualify for any benefits at all. The Senate passed the bill unanimously but the Governor pressed House leaders to never take up the issue.

COVID-19 LIABILITY IMMUNITY FOR BUSINESSES AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS- OPPOSE



SB 72 by Brandes / HB 7 by McClure

SB 74 by Brandes / HB 7005 by Health & Human Services, Burton

These bills were combined and passed the legislature as SB 72. The bill provides blanket immunity for any damages suffered by consumers/employees due to action or inaction by employers during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The bill shuts down access to the courts to workers or customers who were affected ed by the COVID pandemic based on the policies and practices of business or health care providers including nursing homes.

PUBLIC RECORDS & PUBLIC MEETINGS (POSTSECONDARY ED EXECUTIVE SEARCH/SECRECY BILL)- OPPOSE



SB 220 by Brandes & Rodrigues (R) / HB 997 by Garrison

Florida has some of the best “sunshine laws” in the country, laws that ensure government transparency. This legislation would have exempted the searches for college and university presidents from these laws. These positions are some of the most powerful unelected officials in the state, controlling billions of dollars in taxpayer money. It’s vital that these searches and hiring processes remain out in the open.

IMPOSING TERM LIMITS ON LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS- OPPOSE



HB 11 by Sabatini / SB 1642 by Gruters

School privatization advocates have been consistently pushing legislation seeking to weaken the power of local school boards in an effort to silence any push back against vouchers and for-profit charter schools. These bills would have put school board term limits on the ballot as a constitutional amendment, in yet another attempt to influence local elections. While these bills didn’t see much movement, there were repeated attempts to add this language during the final weeks of session.



Pass

Fail

**COMBATING PUBLIC DISORDER
(CRIMINALIZING PUBLIC PROTEST)- OPPOSE**



HB 1 by Fernandez-Barquin / SB 484 by Burgess

The legislation radically alters over twelve areas of current law and will lead to many more arrests for actions and events most consider protected speech activities. The net effect will be more violence not less. These changes were first rolled out by Governor DeSantis during last year's campaigns following actions across the state in support of Black Lives Matter, racial justice and law enforcement reform. The bill was reported to be the Governor's number one priority during this COVID-19 pandemic session.

PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS- OPPOSE



SB 1076 by Brodeur / HB 53 by DiCeglie

This legislation will dramatically reduce the ability for local governments to enact and enforce local ordinances on public workers projects centered around higher wages on these projects, the use of apprentices on these projects and local hire preferences. While the legislation passed, we were able to reduce the scope of the preemptions in terms of the projects covered.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION- OPPOSE



SB 90 by Baxley / HB 7041 Public Integrity & Elections Committee, Byrd, Ingoglia

This legislation would restrict voting options statewide and make it harder for citizens to cast their votes. The bill was pushed heavily by Republican leadership in the Florida Legislature. There were multiple strike-all amendments in both chambers during the final days of session. We are still reviewing this complex legislation to ascertain what provisions made the final cut.



Pass

Fail

EARLY LEARNING AND EARLY GRADE SUCCESS- SUPPORT



HB 419 by Aloupis, Grall

This important policy legislation overhauls Florida's PreK program which was once the model for the county but has been in decline for many years. This legislation moves supervision of the early childhood programs into the Department of Education and adds important measures of performance equally to public and private providers.

SCHOOL PRIVATIZATION - OPPOSED



HB 7045 by Education & Employment Committee, Fine, Fischer

This is one of the largest expansions of tax-payer funded private school vouchers in history and moves many more students into the regular funding program and builds in automatic enrollment increases. It also takes funds that are dedicated to specific programs including teacher salaries and sends them to unaccountable private schools and affects the availability of funds for our public school students.