



FLORIDA'S BUSINESS AGENDA REPORT

Friday May 2, 2008 • Sine Die: 6:02 p.m.

Session Stats
995 House Bills Filed
1,507 Senate Bills Filed
More Than 250
Total Bills Passed

Florida Chamber Succeeds in Challenging Year for Business Tough Session for Legislators

Despite unprecedented attacks on the business climate, the Legislature passed the Florida Chamber's nearly \$2 billion economic stimulus package and took the next step toward a comprehensive energy policy that is critical to the future energy supply in our state.





"Although budget cuts and election year politics made the 2008 Session an uphill climb, we pushed through important legislation and fought off attacks from personal injury trial lawyers, union bosses and their special interest friends with stacked agendas," said Mark Wilson, president and CEO of the Florida Chamber.

The Florida Chamber thanks our grassroots members, association partners and local chambers of commerce, for aggressively advocating for *Florida's Business Agenda*.





Success also came in thwarting over 100 attacks that would kill jobs, damage our business climate and slow our economy from transitioning to our new innovation economy. Such bills included an attempt to destroy the current arbitration process that would have created more lawsuits, and a unitary tax that would create even more uncertainty in the Florida tax system.

Up Next: Elections




140 of 160 state legislative seats are up for election this fall. These elections provide the business community another opportunity to unite behind pro-business candidates. [Visit the Florida Chamber's Election Center at www.FLChamber.com/ELections](http://www.FLChamber.com/ELections)

|  <h2>Comprehensive Property Tax Relief for Floridians</h2> | | | |
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|  | <h3>PRESUMPTION OF CORRECTNESS – REFORM FOR BUSINESS</h3> <p>CS/HB 1283 (Cannon) SB 678 (Fasano)</p> | <p>Would have restored fairness in the property assessment process and leveled the playing field between government and businesses that challenge unfair assessment valuations. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | <p>DIED IN SENATE</p> |
|  | <h3>UNITARY TAX</h3> <p>HB 1237 (Gelber) SB 2766 (Deutch)</p> | <p>This massive tax increase on businesses would have created further uncertainty. FLORIDA CHAMBER OPPOSED</p> | <p>KILLED</p> |
|  | <h3>TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING</h3> <p>HB 181 (Harrell) CS/SB 392 (Storms)</p> | <p>Requires local governments to electronically post certain spending information to better allow taxpayers to see where their money is being spent. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | <p>DID NOT PASS</p> |


[Click Here to Visit the Florida Chamber's Elections Center](http://www.FLChamber.com/ELections)











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|  | <p>GOVERNMENT REVENUE CAP</p> <p>Taxation & Budget Reform Commission & Florida Legislature</p> | <p>Would place a reasonable limit on the revenue growth of government and limits further cost shift to the business community.</p> <p>FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | DID NOT PASS |
|  | <p>NON-HOMESTEAD ASSESSMENT CAP</p> <p>Taxation & Budget Reform Commission</p> | <p>Similar to 3% cap on homestead properties assessable value, this 5% non-homestead assessment cap is included in the tax swap ballot initiative and will be on the ballot in November.</p> <p>FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | PASSED |
|  | <p>FIXING UNFAIR PRACTICE OF HIGHEST & BEST USE</p> <p>HB 909</p> | <p>This Florida Chamber-supported reform protects property owners from unfair and over taxation. It begins to ensure properties are taxed on their use, not their potential.</p> <p>FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | PASSED |
|  | <p>WORKING WATERFRONTS</p> <p>Taxation & Budget Reform Commission (CP 6, 8 & 34)</p> | <p>Assesses specified working waterfront properties based on current use rather than highest and best use.</p> <p>FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | PASSED |












 *Lowering Property Insurance Costs*

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|  | <p>CAT FUND IMPROVEMENTS</p> <p>HB 7021 (Reagan) CS/SB 2156 (Posey)</p> | <p>Would have reduced assessments to businesses due to Citizens' lower than market rates by reducing CAT fund exposure by \$3 billion.</p> <p>FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | DID NOT PASS |
|  | <p>STABLE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY INSURANCE RATES</p> <p>HB 1001 (Richter) CS/SB 1422 (Bennett)</p> | <p>Would have allowed a business to purchase a non-assessable policy covering a commercial risk that is not subject to assessments from Citizens insurance company. This would protect businesses from the uncertainty of the undesirable assessment consequences of state-run Citizens Insurance.</p> <p>FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | DIED IN SENATE |
|  | <p>LOWERING CITIZENS ASSESSMENTS</p> <p>SB 2860 (Atwater)</p> | <p>Lowers maximum assessments from Citizens Insurance on businesses by 12%. Increases assessments on Citizen policyholders who are paying less than actuarially sound rates by 15%.</p> <p>FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | PASSED |

 *Economic Development*

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|  | <p>ECONOMIC STIMULUS</p> <p>CS/HB 1295 (Attkisson) SB 2310 (Ring)</p> | <p>This nearly \$2 billion economic stimulus package is rocket fuel to Florida's new economy and will authorize the State Board of Administration to identify and invest up to 1.5 percent of the Florida State Retirement System to industries that offer the potential for high-growth and high-paying jobs in Florida.</p> <p>FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | <p>PASSED Awaiting Governor's Signature</p> |
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|  | <p>RESEARCH COMMERCIALIZATION & MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM</p> <p>CS/HB 593 (Precourt) SB 1120 (Gaetz)</p> | <p>This program would have promoted research and development activity by providing incentives to accelerate the commercialization of advanced technology and foster the creation of start-up businesses based in Florida. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | <p>DIED IN SENATE</p> |
|  | <p>RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT TAX CREDIT</p> <p>HB 733 (Grant) CS/SB 1398 (Oelrich)</p> | <p>Would have created the research and development tax credit program to encourage corporate research and development activity and attract high-wage, professional research jobs to Florida. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | <p>DID NOT PASS</p> |
|  | <p>SPACE INDUSTRY SUPPORT</p> <p>HB 1355 (Altman) CS/SB 2426 (Posey)</p> | <p>Would have ensured our government is keeping the space industry a priority by ensuring innovative partnerships between our universities and government agencies. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | <p>DIED IN SENATE</p> |
|  <p><i>Education and Workforce</i></p> | | | |
|  | <p>WORKFORCE & EDUCATION</p> <p>Ready to Work Credential HB 985 (Nelson) SB 2460 (Lynn)</p> | <p>Requires high school diploma to include "Ready to Work" credential, as applicable, so businesses can hire job candidates that have met entry level standards to earn this credential. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | <p>PASSED IN SB 1908</p> |
|  | <p>POLITICIZING HIGHER EDUCATION</p> <p>SJR 2308 (Carlton) HJR 7025 (Pickens)</p> | <p>Would have politicized higher education and created uncertainty for Florida's best scientists and academics. FLORIDA CHAMBER OPPOSED</p> | <p>KILLED</p> |
|  <p><i>Energy Solutions</i></p> | | | |
|  | <p>ENERGY SOLUTIONS</p> <p>HB 7135 (Mayfield) CS/SB 1544 (Saunders)</p> | <p>This legislation is the next step in addressing Florida's need for affordable, reliable and environmentally responsible energy for the additional 10 million residents expected by 2030. Much hard work and careful analysis went into the creation and passage of this policy and we strongly urge Governor Crist to sign it into law. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED</p> | <p>PASSED Awaiting Governor's signature</p> |
|  <p><i>Lawsuit Abuse Reform</i></p> | | | |
|  | <p>TRIAL LAWYERS ELIMINATION OF ARBITRATION</p> <p>HB 1219 (McBurney) SB 2076 (Deutch)</p> | <p>This personal injury trial lawyers attack on business would have destroyed the arbitration process and result in more people suing each other. FLORIDA CHAMBER OPPOSED</p> | <p>KILLED</p> |

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|  | EXPERT WITNESS REFORM HB 645 (Ross) SB 1448 (Wise) | Would have strengthened requirements for expert testimony to mirror Federal standards and improve the legal climate in Florida, which currently ranks 42 nd in the nation and is out of balance in favor of trial lawyers. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED | DID NOT PASS |
|  | BAD FAITH REFORM HB 589 (Brown) SB 882 (Baker) | Would have limited bad faith claims to policyholders and not third-party claimants FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED | DID NOT PASS |
|  | SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY FOR ER DOCTORS HB 839 (Homan) SB 1640 (Baker) | Would have extended sovereign immunity to ER doctors to reduce health care costs and frivolous lawsuits that reduce care and drive up health care costs. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED | DID NOT PASS |
|  | CONTINGENCY FEES HB 1341 (Cannon) SB 2430 (Webster) | Caps personal injury trial lawyers ability to make money and collect extensive fees. | DIED IN SENATE |
|  Growth Leadership | | | |
|  | RAIDING TRANSPORTATION FUNDS State Budget | Diverts \$300 million from State Transportation Trust Fund away from transportation projects. This provides further obstacles to economic development progress. FLORIDA CHAMBER OPPOSED | FUNDS DIVERTED |
|  | CRITICAL MINING NEEDS SB 774 (Baker) HB 7155 (Mayfield) | Would have provided strong procedural assurance that construction aggregate materials are available for mining. This helps to keep construction costs low for Florida businesses and would have helped move our economy forward. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED | DID NOT PASS |
|  Constitutional Amendment Reform | | | |
|  | PETITION REFORM CS/HB 903 (Dorworth) CS/SB 2340 (Posey) | Would have further protected our constitution and kept the amendment process in the hands of citizens by regulating out-of-state paid petition gatherers that help special interests buy their way into the Constitution. FLORIDA CHAMBER SUPPORTED | DIED IN SENATE |
|  Private Property Rights | | | |
|  | GUNS AT WORK HB 503 (Evers) SB 1130 (Peaden) | Strips private property rights from Florida employers and other private property owners through government intrusion. FLORIDA CHAMBER OPPOSED | PASSED Join our legal challenge to this attack on private property rights - www.FloridaChamber.com . |

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