

GRay Matters



It's not always black and white.



2020 Session: Week 5

2/17/20

The House and Senate passed their budgets with unanimous votes this week, sending the two sides into a debate over the differences in their spending plans.

The discrepancies between the Senate's \$92.8 billion plan and the House's \$91.4 billion budget range from small to large.

Affordable housing is one of the main sticking points, with the Senate electing to fully fund the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust at \$387 million. The House budget includes \$144 million in affordable housing money, but they're sweeping the rest.

At the lower end, costwise, is VISIT FLORIDA. The tourism marketing arm has the backing of the Governor and the Senate, which funds it at \$52.5 million. A bill moving through the chamber would also extend the agency's authorization through 2028. It is currently set to expire on July 1.

The House has no problem with that, electing to zero out VISIT FLORIDA's budget for the coming fiscal year and allowing it to sunset.

The Florida House of Representatives



— Representative **Randy Fine** debuted a committee bill (HB 7087) that would fold Florida Poly into the University of Florida and New College into Florida State University, as well as make changes to the EASE and ABLE grant programs. It was approved by the House Education Committee on Wednesday.

— House Speaker **Jose Oliva** said he wants to take another look at placing a 10 percent THC cap on medical marijuana, calling it “a priority” for the House. THC levels currently approach up to 25 percent in whole flower marijuana and up to 90 percent for fluid used in vaporizers.

Florida Senate

The Senate Judiciary Committee advanced a bill (SB 664) that would require private employers to use the federal E-Verify system to check the immigration status of workers, but the bill was amended to carve out employers in the agriculture industry. Oliva says the carve out is a non-starter in the House.



Bill of the Week

A bill filed by Fort Myers Republican Representative **Heather Fitzenhagen** could help law enforcement track down missing veterans.

HB 1051 would create a "Camo Alert" registry to house information on "at-risk veterans." The bill defines an "at-risk veteran" as a veteran or active-duty servicemember who suffers from mental illness, such as PTSD or a traumatic brain injury, or is concerned for their own mental stability and their disappearance poses a credible threat to their health and safety or the health and safety of another person.

Registration would be voluntary — a veteran or their legal guardian would provide the information and, if requested, can have the information removed at a later date. Should a veteran go missing, however, the information would be released to local law enforcement and the public.

The proposed Camo Alert system is similar to the Silver Alert program the state employs to track down elderly Floridians and the Amber Alert system, which is used following suspected child abductions. As such, much of the bill is dedicated to adding Camo Alert to the statutes governing the current slate of law enforcement alert systems.

Fitzenhagen's bill has not received a committee hearing. Senator **Victor Torres** has filed an identical bill in the Senate. It also has not made a committee agenda.

Federal Spotlight

GrayRobinson's Washington, DC office releases a newsletter each week entitled **The Golden Apple**, reporting on the "latest discord on Capitol Hill." This week's newsletter discusses FinCEN's plan to propose cryptocurrency regulations "very soon."

[Appearing before the Senate Finance Committee](#) to discuss the President's budget proposal on Wednesday, Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin fielded more than one question about how Treasury plans to address the use of cryptocurrencies to fund terrorism and other international criminal activities. The budget proposal includes funding increases for Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence and for the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), and would move the Secret Service from the Department of Homeland Security back into the Treasury. Mnuchin said an interagency group had been working on issues related to cryptocurrency for some time, and that FinCEN would be rolling out "significant new requirements" for transparency in cryptocurrency transactions. Treasury sees so-called "stable coins" as an opportunity to reduce payment processing costs, especially for small-dollar payments across international borders, but they want to make sure that "pure cryptocurrencies" such as Bitcoin cannot be used as secret bank accounts.

Read **The Golden Apple** in its entirety [here](#).

Client Spotlight



Rave Mobile Safety

Adam Eisenman, Director of Government Affairs

My role at Rave Mobile Safety entails: Adam Eisenman is the Director of Government Affairs at Rave Mobile Safety. Adam leads Rave's legislative and policy efforts nationally on a range of public safety issues from school safety to 9-1-1 resulting in statewide policy solutions that impact millions of individuals.

Rave Mobile Safety can help you: Rave is a software company that develops public safety solutions to help protect K-12 schools, municipalities, colleges, universities and fortune 500 organizations allowing for enhanced communication, collaboration, and response.

Something you wish people knew about Rave Mobile Safety that might not be obvious: One of the many benefits of my job is the amount of stakeholders I engage with across all levels of government including elected officials, public safety leadership teams and K-12 school administrators across the country. What might surprise folks is the amount of travel required from our team during legislative session, which I view as a perk being able to see new parts of the country with hopefully warmer climates than Boston!

What excites you about going to work each day: What drives me personally and our organization every day is the impact that our solutions have on public safety and the individuals who use our technology to keep their families safe. Not many technology companies can claim the mission driven culture present at Rave, the tools we build and customers we serve rely on our technology for multiple areas of emergency response.

Looking Ahead

Budget negotiations are set to begin, but there is still plenty of other business to attend to in committee.

The Senate Ethics and Elections Committee will hold confirmation hearings for nearly two dozen gubernatorial appointments when it meets Monday. Among the names on the agenda is Surgeon General **Scott Rivkees**.

On Tuesday, the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee will take up Senator **Tom Lee**'s E-Verify proposal.

The GrayRobinson Team

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