

Legislative Update



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Summary

Meet the Players



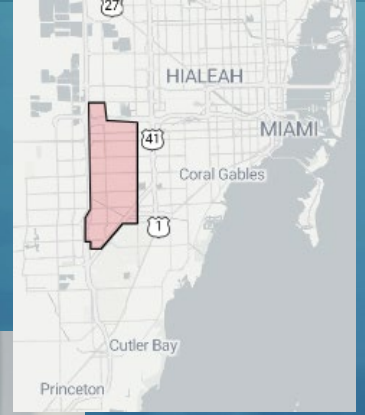
Ben Albritton
Senate President
2025-2026
District 27
Citrus Farmer



Ron DeSantis
Governor
2019-2026
Former Naval Officer
Attorney



Daniel Perez
Speaker of the House
2025-2026
District 116
Attorney



Summary

Legislative Session

- 60 days, ending May 2nd (next Friday)
- Only responsibility is to pass a budget
- Also file “bills” to try and pass new laws and change existing laws
- ~1900 bills filed, over 25% impact cities

Home Rule

- What we are fighting to keep (since 1968)
- System where local governments have a significant degree of autonomy in making decisions and enacting ordinances – without state government approval
- This autonomy can be challenged...

2025 Legislative Impacts for Local Governments

- Limit revenues
- Increase expenses without funding (“unfunded mandates”)
- Limit decision-making authority and expand exposure to lawsuits



Limit Revenues

Ad Valorem Property Taxes

- ▶ First, headlines to “eliminate” property taxes
- ▶ Further headlines result in property tax “relief”
- ▶ Senate proposes a bill requiring an impact study to be done by October 1, 2025 regarding the elimination of property taxes (SB 852)
- ▶ House proposes decrease to sales tax (HB 7031)
- ▶ Priorities appear different



More on Ad Valorem Property Taxes

- ▶ Additional \$100k exemption for all properties, including those currently not eligible (HJR 357)
- ▶ Extension of homestead exemption to leased properties (HJR 1257 / SJR 1510)
- ▶ Eliminating annual property assessments – use recent sale price (HJR 773)
- ▶ Limitations of millage rate increases (HB 787 / SB 996)
- ▶ Shifting homestead exemption from school district levy to non-school levy (SB 1018)
- ▶ Several new exemptions for affordable housing, agriculture, nursing homes, childcare facilities, seniors, veterans, etc.

Sunset Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA's)

HB 991 / SB 1242

- ▶ All CRA's must terminate by 09/30/2045
- ▶ No new projects or debt issuance after 10/1/25
- ▶ No new CRA's after 7/1/25



Local Option Tax Restrictions

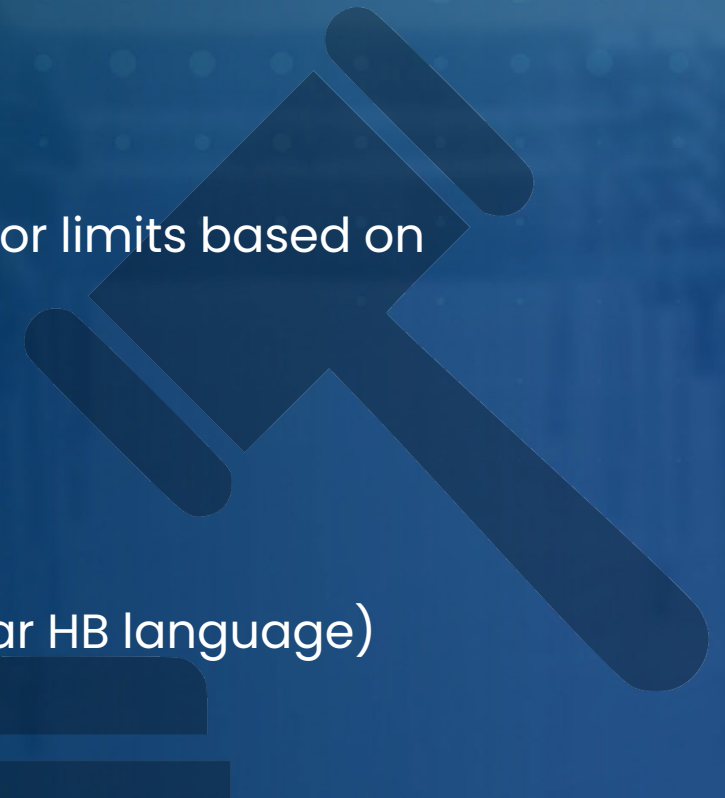
HB 1221 / SB 1664

- ▶ Requires voter-approved referendum to adopt or renew local option taxes (in 8-year increments)
- ▶ Sets expiration deadlines for tourism development taxes, local option food and beverage taxes, and discretionary sales surtaxes

Increase Expenses

Suits Against the Government (Sovereign Immunity)

- ▶ House Bill 301
 - ▶ Increases tort caps from current \$200k / \$300k to \$500k / \$1m for time period of 10/1/25 until 09/30/30
 - ▶ Then further increase to \$600k / \$1.1m effective 10/1/26
 - ▶ Governments may settle claims above these caps
 - ▶ Insurance policies cannot condition applicable payouts or limits based on the passage of a claims bill
 - ▶ Passed all three House committees
- ▶ Senate Bill 1570
 - ▶ Remains at increased tort caps of \$1m / \$3m (with similar HB language)
 - ▶ However, not heard in any Senate committee



Sewer Inspections and Repairs – HB 1187 / SB 1208

- ▶ Municipal utilities must inspect, document and repair sewer laterals
- ▶ Every sewer service lateral must be inspected – with a CCTV lateral launch camera system – every 7 years
- ▶ Identified issues reaching a certain severity score must be repaired within 12 months of discovery

Stormwater Inspections – SB 810

- ▶ Requires annual operation and maintenance inspections of stormwater management system
- ▶ Annual reports must be filed with DEP and DEM identifying deficiencies and blockages that could result in flooding

Expansion of First Responder Insurance Benefits

- ▶ Require employers to fully cover health insurance premiums for disabled firefighters (injured during training exercises), their spouses and dependent children. [HB 749 / SB 1202]
- ▶ HB 751 / SB 1160: Similar to above but applies to law enforcement and correctional officers.
- ▶ Expansion of existing Workers' Compensation Heart and Lung Presumption statute (HB 269 / SB 366):
 - ▶ Redefining "heart disease" to include most heart abnormalities (including aneurysms)
 - ▶ Redefining "law enforcement officer" to include part-time and auxiliary officers

Limit Authority / Expand Exposure

Emergencies – HB 1535

- ▶ Requires local governments to perform specific activities both pre- and post-disaster
- ▶ Restricts the regulation of land use and development following a hurricane
- ▶ Restriction in place for 1 year and applies within 100 miles of storm track
- ▶ Creates a cause of action with plaintiff attorney's fees, unless the contested regulation is withdrawn within 14 days of notice

Affordable Housing – HB 943

- ▶ Revises 2023 Live Local Act, a package to address affordable housing crisis by providing incentives and streamlining regulations for projects
- ▶ Exempts 20% of impact fees for qualifying projects
- ▶ Municipalities must approve the project – and must not restrict density, lot size, height – if (a) project is not in a zoning district solely for single-family or duplex use and (b) at least 40% of units will be affordable for 30 years
- ▶ Creates a cause of action if municipalities restrict or limit – in any way – affordable housing projects

Growth Management – HB 1209 / SB 1118

- ▶ Broad growth management bills favoring developers and reducing local government authority over land use
- ▶ Limits authority over impact fees
- ▶ Specifically targeted at Comprehensive Plan amendments:
 - ▶ Cannot restrict density
 - ▶ Requires supermajority vote for any amendment that increases development restrictions
 - ▶ Creates a cause of action for property owners to sue if requested amendment is not adopted within 180 days
 - ▶ Requires courts to determine compliance with state law, without deferring to local government interpretation

05

Recap

In Summary

Impacts:

- ▶ Limit revenues
- ▶ Increase expenses without funding (“unfunded mandates”)
- ▶ Limit decision-making authority and expand exposure to lawsuits

Next Steps:

- ▶ Session ends next Friday on May 2, 2025
- ▶ BOLO for last-minute “deals” as part of budget reconciliation
- ▶ Governor still has veto power

More Resources

- ▶ Monday morning (9 – 10 a.m.) call-in:
 - ▶ 1-888-585-9008, Participant Code: 301563714#
- ▶ Bill summaries (<https://www.flcities.com/advocacy-pages/legislative-bill-summaries>)
- ▶ Post-session FLC recap – contact Mary Edenfield @ medenfield@flcities.com
- ▶ Ryan Matthews post-session webinar:
 - ▶ Monday, June 2nd from 10 – 11 a.m.
 - ▶ Registration email will be sent soon

Thank You