

RSA INSIGHTS

Legislative Session Update

Friday, January 20 2023

The Three Big Things

That Happened This Week

1. Legislators Meet for Committee Week 3

They heard panels, presentations, and a select number of bills

2. Speaker Renner Unveils School Voucher Expansion Bill

HB1 will be one of his top priorities this session

3. Governor DeSantis Seeks to Make Covid-19 Protections Permanent

He asked the Legislature to extend the ban on mask and vaccine mandates, which expires soon.

Committee Week #3

Lawmakers convened in Tallahassee on Tuesday for the third interim committee week. This week was the busiest yet, with the first and second committee weeks being taken up by Special Session on property insurance and the Inauguration. Many committees heard panels and presentations from agency staff, and several early-filed bills had their first hearings.

HB 1 - School Choice

Speaker Renner unveiled one of his top priorities bills for session, HB1, a school choice bill that would expand school voucher eligibility to all K-12 students.

The bill, filed by Representative Tuck, removes nearly all eligibility parameters on the Family Empowerment Scholarship program, which is currently limited to households earning at or below 375% of the federal poverty level. This would enable any parents of K-12 public school-age children to receive vouchers to send their child to private school, although children from families with income below 185% of FPL or are in foster care would get priority. The bill would also eliminate almost 10,000 special needs students on waiting lists for scholarships by funding those school positions, and the bill also allows parents who home-school their children to be paid under the scholarship program.

The bill would also allow voucher recipients to use the public funds for more than just private tuition and transportation, as is current law. Families could spend the money on home-schooling, college courses, private tutoring, and AP exams, among other expenses.

Governor DeSantis' Covid Protection Priorities

Governor DeSantis unveiled several legislative priorities this week. One initiative, titled 'Prescribe Freedom', would permanently ban Covid-19 vaccine requirements and mask mandates, and protect healthcare practitioners' rights to disagree with "the preferred narrative of the medical community".

In a 2021 Special Session, the legislature passed a bill that prohibits vaccine mandates for employees and mask mandates in schools, however, this law is set to expire in June. The Governor's proposal would also prohibit 'Vaccine Passports'. The Governor has not provided bill language.

Last week the Governor proposed legislation to tackle high prescription drug costs by increasing the transparency of Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs). It would prohibit PBMs from requiring consumers to use mail-in pharmacies, prohibit PBMs from only using a 'narrow network' of pharmacies, and require additional reporting to justify drug price increases.

PRESCRIBE FREEDOM
Protecting Floridians from the "biomedical security state."

PERMANENT PROTECTIONS AGAINST THE BIOMEDICAL SECURITY STATE

- PERMANENTLY PROHIBITS COVID-19 MASK REQUIREMENTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE
- PERMANENTLY PROHIBITS COVID-19 VACCINE AND MASK REQUIREMENTS IN ALL SCHOOLS
- PERMANENTLY PROHIBITS COVID-19 VACCINE PASSPORTS IN FLORIDA
- PERMANENTLY PROHIBITS EMPLOYERS FROM HIRING OR FIRING BASED ON MRNA JOBS

PROTECTING MEDICAL FREEDOM OF CHOICE

- PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION BASED ON COVID-19 VACCINE STATUS
- REMOVES TWO-TIERED TEST AND MASK DISCRIMINATION

PROTECTING MEDICAL FREEDOM OF SPEECH

- PROTECTS MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS' FREEDOM OF SPEECH
- PROTECTS THE RIGHT TO DISAGREE WITH THE PREFERRED NARRATIVE OF THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY
- PROTECTS THE RELIGIOUS VIEWS OF MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

First Cabinet Meeting of the Year

The Florida Cabinet held its first meeting of the year, with new AG Commissioner Wilton Simpson. Among a series of agency leadership appointments, the Cabinet voted to prohibit the State Board of Administration, which oversees the State's retirement fund and other investments, from making investment decisions based on 'environmental, social or corporate governance', or ESG considerations.

Legislators will convene for Committee Week #4 next Monday, January 23rd. There are four committee weeks left until the start of the 2023 Legislative Session on March 7.

258

Bills Filed

4

Committee weeks left

46

Days until Session

Articles



Lawmakers seek to expand voucher eligibility to all K-12 students

Tampa Bay Times

[Read Article ->](#)



Governor DeSantis Backs Permanent 'Freedom of Speech' Protections for Docs, Anti-Vax Mandates

Florida Politics

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Gov. DeSantis, Cabinet taps three agency heads, restrict ESG in investments

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