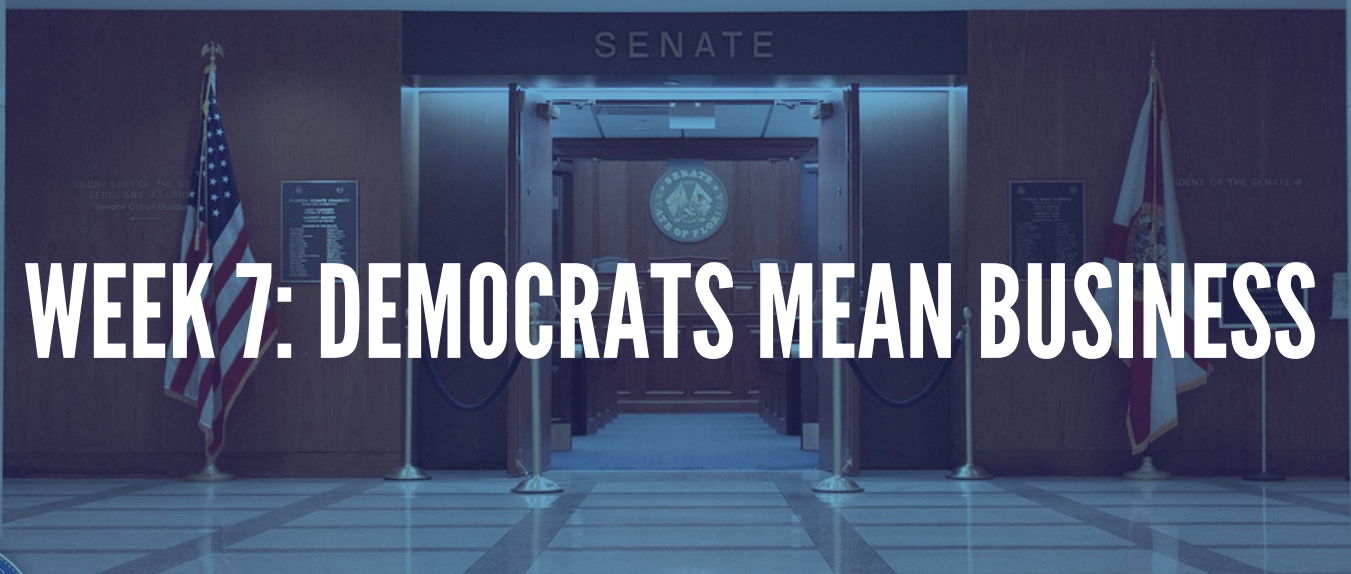




Florida Senate Democratic Caucus Newsletter

Seventh Week of 2023 Session: 4/17/23-4/21/23



Disney vs. DeSantis...Again?

The Governor won't let Disney quit. After the House of Mouse pulled a fast one to decrease the power of the Governor's new Disney board, he promised retaliation - even suggesting building a prison near the tourist attraction.

Once again, the Legislature is on the hook to carry out his attacks. We've had two special sessions and now legislation trickling in for the DeSantis vs. Disney war - when will it end?

"GOVERNOR DESANTIS' PRESS CONFERENCE WAS ABOUT RETALIATION, NOT GOOD GOVERNMENT."



SENATOR LINDA STEWART



State Senator Tina Polsky [@TinaPolsky](#)

We received a 1% hike in property insurance today, on top of already crazy premiums. FTL is underwater and when [@GovRonDeSantis](#) isn't traipsing around the country running for prez, he's fighting a personal vendetta against Disney. Strap on your white boots and do your job!

Economic, Social or Corporate Governance (ESG)

HB 3 - another anti-business measure that could increase borrowing costs for the state and Floridians is on its way to the Governor.

THE ISSUE DOESN'T RESONATE WITH YOUR VOTERS - WHICH BEGS THE QUESTION - WHO ARE YOU DOING THIS FOR? THE GOVERNOR? SUPPORT THE FREE MARKET AND VOTE DOWN THIS BILL.

SENATOR LORI BERMAN



Elections

SB 7050, among other things, adds more rules and requirements for groups that increase democratic engagement by registering people to vote.

"I THINK THE FINES BEING IMPOSED ON THE THIRD-PARTY REGISTRATION ORGANIZATIONS ARE DESIGNED TO PUT THEM OUT OF BUSINESS - MAKE THEM GO AWAY. THOSE ARE THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE HELPED INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRACY.

SENATOR GERALDINE THOMPSON



So-called 'Don't Say Gay' rules expanded through 12th grade in Florida



Lauren Book 
@LeaderBookFL

It's a sad day when Florida's educators are more likely to lose their licenses for having 'safe space' stickers on classroom doors than for sexually abusing a student.

This is not freedom!

Shevrin "Shev" Jones  @ShevrinJones · Apr 19

It was never about protecting kids. If they truly wanted to protect kids, they would make sure ALL kids are protected, especially our vulnerable LGBTQ young people who are three times more likely to commit suicide.

Until ALL Floridians are FREE, no Floridian is free!

Higher Education

Despite amendments, SB 266 still interferes with academic freedom.



Watch Shevrin Jones' debate on SB 266 [here](#).

"THE CRUX OF THIS POLICY...IS RACIST AT ITS CORE... RACISM, SEXISM AND SYSTEMIC RACISM - IT EXISTS Y'ALL. WHETHER YOU WANT TO BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT EXISTS."

SENATOR SHEVRIN JONES

Secret Governor Flights

The Florida Senate passed SB 1616 - a public records exemption that will essentially shield all information related to "security and transportation services" for the Governor. Senator Jason Pizzo questioned the bill sponsor about potential impropriety:



State Senator Jason Pizzo
(D) District 37, Hollywood



State Senator Jonathan Martin
(R) District 33, Fort Myers



State Senator Jason Pizzo
(D) District 37, Hollywood



State Senator Jonathan Martin
(R) District 33, Fort Myers

"Doesn't the public have the right to know if he (the Governor) hitched a ride on a billionaire's jet who has business before the Legislature?"

"If it's for political purposes or for personal purposes - then it's exempt. If it's for official purposes, then we get to know who is involved - as long as it doesn't relate to something...that could be used for nefarious purposes."

"Tell me...we're not protecting and covering up the free flights, the favors of donors to the Governor with this bill."

"That's not the reason for this bill."

"THIS IS THE SUNSHINE STATE FOR A REASON...THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO BRAG ABOUT THE FACT THAT THEY GAVE A RIDE ON THEIR JET TO THE GOVERNOR... THERE IS NO RATIONAL PURPOSE FOR WITHHOLDING WHO IS GIFTING AND WHO IS GRIFTING."

SENATOR JASON PIZZO

DEMOCRATIC BILLS ON THE MOVE

Leader Book's years-long fight for permanent tax exemption for diapers and incontinence products is a highlight of the Florida Senate's tax package!



In recent years, abandoned and forgotten African-American cemeteries have been rediscovered, putting a spotlight on Florida's sordid history of racism and erasure.

Senator Powell's **SB 430** would create a Historic Cemeteries Program within the Division of Historical Resources – it passed the Senate Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development unanimously.

On Its Way to the Governor

- **SB 130, Greyson's Law**, which requires courts to take threats seriously when considering custody arrangements, passed unanimously off the House floor and is headed to the Governor.
- **High School Equivalency Diplomas** sponsored by Senator Torres creates consistency for students over the age of 16 who want to take the GED exam to graduate.
- Senator Davis's **Operation & Administration of the Baker Act** requires DCF to update the handbook and makes it accessible online.



Representative Hillary Cassel and Senator Lori Berman pose with a photo of Greyson Kessler, a young boy who was killed by his father while his mother fought for custody. He was the namesake for SB 130.

Passed the full Senate

Senator Stewart's motor vehicle glass bill – **SB 1002** prohibits "assignment of benefits" agreements and exchanges for anything of value for motor vehicle glass replacement or repair.

Senator Jones's SB 290 authorizes a parent to retain their student in Pre-K if that child has a disability if they meet certain requirements.

Here's a glance at other bills filed by Senate Democrats heard in committee during Week 7:

SB 4 – Relief of Maria Garcia by Pinellas School Board – Senator Rouson

Claims bill providing relief for Maria Garcia for \$2.8 million. Garcia was struck by a Pinellas school bus in 2018 while walking a crosswalk.

SB 8 – Relief of Leonard Cure/State of Florida – Senator Jones

Claimant payment by Leonard Cure for \$817,000 for being wrongfully incarcerated for 16 years.

SB 12 – Relief of Ricardo Medrano-Arzate and Eva Chavez, as personal representatives of Hilda Medrano/Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office

Claims bill providing relief for Ricardo Medrano-Arzate and Eva Chavez for \$1.2 million. Medrano-Arzate and Chavez's daughter was struck and killed by a sheriff deputy's patrol car in 2013.

SB 1046 & 1048 – Victims of Reform School Abuse – Senator Rouson

Provides a process for former students of reform schools who were abused to be certified as victims, provides a public records exemption

SB 1292 – Parenting Plans – Senator Jones

Creates a rebuttable presumption that equal time-sharing with minor children is in the best interests of the child.

SB 1352 – Medicaid Enrollees with Sickle Cell Disease – Senator Rouson

Requires the Agency for Health Care Administration to review if Medicaid enrollees with Sickle Cell Disease are properly covered to meet their needs

SB 1408 – Sickle Cell Program – Senator Davis

Requires the Department of Health to establish a grant program to prevent, care for, and treat sickle cell disease

SB 174 - Protection of Specified Personnel - Senator Polsky
Protects justices, judicial assistants, family members, and law enforcement from threats.

SB 528 - Gain-time for Attempted Sexual Offenses - Senator Davis
Among other things, eliminates the possibility of gain-time for those convicted of sexual battery.

SB 858 - Benefits, Training, and Employment for Veterans and their Spouses - Senator Torres
Establishes the Military Corpsmen and Medics of Florida Program to assist veterans and their spouses

SB 902 & 904 - Safety Standards for Amusement Rides - Senator Thompson
Named the "Tyre Sampson Act", requiring inspections on new rides and requiring additional reports and safety precautions for amusement rides

SB 996 - Driver License, Identification Card, and Motor Vehicle Registration Applications - Senator Berman
Requires the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to include on the application and renewal forms of a motor vehicle registration, driver license, and identification card an option to make a voluntary contribution of \$1 to Best Buddies International.

SB 1440 - Court Proceedings - Senator Book
Authorizes A/V technology for dependency & delinquency proceedings

SB 1510 - Visiting County and Municipal Detention Facilities - Senator Pizzo
Extends current law allowing visitation at correctional facilities to apply to county and municipal detention facilities

SB 1538 - Implementation of the Recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force - Senator Stewart
Requires the Department of Environmental Protection to monitor and reassess their projects

SB 1564 - Year-round School Pilot Program - Senator Stewart
Directs the Department of Education to conduct a pilot program relating to the cost and benefits of Year-round School

SB 1578 - Florida Children's Initiatives - Senator Thompson
Clarifies and streamlines provisions related to the Department of Children and Families Florida Children's Initiatives

SB 1606 - Florida Museum of Black History - Senator Powell
Creates a Florida Museum of Black History Task Force and requiring the Division of Historical Resources to oversee the construction of a Florida Museum of Black History

SB 1646 - Commercial Service Airport Transparency and Accountability - Senator Davis
Revises legislation enacted in 2020 relating to commercial service airport transparency and accountability



Congrats, Miles!
Miles Davis, Chief of Staff for Senator Shevrin Jones, was honored as a Rising Star in Florida Politics Spring 2023 edition of **INFLUENCE Magazine!**

"And like the jazz great whose name he shares, Florida's Miles Davis is good at his job."

Check out Miles' feature on page 80 of **INFLUENCE Magazine!**

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DEAR FLORIDA.

AS DEMOCRATS AND FLORIDIANS, WE'RE SICK OF THE CULTURE WARS BEING PLAYED OUT DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION AT YOUR EXPENSE.

WHILE WE CONTINUE THE FIGHT TO PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS & FREEDOMS - WE HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK:

WHAT ARE THE REAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOU DAILY? ANYTHING WE CAN HELP WITH?

SHARE WITH US AT HELP@DEARFLORIDADEMS.COM.

TALK TO YOU SOON.

FLORIDA SENATE DEMOCRATS



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