

BROWARD LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

NEWSLETTER

2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Broward Legislative Delegation Office provides a communication resource between the Federal, State, local governments and Broward County citizens to facilitate the legislative process. Our responsibilities include maintaining an efficient means for the local bill process and monitoring bills approved by the Delegation Members through the Legislature. The Legislative Delegation has a responsibility to monitor the appropriations process, securing State Revenues and other allocated funds for programs, organizations and government agencies in Broward County.

Week : Apr. 22 - 26

Sanctuary Cities/Immigration Legislation

The Florida House of Representatives voted Wednesday to require local officials to comply with federal immigration authorities, a move that brings the Republican-controlled state government to the cusp of enacting one of the nation's most stringent laws against "sanctuary cities."

The state House legislation, which passed in a 69-to-47 vote, would bar local governments from ignoring Immigration and Customs Enforcement requests — known as detainers — for local jails to hold suspected undocumented immigrants until federal authorities take them into custody. It also mandates that local agencies use their "best efforts to support federal immigration law" and threatens a fine of up to \$5,000 per day for entities that violate the law.

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While the definition of sanctuary cities varies, most analysts say Florida does not have any.

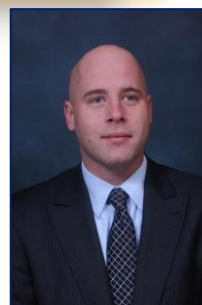
BROWARD LEGISLATORS TO LEAD DEMOCRATS IN SENATE AND HOUSE. 2020 - 2022.



Senator
Gary Farmer



Representative
Bobby DuBose



Representative
Evan Jenne

State Senator Gary Farmer, Senate District 34 is the leader-Designate for the Florida Senate Democrats for 2020-2022 and State Representative Bobby DuBose, District 94 and Evan Jenne, District 99 with overwhelming support will lead the House Democrats for the 2020-2022 Legislative Terms. Broward County is Florida most Democratic County. The Broward Legislative Delegation is made up of 19 total members: 5 Senators, 14 House Members.

Congratulations Senator Farmer and Representative DuBose and Jenne.

TEXTING WHILE DRIVING COULD BECOME A PRIMARY OFFENSE

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Texting while driving would become a primary traffic offense along with talking on a handheld cellphone in school and construction zones under a bill passed by the [Florida](#) Senate.

The Senate's 33-5 vote on Thursday made changes to a House bill passed two days earlier by a vote of 104-9. The bill now goes back to the House.

The Senate added the language on school and construction zones. Drivers would have to use hands-free devices if they wanted to talk on their phones in those areas.

Under current law, officers can only cite drivers for texting if they are pulled over for some other violation. The bill would allow officers to stop motorists simply for texting or using a handheld phone in prohibited zones.

The bill requires reports to guard against racial profiling.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/florida/articles/2019-04-25/florida-senate-passes-bill-to-ban-texting-while-driving>

Sanctuary Cities/Immigration (cont'd).

“This bill is about public safety and making sure we remove the criminal element of illegals that are here,” said state Sen. Joe Gruters, sponsor of the Senate legislation and chairman of the Florida Republican Party. At least 25 states considered legislation dealing with sanctuary policies last year, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. But Florida — a state where 20 percent of the population is foreign-born — has emerged as an especially emotional battleground in the nationwide fight over those laws.

More than 120 Florida business leaders, ranging from a former chief executive of Carnival Cruise Line to executives of home-building companies, signed an open letter to DeSantis and legislative leaders warning that the bills could cripple the state’s robust economy. “Immigrants represent over 25 percent of our workforce and employ over 500,000 fellow Floridians,” the letter states. “It is their innovative spirit that keeps us moving forward. Anti-immigrant legislation will inflict long-lasting damage to the state of Florida.”

Florida’s attorney general could take civil action against state or local government entities, which advocates fear could make individual government employees liable for actions they take in support of an undocumented resident. Although most ICE detainers are good for 48 hours, advocates say the legislation infringes on the rights of undocumented immigrants by denying them due process.

The Senate passed its version with a vote of 22-18 but with their changes, the bill heads back to the House.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/florida-house-passes-bill-that-forbids-sanctuary-cities-would-issue-fines-for-failing-to-help-federal-immigration-authorities/2019/04/24/8c95f1ce-65e5-11e9-a1b6-b29b90efa879_story.html?utm_term=.70a4134f64b6

Assignment of Benefits heads to the Governor

TALLAHASSEE (CBSMiami/NSF) — After a fierce lobbying battle that included arguments about insurance rates and “bad actors,” the Florida Senate on Wednesday approved an overhaul of the insurance practice known as assignment of benefits.

The 25-14 vote sends the measure (HB 7065) to Gov. Ron DeSantis, who quickly issued a statement saying he will sign it. Passage of the bill was a major victory for insurers and business groups, which have argued that “AOB” abuses and excessive litigation have driven up homeowners’ insurance premiums. “The exponential growth in AOB abuse has contributed to mounting insurance costs for Floridians for far too long,” DeSantis said in a prepared statement.

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Broward Legislative Delegation Office - Executive Director: Andrea C. Knowles

Broward Governmental Center, 115 South Andrews Avenue, Room 429, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301

Office Number: 954.357.6555

Fax Number: 954.357.6041

Email: DelegationInfo@broward.org

Website: www.broward.org/legislative

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Firefighter's Cancer Coverage

TALLAHASSEE -- The Florida Senate and Florida House voted unanimously to entitle firefighters to cancer coverage as part of doing their jobs, moving Florida closer to joining about 40 other states designating the disease an occupational hazard for those first responders.

SB 426 establishes cancer as an occupational hazard tied to firefighting and requires firefighters be afforded full health insurance coverage with disability and death benefits. Under the bill, firefighters would qualify after meeting requirements including not smoking in the last five years. The bill, which carves out an alternative to workers' compensation, would also grant firefighters a one-time lump sum of \$25,000 upon diagnosis of one of the 21 cancers specified in the legislation.

Advocates had pointed to the changing hazards of firefighting for years, saying carcinogens from the synthetic materials used in buildings had elevated the already existing risks posed by smoke inhalation during a blaze. They referenced studies that showed an increased incidence of cancer among firefighters compared to the general population, even as fire departments have taken precautionary measures to help protect firefighters against the chemicals that cling to their skin or their firefighting gear.

But groups representing local governments, which largely are responsible for their fire departments, had been opposed to the bill's progress for multiple years, citing the financial cost. This year's bill, according to a staff analysis, was estimated to cost a little less than \$5 million for the state and local governments.

The Senate then voted 39-0 to approve the bill. The House passed the bill 116-0.

In the gallery, several firefighters from across the state and loved ones were watching as the bill passed. Among them was Claudine Buzzo, a firefighter from Miami-Dade, who had been diagnosed with cancer and had traveled multiple times to Tallahassee to advocate for the bill.

The bill heads to Gov. Ron DeSantis' desk for a signature.

<https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/2019/04/23/firefighter-cancer-coverage-gets-approved-in-florida-senate/>

Assignment of Benefits (cont'd).

"In recent years, there have been calls for reform and today, the Legislature took action. I thank them for their efforts in getting this done and I look forward to signing this meaningful legislation into law."

Assignment of benefits is a decades-old practice that has become controversial in recent years, at least in part because of an increase in residential water-damage **claims**. In assignment of benefits, property owners in need of repairs sign over benefits to contractors, who ultimately pursue payments from insurance companies.

While insurers contend the practice has become riddled with fraud and litigation, plaintiffs' attorneys and other groups say AOB helps make sure **claims** are properly paid. They accuse insurers of often trying lowball amounts paid for work. The House passed the bill April 11, and the Senate ultimately went along with the House's plan. As an example of one of the changes, the bill would let insurers **offer** policies that do not allow or restrict assignment of benefits. The concept is that such policies could be offered at lower prices to homeowners.

Another key part of the bill would **effectively** limit attorney fees in AOB lawsuits filed by contractors against insurers. The fee changes, which involve a formula, would not apply to lawsuits filed by policyholders.

Oponents of the bill argued, in part, that it should guarantee rate reductions for homeowners. The **Senate** on Tuesday rejected a proposed amendment aimed at requiring reductions. Sen. Gary Farmer, a Fort Lauderdale **Democrat** who has been an outspoken critic of the bill, questioned the insurance industry's contentions about a "crisis." "This bill is designed to cure a crisis that has not been actuarially shown," Farmer said.

<https://miami.cbslocal.com/2019/04/24/assignment-of-benefits-insurance-bill-headed-to-gov-desantis/>



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