

CAPITOL REPORT

Battles Brewing in Week 4 of Session



League of Women Voters of Florida works with University students to keep campuses safe

Capitol Report 2015

March 27, 2015

Filed by: Debbie Harrison Rumberger, LWVF Governmental Consultant

Overview: Week 4 of the Legislative session was filled with bills moving through remaining required Committee stops.

Affordable Health Care for All Floridians: Controversy has shrouded the differing Senate-House positions on budget. The Senate Appropriations Committee continues to insist the House leadership resolve the Health Care budget shortfall created by a \$2 billion loss of Low Income Pool Program funding, which is set to expire in June. The Senate is moving forward with adoption of SB 7044, which would bring \$51 billion in health coverage for 800,000 Floridians who currently do not qualify for federal health coverage. The LWVF continues to work to bring Florida's tax dollars back to Florida to provide health coverage for our working poor. To date, the House has not considered legislation to accept federal funds to extend health care coverage to Florida's poorest

citizens.

Online Voter Registration: The Senate Ethics and Elections Committee accepted an amendment to Senate Bill 7064 to include Senator Jeff Clemens' online voter registration proposal. The language would implement a system of online voter registration by January 1, 2017. This new bill was approved unanimously. There is no current online voter registration bill moving in the House.

Land and Water Policy: The Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee on Tuesday unanimously approved changes to its version of the water policy bill (SB 918), which is deemed stronger than the House alternative by environmentalists. The Senate proposal, which also seeks to develop a statewide trail system and increase public access to conservation lands for recreation, is more project-focused than the House plan, which was approved in a 106-9 vote on the third day of the legislative session. In other action, several senators want their chamber to float more than a proposed \$2 million for land purchases in the Florida Forever program, after voters last year overwhelmingly backed an increase in money for conservation efforts. Lawmakers will work to increase funding during upcoming budget talks with the House, which will be led by Sen. Alan Hays, a Umatilla Republican who says Florida already has enough in public lands.

League members, please look for Monday's Action Alert for immediate needs of your voice in this legislative session!

Get Involved!

Debbie Harrison Rumberger is the League's professional lobbyist for the 2015 Legislative Session. Updates on League legislative issues will be provided on a regular basis through Capitol Report, which is published every week during the session. Important information may also be accessed at www.leg.state.fl.us Watch for your Capitol Report each Friday of the session for news on priority issues and what you can do to help. For updates on or copies of proposed legislation, call legislative information at 1-800-342-1827 or visit the Florida Online Sunshine homepage at www.leg.state.fl.us. For more information about the League's advocacy, check out www.thefloridavoter.com

Thank you,

Debbie Harrison Rumberger
LWVF Legislative Liaison