
CAPITOL CONNECTION

News and Views from
**Representative Trudi
Williams**



Florida, District 75
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TRUDI'S BILL TRACKER

HB 931-Residential Tendencies

HB 931 has passed out of the House unanimously. As stated before, this bill prohibits a landlord from terminating, failing to renew, or refusing to enter into residential rental agreement because the tenant, applicant, or family or household member is a victim of domestic violence. HB 931 would also allow victims of domestic violence to terminate residential rental agreements with a permanent injunction from a judge. This bill is waiting to be passed out of the Senate.

HB 527-Environmental Site Redevelopment - Brownfields

HB 527 also passed out of the House this week. This bill provides a one-time tax credit for the construction and operation of new healthcare facilities or health care providers on brownfield sites.

HB 1155-Campaign Financing

HB 1155 has passed out of the House. This bill represents the legislative recommendations of the Department of State's Division of Elections. HB 1155 is now in the Senate for a vote.

HB 577 - Illegal or Undocumented Aliens

Unfortunately, this bill will not pass out of the House of Representatives this Session. This bill is sound legislation with the potential to save the tax payers over \$100 million every year. I intend to file it again next year.

2008-2009 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Although this was a lean fiscal year, some of our water projects did make it into the budget. I am also happy to report that funding for both Florida Forever and Everglades Restoration has been funded. Even though funding has been reduced this year, we have not wavered in our commitment to Florida's environment. In total, we were able to bring home \$1.625 million for Lee County.

PROPERTY INSURANCE RELIEF

The House also addressed the issue of property insurance this week. The House unanimously approved property insurance legislation that will provide greater protection for consumers and hold insurance companies accountable. Here are just a few highlights of this legislation:

- Extends the Citizens Property Insurance Corporation (Citizens) rate freeze to Jan. 1, 2010 (the freeze has been in effect since Jan. 1, 2007).
- Increases fines for unfair insurance trade practices or violations of the insurance code from \$2,500 to \$5,000 for non-willful violations and from \$20,000 to \$40,000 for willful violations.
- Requires an insurer to notify the Office of Insurance Regulation 90 days before non-renewing more than 10,000 policies within a one year period.
- Extends the suspension of “use and file” for one year. This is a provision from last year's insurance bill that requires insurers to get state approval before raising property insurance rates.
- Requires transparency in the Office of Insurance Regulation’s ratemaking process by requiring OIR to provide ratemaking information on the Internet and requiring OIR’s actuary to certify the truthfulness of the rate recommendation.

TRUDI’S THOUGHTS

Today is the last day of the 2008 legislative session. The technical term for the end of session is called the *Sine Die adjournment*. Sine die is the Latin term for "without day" and a motion to adjourn sine die concludes the legislative session. Tradition holds that each chamber opens its doors so they can see across the rotunda to the other chamber. When the motion to adjourn passes, the Sergeant-at-Arms of the respective chambers drop a handkerchief. This is a practice dating back before telephones were installed in the Old Capitol, so that the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House knew when the other chamber had adjourned for good. Watching this ceremony take place is truly moving. Though it signifies that our job in Tallahassee is done, it does not mean the work that we do as legislators is over. As we return to our home districts, we must always keep the voice of our constituents in our mind and our hearts. We will continue to face tough issues ahead but through our hard work and persistence we can get Florida back on track. Thank you to all of those that contacted me this session expressing their support, ideas and concerns.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.” –Ronald Reagan