
CAPITOL CONNECTION

News and Views from
**Representative Trudi
Williams**



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KEY LEGISLATION

ENDING WELFARE FOR POLITICIANS: Public financing for political campaigns is an outdated practice that has outlived its usefulness and is a ridiculous waste of taxpayer money. In the presidential elections, then-candidate Obama proved that candidates can raise record amounts of campaign cash without taking a dime of public financing. It adds insult to injury that Florida taxpayers would be adding to multi-million dollar campaign coffers at a time when they can least afford it. To end this outdated practice, which has come to be known as "Welfare for Politicians," House Republicans supported House Joint Resolution (HJR) 81 this week. If passed, the measure would end public financing of political campaigns and save Florida taxpayers millions of dollars. In 2006, Florida taxpayers gave over \$11 million to statewide politicians to spend on their political campaigns.

CHAMBERS DIFFER ON GAMBLING: As both the House and Senate begin to look towards legislation dealing with the impact of Governor Crist's decision to sign a gaming compact with the Seminole Indian Tribe- a compact that was later invalidated by the Florida Supreme Court- it is apparent that the two Chambers differ in their approach. The House's proposal grants the Seminoles a slot-only agreement and the offer of geographic exclusivity in certain areas of Florida. This is less than the offer that Governor Crist offered them with blackjack and slots. The Senate has taken a different approach by looking to offer the Seminoles full Atlantic City-style casinos- not just slots and blackjack, but also other table games like craps and roulette- and lower the legal age limit to gamble from 21 to 18 years old. The Senate has also indicated they are prepared to place video lottery terminals at other locations throughout the state in an effort to bring in more revenue for the state. Both Chambers will continue their work on this matter throughout the rest of the Legislative session.

TRUDI'S BILLS:

HB 1413 – Regulation of Professions: One of Governor Crist's priority bills, HB 1413 streamlines the application and renewal process for numerous licensed professionals in the state of Florida. This bill passed unanimously out of committee this week and is poised to be heard in the General Government Policy Council soon.

HB 1435 – Lee County Sheriff's Office: This bill amends the Lee County Sheriff's Office Civil Service Act qualifications for employment. The goal of this bill is to enlarge the applicant pool for employment with the Sheriff's Office while giving them greater discretion in their hiring decisions. This bill also passed unanimously out of committee this week and I am hopeful that it will be heard in its' final committee of reference next week.

TRUDI'S THOUGHTS

This week marked the end of committee meetings in the Florida House. Our actions were focused on moving legislation through the first steps of the legislative process. Once bills have been through their initial committees, they are moving closer to the House Floor and final passage. This is always a fast-moving week as each member works to have their bills heard favorably and to listen to other members seek support for their own legislation.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"The middle of the road is where the white line is - and that's the worst place to drive." – Robert Frost

