

Capitol Update



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Budget Update

The recent state revenue collection predictions are positive and the Senate and House budget sub-committees have released their respective spending plans this week in Tallahassee. The House expects to pass the budgets out of the respective committees on March 26th and pass the full budget on April 2nd. The Senate is on a similar timeline, Within a day or two.

Once both plans are passed in each chamber, the Senate and House will begin the process of budget conferencing to iron out differences between the two spending plans. With the latest Revenue Estimating Conference forecasting a \$1 billion surplus, so lawmakers should move quickly this Session to reconcile differences.

Early Steps

The Council has requested **\$3,000,000** of increased funding for Early Steps to raise the amount of services per child to optimize the potential of young children with developmental disabilities. Florida is well below the national average of \$3000.00 per child annually with \$1267 spent per child in 2012-2013.

Please share your opinion on human services budget issues with the [Health Care Appropriations Committee](#) in the House and with the [Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee](#) in the Senate.

Vocational Rehabilitation

This week, the House and Senate Education Appropriations Subcommittees came out with their recommended budget proposals. As you recall from my previous email, the Governor's Recommended Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-15 proposes an increase in state General Revenue (GR) to draw down the full federal grant award Florida is eligible to receive for its Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, which would enable the state to begin releasing people from the waiting lists on July 1, 2014. These waiting lists were a result of a very high demand for VR services and the need to continue services to as

many customers as possible, while living within this fiscal year's projected revenue picture. Here is a summary of the three proposals relating to the waiting lists:

- The Governor's Proposed Budget – \$45,352,547 (this includes \$27,219,069 in nonrecurring GR)
- **The House Education Appropriations Subcommittee – \$45,352,547 (this includes \$26,783,071 in nonrecurring GR)**
- The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education: \$18,569,476 (recurring GR)

The Council is asking the Senate to adopt the House position.

Please share your opinion regarding the Vocational Rehabilitation budget with the Education Appropriations Committee in the [Senate](#).

Help Me Grow

The Council's Child Development Screening Initiative is a three-year endeavor by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) to convene stakeholders and develop a comprehensive system for the developmental screening of children aged birth to five. We are in the final year of our initiative which has focused on utilizing the nationally recognized and successful Help Me Grow model as the platform to create a comprehensive system for childhood developmental screening in Florida.

Help Me Grow (HMG) is a system that links families with local resources to address parents' concerns about the health, development, behavior and learning of their young children. HMG pilot projects currently operate in two counties in Florida - Miami-Dade and Hillsborough with another five in stages of development. Each county project works with a budget of approximately \$250,000 which includes 4 FTE parent counselors and a Project Coordinator.

A \$2 million appropriation for FY 2014 will allow funding to establish HMG operations in additional counties as well as the establishment and staffing of a statewide HMG parent support and education coordinating center that would link all Florida HMG county projects through a single project database.

Thank you to Representative Fresen for appropriating **\$ 2 million dollars** towards this long awaited program. **The Council is asking the Senate to adopt the House position.**

Please share your opinion regarding Help Me Grow with the Education Appropriations Committee in the [Senate](#).

Children with Disabilities Who Have Medically Complex Conditions

There are still 149 children with medically complex conditions living in skilled nursing facilities that are not part of child protection. While skilled nursing facilities can provide needed interim intensive medical care to stabilize a child, they should not be a child's long term or life time home. Children need to grow up with the emotional security and continuity of a parental relationship and a stable living arrangement.

The Council is now requesting a Task force to consider the following ways to be able to realize this goal;

- Adopt uniform procedures applicable to each of the state agencies on the task force to ensure that an individualized permanency plan is developed for each child who resides in a skilled nursing facility that focuses on facilitating a permanent living arrangement with an enduring and nurturing family and honoring parental choice.
- Design a Family-Based Alternative system where by a child with medically complex conditions who cannot reside with the child's birth family may receive necessary services in a Family-Based Alternative, instead of a childhood in a skilled nursing facility. This involves the birth family in the alternate family selection and decisions regarding the child's daily life.
- Provide Adequate Medicaid State Plan and Waiver service options for Children who have Medically Complex Conditions. For example, there are children who have medically complex conditions that do not meet the eligibility requirements for Medicaid unless services are provided in the skilled nursing facilities. This leaves families with only the option of nursing homes
- Establish facilitation services to transition a child from a skill nursing facility to a permanent family blending services and resources across the multiple agencies.

Please let your [Senator](#) and your [Representative](#) know your views on this issue!

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Education for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities

There are several education bills this Session. Two bills that the Council are following make big changes for students with developmental disabilities. SB 1512 repeals statute that authorizes the Special Diploma and offers other options and also offers guidelines for the use of Personalized Accounts for Learning. SB 850 makes changes in digital learning and career technical programs. The Council is following these bills and determining their impact.

Here are the 5 recommendations to date for the Councils position on [SB 1512](#) and [SB 850](#) (also see in bill section below);

- Personalized Account for Learning: Could be good for students with developmental disabilities who cannot get on the waiver (but needs to be out of a high school setting if the student is over 18), depending on the specifics of the program which need to be clarified.
- The Council does not support anything that would diminish or eliminate the requirements or options available for students with disabilities with the special diploma. We want to see what the requirements and options available to

students with disabilities would be with the new standard diploma before supporting.

- Schools should not be able to deny entry into a career and technical program due to lack of credentialing (currently no credential is required).
- The Council would not support changes to the provisions to dual enrollment that allows for dual enrollment only for students in collegial programs. This does not give access to dual enrollment for all students with disabilities.
- The Council would not support making the requirements for the career and technical programs more stringent or more difficult for students with disabilities to achieve.

Bills

[SB 174 - Relating to Autism by Ring](#)

Summary

This bill requires that a physician refer a minor to an appropriate specialist for screening for autism spectrum disorder under certain circumstances and requires that certain insurers and health maintenance organizations provide direct patient access to an appropriate specialist for screening for or evaluation or diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. The bill also requires that certain insurance policies and health maintenance organization contracts provide a minimum number of visits per year for screening for or evaluation or diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Effective Date: July 1, 2014.

The Council voted to support this bill.

Actions

09/25/13 SENATE Referred to Health Policy; Banking and Insurance; Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services; Appropriations

Identical Bills

[HB 0483 - Relating to Autism by Cruz](#)

01/16/14 HOUSE Referred to Health Innovation Subcommittee; Insurance & Banking Subcommittee; Appropriations Committee; Health & Human Services Committee
HOUSE Now in Health Innovation Subcommittee

[SB 178 - Relating to Disability Awareness by Ring](#)

Summary

This bill requires that each district school board provide disability history and awareness instruction in all K-12 public schools. The bill provides for individual presenters who have disabilities to augment the disability history and awareness instruction. And it requires each public school to establish a disability history and awareness advisory council. Effective Date: Upon becoming a law. **The Council will support this bill if the Advisory Councils are removed or integrated within existing advisory Council's and if there is more flexibility in the time of year to provide this instruction.**

Actions

09/25/13 SENATE Referred to Education; Children, Families, and Elder Affairs; Appropriations Subcommittee on Education; Appropriations

01/14/14 SENATE Favorable by Education; 8 Yeas, 0 Nays

01/15/14 SENATE Now in Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

Identical Bills

[HB 0093 - Relating to Disability Awareness by Reed](#)

11/05/13 HOUSE Referred to K-12 Subcommittee; Education Appropriations Subcommittee; Education Committee

HOUSE Now in K-12 Subcommittee

[SB 762 - Relating to Family Care Councils – by Detert](#)

Summary

This bill revises the membership of the family care council within each service area of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. It amends s. 393.502, F.S., to change membership eligibility of Family Care Council's by allowing grandparents to be members of Family Care Councils (FCCs). FCCs are local councils that advise the Agency for Persons with Disabilities on the needs of self-advocates and their families. It also clarifies that persons waiting to receive services may be members of FCCs.

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state or local government and provides for an effective date of July 1, 2014.

The Council voted to support this bill.

Actions

02/06/14 SENATE Referred to Children, Families, and Elder Affairs; Governmental Oversight and Accountability

03/04/14 SENATE Favorable by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs; 10 Yeas, 0 Nays

03/04/14 SENATE Now in Governmental Oversight and Accountability

Similar Bills

[HB 0715 - Relating to Family Care Councils by Diaz \(J\)](#)

02/03/14 HOUSE Referred to Healthy Families Subcommittee; Health & Human Services Committee

02/19/14 HOUSE Favorable by Healthy Families Subcommittee; 12 Yeas, 0 Nays

02/21/14 HOUSE Now in Health & Human Services Committee

[SB 850C1 - Relating to Education by Legg - CS Sponsors: Education](#)

Summary

This bill requires a school that includes certain grades to include information, data, and instructional strategies in its school improvement plan. It requires district school board, in consultation with the district school superintendent, to make digital materials, CAPE Digital Tool certificates, and CAPE industry certifications available to students, including students with disabilities, in prekindergarten through grade 12 to enable students to attain digital skills; deleting calculations for paid and unpaid high school credits. **The Council is following this bill.**

Actions

02/10/14 SENATE Referred to Education; Appropriations Subcommittee on Education; Appropriations

03/04/14 SENATE Favorable with CS by Education; 8 Yeas, 0 Nays

03/18/14 SENATE Favorable with CS by Appropriations Subcommittee on Education; 10 Yeas, 0 Nays

03/20/14 SENATE Now in Appropriations

[SB 1512 - Relating to Students with Disabilities by Stargel; Co-Sponsors: Galvano, Gardiner and Thrasher](#)

Summary

This bill establishes the Florida Personalized Accounts for Learning and it specifies criteria for students who are eligible to participate in the program. It prohibits specific providers, schools, institutions, school districts, and other entities from sharing, refunding, or rebating program funds. The bill also repeals the term special diploma and offers other alternatives. Effective Date: Except as otherwise expressly provided in this act, this act shall take effect July 1, 2014. **The Council is following this bill.**

Actions

03/05/14 SENATE Referred to Education; Appropriations Subcommittee on Education; Appropriations

03/11/14 SENATE Workshopped by Education

03/18/14 SENATE Favorable with CS by Education; 7 Yeas, 2 Nays

03/20/14 SENATE Committee Substitute Text (C1) Filed HB 5103 - Relating to Students with Disabilities - 2014

Similar

HB 5103 - Relating to Students with Disabilities - by Choice & Innovation Subcommittee, Bileca CS Sponsors: Education Appropriations Subcommittee

Summary

This bill establishes Florida Personal Learning Account Program to enable parents of students with disabilities to customize their child's education using wide range of instructional services; provides student eligibility, responsibilities for program participation, administration & funding of Florida Personal Learning Accounts, & DOE, nonprofit scholarship-funding organization, & school district obligations. Effective Date: July 1, 2014.

Actions

HOUSE Now in Appropriations Committee

[HB 849 - Relating to Service Animals - by Smith \(J\) Co-Sponsors: Moskowitz, Pilon and Stewart](#)

Summary

This bill requires public accommodation to permit use of service animal by an individual with disability. The bill provides conditions for public accommodation to exclude or remove a service animal and revises penalties to include community service for certain persons or entities who interfere with use of a service animal. The bill also provides equal access to housing accommodations for an individual with a disability accompanied by

an emotional support animal. The bill provides conditions under which a landlord may request documentation of a qualifying disability. And the bill provides a penalty for fraud with respect to use or training of a service animal. **The Council is supporting this bill.**

Actions

02/20/14 HOUSE Referred to Government Operations Subcommittee; Criminal Justice Subcommittee; State Affairs Committee

03/18/14 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Government Operations Subcommittee; 9 Yeas, 0 Nays HOUSE Committee Substitute Text (C1) Filed

03/20/14 HOUSE Reference to Criminal Justice Subcommittee removed; Reference to Judiciary Committee added; Remaining references: Judiciary Committee, State Affairs Committee

HOUSE Now in Judiciary Committee

Similar Bills

[SB 1146 - Relating to Service Animals by Altman](#)

02/28/14 SENATE Referred to Commerce and Tourism; Community Affairs; Judiciary