

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 3: Mar. 18 - 22

## House and Senate release proposed budgets.

About \$400 million separates the initial House and Senate proposed budgets. The House late Thursday night unveiled an \$89.9 billion [budget](#) for the 2019-20 fiscal year. The Senate on Friday published a \$90.3 billion spending plan.

The Senate's budget includes about \$1.8 billion for Hurricane Michael relief, as well as a \$1.1 billion increase to the Florida Education Finance Program, a school district operating funding source.

House Speaker **José Oliva** told reporters after a floor session on Thursday that he wants per-capita spending to be lower than it is during the current fiscal year. It's now "around the \$4,800 [per-person] range," he said.

Cont'd on next page

## Smokable medical marijuana now legal in Florida.

Smoking medical marijuana is now legal in Florida, ending a yearslong showdown between Florida lawmakers and public advocacy groups.

Gov. Ron DeSantis, R-Fla., signed SB-182 into law on Monday, a state Senate proposal put forward by Republican state Sen. Jeff Brandes and Democratic state Sen. Linda Stewart, repealing the state's ban on smokable medical marijuana for use under the supervision of a doctor as part of standard care.

The law allows patients to receive 2 1/2 ounces of cannabis every 35 calendar days to smoke. Patients under the age of 18 face more stringent restrictions, only gaining access to the cannabis if they have a terminal condition and have been referred by one pediatrician and one qualified physician.

Patients who receive a prescription will only be able to pick up their allotted amounts at licensed and heavily regulated medical marijuana centers, identical to the pharmacy model used by traditional medical treatments. News story courtesy of:

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/florida-rolls-with-smokable-medical-marijuana-ending-yearslong-debate>

## 2019 Hose and Senate Budget

“The overall goal is to be below what we spent last year per resident,” Oliva said. “How much of that? The more the better obviously in our opinion, but that’s the goal we set for ourselves.”

Last year, the Legislature passed and then-Gov. **Rick Scott** signed into law an \$88.7 billion budget.

The Legislature as a whole is shaping up to deliberate a much smaller spending plan than what Gov. **Ron DeSantis** has recommended. The Governor’s first proposed budget totals \$91.3 billion.

The House Appropriations Committee is expected to consider the budget on Wednesday. The Senate budget panel also will meet Wednesday.

News story Courtesy of <http://floridapolitics.com/archives/291579-house-proposes-89-9-billion-spending-plan>

## STAY CONNECTED



## Amendment 4 Legislation

Former felons would have to pay back all their court fees before being allowed to vote [despite the idea being blasted by critics as a “poll tax.”](#) according to a Senate committee bill filed Wednesday dealing with the rollout of Amendment 4.

But the bill differs in important ways from a House committee bill that passed along party lines on Tuesday, leading to claims that the state’s Republican-led Legislature was trying to curtail one of the biggest expansions of voting rights in decades.

The Senate committee’s proposed bill would require felons pay fees only required by a judge as part of the person’s sentence, according to Senate Criminal Justice Committee Chair Keith Perry, R-Gainesville. The House version requires felons pay back all fees, including those not part of a person’s sentence.

The Senate committee’s version would likely allow more felons to vote than the House version.

The Senate version has a broader interpretation of “murder,” to include attempted murder and felony manslaughter, according to the bill. The House version sticks to just “murder.”

But the House version has a broad interpretation of “felony sex offenses,” to include a wide array of any sort of sexual felony, including prostitution.

The Senate committee’s version sharply narrows it to just crimes that would require someone to register as a sex offender and a handful of other offenses.

Advocates for Amendment 4 have argued that the Legislature should do nothing after Amendment 4 passed, instead leaving it up to elections supervisors and the courts to sort out. Already, supervisors are registering felons.

And they say that requiring felons to pay back court fees and other costs of supervision, like drug tests while on probation, would delay people from being able to vote.

But elections supervisors have asked for clarification on how to define “sexual offenses,” and for a way for them to easily check if a former felon is eligible to vote.

Both bills will likely be amended several times as they go through committees. <https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/2019/03/20/amendment-4-senates-bill-requires-payment-of-court-fees-but-with-key-differences/>

**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](mailto:DelegationInfo@broward.org)

Website: [www.broward.org/legislative](http://www.broward.org/legislative)

*Disclaimer: The Broward Legislative Delegation office is a non-partisan office and does not, in any way, endorse or favor any particular political party or Delegation Member. The contents of this publication are strictly informational. Bill content is obtained from [www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov) and/or [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov).*

