

Broward SLI

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Table of Contents

**Governor's Office
Presents County Medicaid
Billing "Streamline" to
House and Senate Tax
Committees**

**Southeast Florida Climate
Change Compact
discussed by Delegations**

**Select Committee Takes
Testimony on the
Affordable Care Act**

**House Committee Passes
Two Election Bills**

**Bill Would Put the Brakes
on Red Light Cameras**

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Governor's Office Presents County Medicaid Billing "Streamline" to House and Senate Committees

During the February 11, 2013, committee week, both House and Senate Finance and Tax Committees heard presentations by the Office of Policy and Budget relating to the Governor's proposed budget recommendations. The presentation included proposals to delete sales tax on manufacturing equipment, increase the corporate income tax exemption, require electronic tax payment filing, streamline taxes on communications, and implement a new county Medicaid formula-based payment system.

The conforming bill dealing with prospective county Medicaid contributions is unchanged from the Special Update that immediately followed publication of the Governor's budget proposal. Essentially, the budget sets the total county Medicaid contributions at \$278.4m. Each county is responsible for a share of this amount (Broward County is currently at 9%) and the total contribution amount will grow at 75% of the state Medicaid growth rate.

Southeast Florida Climate Change Compact discussed by Delegations

Dr. Jennifer Jurado, Director of Broward County's Natural Resources Planning and Management Division, presented sea level rise and climate change recommendations at a Multi-County Legislative Delegation Workshop. Representative Mark Pafford, who chairs the Palm Beach County Delegation, called the meeting to discuss the impending negative impacts of climate change and suggestions to help deal with such changes. Alongside specialists from the South Florida Water Management District and Palm Beach and Monroe Counties, Dr. Jurado offered a brief review of the Regional Climate Action Plan. While the presentation revolved largely around sea level rise and management, the plan includes 110 recommendations across seven critical planning areas. The presentations also discussed the economic impact from proper water supply, management and infrastructure.

Select Committee Takes Testimony on the Affordable Care Act

The Senate Select Committee on Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act took testimony on the choice to expand Medicaid. A representative from the Foundation

for Government Accountability argued that case studies from Arizona and Maine show unforeseen problems and higher costs. Hospital representatives countered that Maine sees less Medicaid patients in a year than Hospitals see in a day and that a fair comparison can't be made. The hospital industry maintains that expanded Medicaid will significantly reduce the number of uninsured that hospitals treat.

The Committee continues to study the issue. The House will study a similar issue next week and decision to accept Medicaid expansion dollars has still not been made.

House Committee Passes Two Election Bills

On Monday, the House Ethics and Elections Subcommittee met to discuss [House Bill 569 – Florida Election Code](#). The bill proposes to ban Committees of Continuous Existence (CCE), raise campaign contribution limits from \$500 to \$10,000, and require greater frequency of reporting.

CCEs have been accused of acting as a vehicle to skirt existing contribution limits. While contributions and expenditures are reported to the state, CCEs have no cap on contributions amounts. In turn, the unlimited funds are used to influence races with little transparency. Opponents argue that raising the contribution limits to \$10,000 protects incumbents as sitting lawmakers can raise money from powerful interests who lobby the Legislature. The bill passed by a final vote of 10-2.

On Wednesday, the same subcommittee met to examine [House Proposed Committee Bill EES-13-01](#) (Now [House Bill 7013](#)), which would extend early voting from 8 to up to 14 days, expand areas where polling sites may operate, and apply a 75-word limit on constitutional ballot initiatives.

The bill passed unanimously after 9 amendments were withdrawn. Chairman Jim Boyd stated that there will be future opportunities to make changes to the bill. Members of the committee noted that the amendments need further consideration.

Bill Would Put the Brakes on Red Light Cameras

The House Economic Affairs Committee passed [House Bill 4011](#) which would repeal a 2010 law that authorized red light camera use and citations. Current law allows for local governments to install infraction devices at intersections. Supporters of red light cameras, such as the Florida League of Cities, argued that the devices save lives because the fines serve as a deterrent to red light running. The bill's sponsor stated that the program has nothing to do with safety, and is nothing more than a grab for money. There is currently no Senate companion bill.

The final vote was 10-8 making it one of the closest votes this year. A similar repeal was passed by the Florida House of Representatives in 2011 by another close vote of 59-57, but ultimately died in the Senate.

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